



Sixth-graders may either be the oldest children in the elementary school or the youngest in a middle or junior-high school. No matter which position they find themselves in, this is a year of major transitions that require significant support from parents.

LANGUAGE

Your child will begin to:

Choose specific types of books to read. For example, your child may read only science-fiction stories for the entire year.

- Engage in more descriptive writing where the words chosen will be more complex.
- Complete long-term types of independent projects whereby the teacher may give the children a due date and much of the work is completed on their own.
- Work on reports that include both written and oral information containing graphics and other visuals.
- Be introduced to debate so he or she can examine several aspects of an issue.

MATH

A sixth-grader will:

- Be introduced to geometry and algebra.
- Use a wide range of math functions to decide how to solve a problem.
- Apply the math to real-life situations. For example, children may use an algebraic formula to determine how many gallons of paint are needed to paint a room.
- Work on an in-depth science project that includes making a hypothesis. This type of work will require your child to learn to meet frustration head-on, when the project does not work the way the child thought it would and he or she is forced to start over.

SOCIAL

You'll notice your child will:

- Change and grow dramatically this year. The school curriculum may include sex education and substance-abuse information to help children deal with these changes.
- Want to fit in with other children but may show signs of not feeling confident in how to relate to peers.
- Use jargon and inappropriate language they learn from others.

PHYSICAL

Your child will:

- Be developing and changing so fast he or she may seem unsure about how they fit into his or her own body.
- Have dramatic growth spurts that may result in an awkward stage, complete with big feet that seem to always trip them up.
- Require more food and sleep.

CHALLENGES

- With all of the social and biological changes in their bodies, some sixth-graders begin to show signs of stress, such as sudden outbursts or moodiness. Frequent talks with a caring adult are one way to help with stress.
- Your early-adolescent child will need more privacy. Have a talk with other children in the house about this

concern.

- Your sixth-grader will become very clothes-conscious; begging for the right shoes or jeans, for example. It's a normal part of children's social group to dress in certain ways, but it is always OK to insist that your child uses some of his or her own money to help buy these "must-haves."
- Don't worry if ...
Your child no longer likes to be "seen" with you when he or she is with friends. It may seem like children at this age have dual personalities: At home, they are still your sweet children, but with friends they are too cool to hang out with parents.

HOW TO HELP

- Get a good dictionary and thesaurus to help with assignments.
- If you don't have a computer at home, check with the local library for availability.
- Have regular talks with your child about how he or she feels about the changes in his or her body. Encourage your child to speak honestly and offer reassurance when he or she expresses self-doubts.
- Keep lots of high-energy, low-fat snacks available.
- Allow your child to help with family projects. For example, if you are planning a remodeling job, allow your child to do the math computations.



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