



PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of second-grade students

Physical Development in Middle Childhood

Second graders usually will grow 2 to 3 inches in a year. Their bodies, hands and feet begin to lengthen. Even vision may change as their eyes develop.

Girls are usually ahead of the boys in physical development. Losing teeth and getting the 6-year molars are always exciting events for this age, even when they've lost several teeth before. Most children view losing teeth as a sign of growing up.

Your child's coordination is improving. Hand-eye coordination is getting better too. This is evident in skills such as skating, jumping rope, playing ball and riding a bike.

Fine motor development also is making progress. You will notice this in your child's handwriting, drawing and art projects.

Active play such as running, jumping, play wrestling and chasing are still very important to your child's development. Most adults tend to view these activities as simply playing. But developing muscles, learning new skills, gaining a sense of accomplishment, cooperating with friends and solving problems are all natural outcomes of play.

Although children need and enjoy active play, they need quiet time as well. Your child's reading ability should be developing to a point where they can use quiet time to practice this new and important skill.

As your child grows physically, people increase their expectations. At times, this will be a welcome experience, but at other times, it may be too much pressure. Occasionally, children who are overtired or under stress may have stomachaches, suck their thumb or wet their pants. Don't make a big deal about it. Try to determine the source of stress and help your child manage it.



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Stress Less Activity

Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Invite your children to take a music break when life gets stressful. Play many types of music in your home. One day the child may need some dance party tunes to get them motivated or moving faster. Another day they will want soft music to relax their mind and body.

Emotional Development

Each year, your child is making progress toward becoming an independent person. Eight year olds will be able to understand many concepts in a way they couldn't before.

More complex thinking patterns, and a new sense of emotional development, comes with these complex thoughts. Some examples might include:

- The concept of saving money rather than spending it immediately.
- The idea of taking care of daily routine such as dress, make bed, brush teeth, and make simple breakfast.
- The concept that others want the biggest cookie and the first place prize, too.

Activities your child participates in are important, but how well he or she does compared with others and how others are affected by his or her actions also are important.

Children this age question and evaluate themselves. Children may hear the words *smart, dumb, ugly, good*. They can accept that they are wrong or have made a mistake but have a harder time accepting being judged as bad or dumb because of the mistake.

Separating these two concepts for your child is important. If Jett has broken a dish, avoid lines such as, "Don't you know better?" or "How could you be so clumsy?" Instead say, "Accidents happen. What could you do next time so this won't happen again?"

Separate the love for your child from the misbehavior. When your daughter pushes her brother, try saying, "I can see you are angry, but the rule is no hurting others. What will you do next time to get a turn without pushing?" This method will help your child begin to identify and understand the powerful emotions they are experiencing. At the same time, they will develop problem-solving skills.

Children this age may try to protect their ego by crying, running away, lying or blaming others for their mistaken behaviors. In their mind, this was necessary to avoid the hurt. Avoid labeling them and using lines such as, "Shame on you." Instead, point

out what is happening and offer suggestions on how to handle those big feelings. This is an important teachable moment for parents. Your child needs to learn how to handle all those emotions. Remember to set a good example.

You also may notice empathy from your child.

Your child may display great pleasure when someone else is happy or wince when someone's finger gets pinched in a door.

Middle childhood (6-12 years) is a time when children enjoy being a part of the family and express it by making gifts for those they care about. Encourage these activities, display this work and acknowledge the child's efforts with gratitude.

The strong sense of belonging that comes from your family is a strong need at school as well. At this age, the need to belong to groups outside of the family can be met by exploring clubs such as 4-H and Scouts, teams or group activities.

These early and positive group experiences can boost your child's self-esteem, provide special time for interaction and help teach your child to develop secure and fun relationships outside the family.



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