

6 Years Old:



Social and Emotional Development

- Experiences sudden mood swings; can be “best friends” one minute, “worst of enemies” the next; loving one day, uncooperative and irritable the next; especially unpredictable towards mother or primary caregiver.
- Friendship circle expands; still needs closeness and nurturing from family, yet has urges to break away and “grow up”.
- Needs and seeks adult approval, reassurance, and praise; anxious to please, may complain excessively about minor hurts or illnesses to gain attention.
- Continues to be self-centered (egocentric); still sees events almost entirely from own perspective (views everything and everyone as there for child’s own benefit)
- Easily disappointed and frustrated by self-perceived failure.
- Still has difficulty composing and soothing self; dislikes being corrected or losing at games; may sulk, cry, refuse to play, or reinvent rules to suit own purposes.
- Is enthusiastic and inquisitive about surroundings and everyday events
- Still gaining an understanding of ethical behaviour or moral standards; may fib, cheat, or take items belonging to others.
- Knows when he or she has been “bad”; values of “good” and “bad” are based on school and family expectations and rules.
- May become increasingly fearful of thunderstorms, the dark, unidentified noises, dogs, and other animals.



Growth and Physical Characteristics

- Growth occurs slowly but steadily.
- Height increases 2-3 inches each year; girls are an average of 42-46 inches tall; boys are an average of 44-47 inches.
- Weight increases 5-7 pounds per year; girls weigh approximately 38-47 pounds; boys weigh approximately 42-49 pounds.
- Weight gains reflect significant increases in muscle mass.
- Heart rate (80 beats per minute) and respiratory rates (18-28 breaths per minute) are similar to those of adults; both rates vary with activity.
- Body takes on lanky appearance as long bones of the arms and legs begin a phase of rapid growth.
- Loses baby (deciduous) teeth; permanent (secondary) teeth erupt, beginning with the two upper front teeth; girls tend to lose teeth at an earlier age than do boys.
- Visual acuity should be approximately 20/20; children testing 20/40 or less should have a thorough professional evaluation.
- Farsightedness is not uncommon and may be outgrown as children mature.
- Develops more adult-like facial features and overall physical appearance.



Motor Development

- Has increased muscle strength; typically boys are stronger than girls of similar size.
- Gains greater control over large and fine motor skills; movements are becoming more precise and deliberate, although some clumsiness persists.
- Enjoys vigorous physical activity (*running, jumping, climbing, and throwing*).
- Moves constantly, even when trying to sit still.
- Has increased dexterity and eye-hand coordination along with improved motor functioning, which facilitates learning to ride a bicycle (without training wheels), swim, swing a bat, or kick a ball.
- Enjoys art projects (likes to paint, model with clay, "make things", draw and color, put things together, and work with wood).
- Writes numbers and letters with varying degrees of precision and interest; may reverse or confuse certain letters (*b/d, p/g, g/p, t/f*).
- Traces around hand and other objects.
- Folds and cuts paper into simple shapes.
- Ties own shoes (still a struggle for some children).



Speech and Language Development

- Talks nonstop (this behavior may not be encouraged in all cultures); sometimes described as a chatterbox.
- Acquires language pattern reflective of his or her cultural background.
- Carries on adult-like conversations; asks many questions.
- Learns as many as five to ten new words each day; vocabulary consists of approximately 10,000 to 14,000 words.
- Uses appropriate verb tenses, word order, and sentence structure.
- Uses language rather than tantrums or physical aggression to express displeasure: "That's mine! Give it back or I'm telling."
- Talks self through steps required in simple problem-solving situations (although the logic may be irregular and unclear to adults).
- Imitates slang and profanity; finds "bathroom" talk extremely funny.
- Delights in telling jokes and riddles; often, the humor is far from subtle.
- Enjoys being read to and making up stories.
- Is capable of learning more than one language; does so spontaneously in a bilingual or multilingual family.



Perceptual-Cognitive Development

- Shows increased attention span; forks at tasks for longer periods of time, although concentrated effort is not always consistent.
- Understands concepts such as simple time markers (*today, tomorrow, yesterday*) or uncomplicated concepts of motion (*cars go faster than bicycles*).
- Identifies seasons and major holidays and the activities associated with each.
- Enjoys the challenge of puzzles, counting and sorting activities, paper-and-pencil mazes, and games that involve counting or matching letters and words with pictures.
- Recognizes some words by sight; attempts to sound out words (some children may be reading well by this time).
- Identifies familiar coins (*pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters*).
- Names and correctly holds up right and left hands fairly consistently.
- Clings to certain beliefs involving magic or fantasy (the Tooth Fairy swapping a coin for a tooth; the Easter Bunny bringing eggs).
- Has limited understanding of death and dying (believes it can be reversed or that he or she caused it to happen; often expresses fear that parents might die, especially mother).

References:

Marotz, L. & Allen K. (2013) *Developmental profiles: Pre-birth through adolescence* (Instructor's Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.