

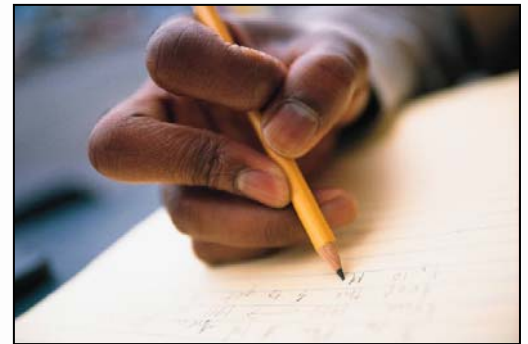
Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development



Middle Childhood (6-8 years old)

Developmental Milestones

Middle childhood brings many changes to a child's life. By this time, children can dress themselves, catch a ball more easily with only their hands, and tie their shoes. Developing independence from family becomes more important now. Events such as starting school bring children this age into regular contact with the larger world. Friendships become more and more important. Physical, social, and mental skills develop rapidly at this time. This is a critical time for children to develop confidence in all areas of life, such as through friends, schoolwork, and sports. Here are some changes your child may go through during middle childhood:



Emotional/Social Changes

- More independence from parents and family.
- Stronger sense of right and wrong.
- Beginning awareness of the future.
- Growing understanding about one's place in the world.
- More attention to friendships and teamwork.
- Growing desire to be liked and accepted by friends.

Mental/Cognitive Changes

- Rapid development of mental skills.
- Greater ability to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings.
- Less focus on one's self and more concern for others.

(Adapted with permission from Bright Futures: Green M, Palfrey JS, editors. Bright Futures Family Tip Sheets: Middle childhood. Arlington (VA): National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health; 2001.)

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Developmental Stages website (<http://aap.org/healthtopics/stages.cfm>)

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Positive Parenting

- Show affection for your child. Recognize her accomplishments.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—ask him to help with household tasks, such as setting the table.
- Talk with your child about school, friends, and things she looks forward to in the future.
- Talk with your child about respecting others. Encourage him to help people in need.
- Help your child set her own achievable goals—she'll learn to take pride in herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Make clear rules and stick to them, such as how long your child can watch TV or when he has to go to bed. Be clear about what behavior is okay and what is not okay.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play. Encourage him to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Do fun things together as a family, such as playing games, reading, and going to events in your community.
- Get involved with your child's school. Meet the teachers and staff to understand the learning goals and how you and the school can work together to help your child do well.
- Continue reading to your child. As your child learns to read, take turns reading to each other.
- Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make her feel badly about herself.
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage him to solve problems, such as a disagreement with another child, on his own.

Child Safety First

More physical ability and more independence can put children at risk for injuries from falls and other accidents. Motor vehicle crashes are the most common cause of death from unintentional injury among children this age.

- Protect your child properly in the car. For detailed information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics' Car Safety Seats: A Guide for Families (<http://www.aap.org/family/carseatguide.htm>)
- Teach your child to watch traffic and how to be safe when walking to school, riding a bike, and playing outside.
- Make sure your child understands water safety, and always supervise her when she's swimming or playing near water.
- Supervise your child when he's engaged in risky activities, such as climbing.
- Talk with your child about how to ask for help when she needs it.
- Keep potentially harmful household products, tools, equipment, and firearms out of your child's reach.

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