

JOHN CROCKETT, M.D.  
FAMILY PRACTICE AND OB/GYN

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## 6 to 12 years

Your child's wellbeing always remains top priority in our office. We are here to support and answer your questions as your child grows. Please call us anytime with your concerns, or use our patient portal to contact us online. This is a guideline for developmental milestones for your child. Remember, children develop at different rates, and this is only a guideline.

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- School-age children usually have smooth and strong motor skills. However, their coordination (especially eye-hand), endurance, balance, and physical abilities vary.
- Fine motor skills may also vary widely. These skills can affect a child's ability to write neatly, dress appropriately, and perform certain chores, such as making beds or doing dishes.
- There will be big differences in height, weight, and build among children of this age range.
- There can also be a big difference in the age at which children develop secondary sexual characteristics. For girls, secondary sex characteristics include breast development as well as underarm and pubic hair growth. For boys, they include growth of underarm, chest, and pubic hair and growth of testicles and penis.

### LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Early school-age children should be able to use simple, complete sentences that average five to seven words. As the child goes through the elementary school years, grammar and pronunciation become normal and sentences will become more complex.
- Language delays may be due to hearing or intelligence problems. Children who are unable to express themselves may be more likely to have aggressive behavior or temper tantrums.
- A 6-year-old child normally can follow a series of three commands in a row. By age 10, most children can follow five commands. Children who have a problem in this area may try to cover it up and will rarely ask for help because they are afraid of being teased.

### BEHAVIOR

- Frequent physical complaints (such as sore throats, tummy aches, arm or leg pain) may simply be due to a child's increased body awareness. The complaints should be investigated to rule out possible health conditions, and to assure the child that the parent is concerned about his or her well-being.
- Peer acceptance becomes more important and children may take part in certain behaviors to be part of "the group." Talking about these behaviors with your child will allow the child to feel accepted, without crossing the boundaries of the family's behavior standards.
- Friendships tend to be mainly with members of the same sex. Younger school-age children often talk about members of the opposite sex as being "strange" or "awful" and will become less negative about the opposite sex as they get older.
- Lying, cheating, and stealing are all examples of behaviors that school-age children may "try on" as they learn how to negotiate rules placed on them by family, friends, school, and society. Parents should deal with these behaviors privately, show forgiveness, then punish in a way that is related to the behavior.
- A 6-year-old should be able to focus on a task for at least 15 minutes. By age 9, a child should be able to focus attention for about an hour.
- It is important for the child to learn how to deal with failure or frustration without losing self-esteem.

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**SAFETY**

- School-age children are highly active. They need physical activity and peer approval, and want to try more daring and adventurous behaviors.
- Children should be taught to play sports in appropriate, safe, supervised areas, with proper equipment and rules. When a child plays, he or she should follow traffic and pedestrian rules, and use safety equipment such as knee, elbow, wrist pads/braces, and helmets. Sports equipment should not be used at night or in extreme weather conditions.
- Swimming and water safety lessons may help prevent drowning.
- Safety instruction regarding matches, lighters, barbecues, stoves, and open fires can prevent major burns.
- Wearing seat belts is the most important way to prevent major injury or death from a motor vehicle accident.

**PARENTING TIPS**

- If your child's physical development appears to be outside the norm, talk to your health care provider.
- If language skills appear to be lagging, request a speech and language evaluation.
- Keep close communication with teachers, other school employees, and parents of your child's friends so you are aware of possible problems.
- Encourage children to express themselves openly and talk about concerns without fear of punishment.
- While encouraging children to participate in a variety of social and physical experiences, be careful not to over-schedule free time. Free play or simple, quiet time is important so the child does not always feel pushed to perform.
- Children today are exposed, through the media and their peers, to many issues dealing with violence, sexuality, and substance abuse. Discuss these issues openly with your children to share concerns or correct misconceptions. You may need to set limits to ensure children will be exposed to certain issues only when they are ready.
- Encourage children to participate in constructive activities such as sports, clubs, arts, music, and scouts. Staying inactive at this age increases the risk of lifetime obesity. However, it is important not to over-schedule your child. Try to find a balance between family time, school work, free play, and structured activities.
- School-age children should participate in family chores such as setting the table and cleaning up.
- Limit screen time (television and other media) to 2 hours a day.

Please see the following link for recommended vaccines for your child:

<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4050.pdf>