

Having good mental health sets the stage for future growth. How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts and moves offers important clues about your child's development.

Paying attention to changes and acting early can make a real difference for your child.



Typical developmental milestones for children ages 6 to 12 years:

- They're cooperative, energetic, resilient and active in extracurricular activities
- They enjoy spending time with family while also becoming more independent, understand and express feelings, make friends and are proud of accomplishments
- They follow rules and routines, solve basic problems, seek praise and take small risks such as speaking in front of a group at school

It's a good idea to let your pediatrician know if you notice the following:

- They're clingy, withdrawn, restless, nervous, overly distrusting of others, irritable, defensive, rebellious, unable to be soothed or seem out of control, often complain of physical symptoms such as headaches, nervous stomach or wetting the bed
- They act out in class or refuse to go to school, lack interest in activities, are unable to follow directions or don't have friends
- They have negative self-talk, are unaware of how their actions affect others, are worried about failing or making mistakes

The most common issue affecting school-aged children is **anxiety**. An estimated **30-40%** of youth in the U.S. will struggle with an anxiety disorder at some point during their childhood. Other common concerns include: learning disabilities, such as reading disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders like attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism.



Great ways to connect with your child between 6 to 12 years:

- **Model** positive behaviors such as understanding, respect, patience and sharing
- **Praise** your child and encourage them to be proud of themselves to help them make good choices as they age
- **Take** technology breaks to check in with your child and talk about their friends, how they're feeling and any challenges they're facing
- At the appropriate time, **talk** about the typical physical and emotional changes during puberty
- **Be involved** with and supportive of their school, extracurricular activities, friendships and hobbies
- **Encourage** reading, physical activity and talk about what they're doing and learning
- **Provide** a healthy diet high in protein, fruits and vegetables and limit fat, processed food and sugar
- **Help** your child develop a clear sense of right and wrong, responsibility and goal setting
- **Set** clear boundaries for your child and use discipline to re-direct and guide versus punishing
- **Limit** screen time and media exposure to violence, sexuality and substance use

Getting help early is better. Never worry alone. Consult your pediatrician.

