

Fact Sheet #4: Skills to Expect from 6 to 8 years:

Mental Skills

Children:

- Become able to understand the viewpoint of others: are aware that others can have different thoughts
- Can focus on several aspects of a problem at a time
- Can concentrate on what they do for longer periods of time
- Increased problem-solving ability, but not yet like an adult
- Can think of simple plans before acting. For example, when inviting friends over to play, children can plan in advance what games they will play
- Can begin to understand time and the days of the week; by age 8 can place events in time sequence
- Improved short- and long-term memory
- Can speak and also write; by age 8 have a vocabulary of 20,000 words and learn an average of 20 new words a day; can also understand that a word may have different meanings
- Can communicate better and longer with others, express themselves, and understand things.
- Can better understand and internalize moral rules of behavior (right/wrong; good/bad; wonderful/terrible)
- Begin to understand that what is fair is related to merit: who works harder deserves special treat
- Are better able to empathize with other people and accept the idea of giving special consideration to those in greater need

Social Skills

Children:

- Are able to view themselves based on: how they perform in school; capacity to make friends; and their physical appearance
- Understand they can feel two emotions at the same time (I like Jenny but I hate how she talks to me)
- Are intensely interested in peers, prefer same sex friends; develop friendships marked by give and take, mutual trust, and shared experiences
- Feel that belonging and acceptance by peers is very important. (Children may look more for peers than to adults for gratification)
- Play is no longer just fantasy play where imagination is the key element; more often children choose rules-based games where the rules are the key element and winning the game is more frequently the objective
- Have great concern with justice and fairness; what is fair or equal is important and some children may try to get even and become verbally or physically aggressive
- Continue to develop social skills like empathy and compassion
- Become more able to do things by themselves and as a result, their relationship with parents changes





Tips for Parents



- Help your children to develop a sense of competence: give them opportunities to master some skills like cooking, building models, making crafts, playing an instrument

- Learn to gradually share the control of your child's life with your daughter or son

- Reinforce the understanding of right and wrong and consequences

Teach problem solving to your child. Use the IDEAL model to:

Identify the problem and the feelings involved (Your child is being bullied and is afraid of going to school)

Determine with the child possible solutions without use of violence

Evaluate with the child the merits of each possible solution

Act, choosing the best solution

Learn from what you and your child did to solve the problem

- Use real-life situations (in your family or make-up a situation) and when you are on the bus, in the car, or in the kitchen, play the IDEAL game with your child. A mock scenario

could be: A child can't watch TV because hasn't done homework and she/he is mad and breaks the remote control.

- Reinforce prosocial skills such as sharing, empathy, cooperation by asking a child to do things like help care for a baby, collect food for a shelter.

- Provide opportunities for your child to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games that rely on chance rather than on skills such as cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe

- Teach by speaking out loud to yourself (so your child will hear) about a problem and how to resolve it. An example: We are out of milk, bread, and fruits. I'm not feeling well. I will call daddy and ask him to stop by the grocery store on his way home to get them

- Demonstrate that behaviors and actions have consequences for everybody involved in a situation: If you do that, this will happen or when you do this, then you will get this

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