



Quick Links

Milestones for 6-Year-Olds

Topic Overview

Children usually progress in a natural, predictable sequence from one developmental milestone to the next. But each child grows and gains skills at his or her own pace. Some children may be advanced in one area, such as language, but behind in another, such as sensory and motor development.

Feedback

Milestones usually are grouped into five major areas: physical growth, cognitive development, emotional and social development, language development, and sensory and motor development.

Physical growth and development

Most children by age 6:

- Have grown about 2.5 in. (6 cm) since their last birthday.
- Have gained about 7 lb (3 kg) since their last birthday.
- Are developing their first [molars \(/health-library/d08237933#d08237933-sec\)](/health-library/d08237933#d08237933-sec).
- Are starting to lose [baby teeth \(/health-library/hw143891#hw143891-sec\)](/health-library/hw143891#hw143891-sec).

Thinking and reasoning (cognitive development)

Most children by age 6:

- Can tell you their age.
- Can count to and understand the concept of "10." For example, they can count 10 pieces of candy.
- Are learning to express themselves well through words.
- Begin to understand cause-and-effect relationships. "Magical thinking" typical of preschoolers quickly fades around this age.
- Are learning to write.
- Start to grasp the concept of time.

Emotional and social development

Most children by age 6:

- Continue to have fears typical of the preschool years, such as fear of monsters, kidnappers, and large animals.

- Want their parents to play with them. Parents are their main source of companionship and affection. A gradual shift begins, though, to fulfilling more of these needs with friends and other people they admire, such as teachers.
- Play in ways that include a lot of fantasy and imagination.
- Often like to be the "big kid" and feel as if they are taking care of a younger child.
- Usually like to play with friends of the same gender. Boys most often play with other boys, girls most often play with other girls.
- Start to understand the feelings of others, with the encouragement of parents and other caregivers. But they are still most focused on themselves.
- Are developing a sense of humor. They may like simple jokes and funny books and rhymes.

Language development

Most children by age 6:

- Are able to describe a favorite television show, movie, story, or other activity.
- Speak with correct grammar most of the time.
- Can spell their first name and can write some letters and numbers.
- Read some simple words.

Feedback

Sensory and motor development

Most children by age 6:

- Can control their major muscles. They usually have good balance and enjoy running, jumping, skipping, and other forms of physical play.
- Can catch a ball.
- Skip with ease.
- Draw a person with at least 8 parts. They can also copy different shapes and like to make designs.
- Can write their names.
- Dress themselves, although they may still need some help with difficult buttons or laces.

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