

**Ages 6 to 12 years old****The Facts**

Understanding the stages and behaviors in your child's development is an important step in parenting. Due to children maturing at their own rates (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) they need all the support, love and encouragement you can provide. As a parent you can help!

Developmental Stages & Behaviors**6 to 12 year olds**

- Have larger muscles that are better developed than their smaller muscles
- Girls are ahead of boys in physical development and achievement
- Grow at an average rate of 2-3 inches and 4-5 pounds a year
- Their legs, arms, hands and feet grow faster than other body parts
- Their facial features change as permanent teeth appear
- Need less sleep and rest
- Have the ability to shift attention
- Think logically and work problems in head
- Begin to apply logical thought to practical situations
- Use fully developed visual skills to learn to read
- May start a collection which requires classifying objects
- Able to give thought to judgements and decisions
- Go their separate ways in terms of gender division
- Boys become oriented to things
- Girls become oriented to people
- Boys identify with large groups
- Girls tend to identify more in smaller groups
- Begin to criticize peers for differences
- Look to peers for their source of behavior standards and models
- Are faced with decisions regarding alcohol and other drug use
- Express feelings freely
- Need frequent assurance of being loved
- Are sensitive to criticism and ridicule
- May lack self-confidence, be shy and self-conscious
- Worry about peers' opinions of them
- Are sometimes moody and unpredictable
- Begin to accept responsibility
- Begin to set standards for themselves

*Not every child develops the same, that's what makes us all unique. The previous listing contained general behaviors that most children obtain at a certain age, but not all.

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Helping Your Child's Development

Helping your child learn right from the start makes a big difference. Here's what you can do:

Help your child make and keep friends. Friendships start to form and become vital for children between the ages of 6 to 12 years old. Get involved!

- Teach your child to respect both peers and property.
- Teach your child to manage her conflicts and anger appropriately.
- Teach your child to share as well as give.
- Suggest that she join clubs or sports teams in order to meet children with similar interests.
- Make your home a place where her friends feel welcomed.

How To Handle Discipline Problems

Even good children have bad behaviors. The following is an example of how to handle a discipline problem that occurs within the ages of 6 to 12 years:

Scenario: Your child delays his/her homework by watching television instead.

Goal: To have your child take increasing responsibility for their behavior.

Don't try to organize and/or finish her homework. Try and understand the situation and help your child get back on track with the assignment(s) that need to be completed. Don't be afraid of letting your child experience the consequences of her actions and decisions.

Do try and understand what it might be that is getting in the way of your child's homework. Have and show sympathy if the work is difficult and frustrating to complete. Help her organize a homework schedule that is reasonable for the both of you. Though her grades may not be good, show that you are pleased with the effort your child has put into school work.

Prevention begins by assisting your child when organizing her assignments. Maintain contact with your child's teacher to better understand what homework is due and how much time should be spent on assignments each night.

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