

# AGES & STAGES

6–8 years



*Young school-agers are ready for a steady pace of growing and learning, one in which real life tasks and activities overtake pretend and fantasy. Friendships are an important testing ground for learning new social skills. Equipped with a longer attention span, your child also is ready to delve into projects, solve problems, and resolve arguments!*

## 6–8 YEARS

### Growing and Moving

- has good sense of balance
- can catch both large and small balls
- enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
- skilled at using a pencil, scissors and small tools
- can print name and begins to write basic sentences
- enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
- can tie shoelaces and simple knots
- may have gawky awkward appearance from long arms and legs
- shows development of permanent teeth

### Thinking and Learning

- likes to learn by doing; loves to experiment
- enjoys planning and building
- increases problem-solving abilities
- often interested in magic and tricks
- has longer attention span
- enjoys creating elaborate collections
- shows ability to learn difference between left and right
- can begin to understand time and the days of the week

### Listening, Talking, and Reading

- develops a stronger interest in reading
- likes writing for a purpose – makes lists and writes down ideas
- usually enjoys writing letters and thank you notes
- uses and understands more complex words
- doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
- may reverse printed letters (b/d)
- likes to create plays and puppet shows



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# TOYS



## Toys and Hobbies

- arts and crafts materials
- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- camping equipment
- construction sets
- electric trains
- bicycles (use helmets)
- models
- board games

## Feeling and Relating

- being with friends becomes increasingly important
- seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
- wants to play more with similar friends—girls with girls, boys with boys
- may have a “best” friend and “enemy”
- shows strong desire to perform well, do things right
- finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
- shows interest in rules and rituals
- views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- begins to see things from another child’s point of view, but still focused on self
- generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
- may become upset when “good” behavior or schoolwork is ignored

## LET’S TALK!

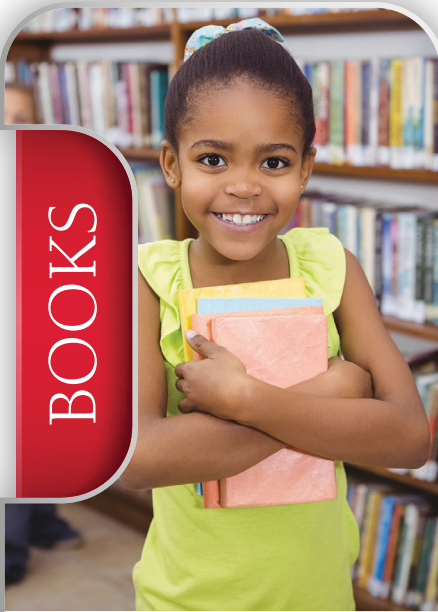
### *Ideas to help children build communication skills*

**Challenge children.** School-age children like to master new skills. Make a game out of everyday tasks and encourage them to think out loud as they problem solve. Challenge them to see how quickly something can be done. Or encourage them to try stacking or sorting items in a new way. Inspire children to find creative ways to do something and talk about their ideas.





## BOOKS



### Books for Children

*Amelia Bedelia*  
Peggy Parish,

*Anna Banana and Me*  
Lenore Blegvard

*Children Just Like Me: A new celebration of children around the world*  
DK Books

*Everybody Needs a Rock*  
Byrd Baylor

*Little House in the Big Woods*  
Laura Ingalls Wilder

*One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*  
Dr. Seuss

*Ramona the Pest*  
Beverly Cleary

*The BFG*  
Roald Dahl

*The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*  
Chris Van Allsburg

*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*  
Jon Scieszka

*Where the Sidewalk Ends*  
Shel Silverstein

## IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Provide opportunities for active play such as running, jumping rope, tumbling, and dance. Throwing at targets and building obstacle courses may also be of interest.
- Encourage creative activities to develop finger skills: basic weaving, making real pottery, wood building, jewelry making.
- Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, or tic-tac-toe.
- Involve children in planning daily events, encourage them to make lists and give ideas.
- Encourage a sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to weave, build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.
- Encourage collections with special storage boxes or non-fiction books about rocks, coins, insects or flowers.
- Encourage reading and writing by encouraging children to write short stories, create puppet shows, jot down notes.
- Show children how to work together to solve a jigsaw puzzle, plant a garden, or make a snack.
- Help your children explore their world by taking field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods.



### A Word on Development

Every child is unique. Each child's learning and growth rates may differ slightly from other children the same age. If, however, you notice a child is unable to do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you may wish to talk with a health professional. In Iowa, you may request a free evaluation and assessment from **Early ACCESS** at 1-888-425-4371. [www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa](http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa)

If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

### Resources

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

- Human Sciences [www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)
- Extension Store [store.extension.iastate.edu](http://store.extension.iastate.edu)

Search "Ages and Stages" for information about specific development milestones.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been combined from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

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Ages & Stages 6-8 Years is available online at: [store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5027](http://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5027).

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