
BACK TO BASICS

What it's like to be a schoolager

Many preschool programs offer extended day care for school-age children. Teachers will find it useful to review the developmental skills of older children, especially when the adults spend much of their time with preschoolers.

5- to 7-year-olds

- Focus on honesty and fairness. They are quick to share perceived injustices and often rely on retribution when they feel their concerns aren't respected or acted upon.
 - Want adult acknowledgement when they've been successful at a task. Their feelings are hurt when criticized by adults or other children.
 - Aren't too old for hugs, stuffed animals, or read-aloud books.
 - Can be cranky, tearful, or argumentative when tired or hungry.
 - Are eager to please and try to be helpful and honest with peers and adults.
- Talk about what their parents do at work and with their adult friends sometimes with potentially embarrassing stories about traffic tickets, intoxication, and conflict. They rely on your professional ethics to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
 - Notice, and want to discuss, differences in people and their families.
 - Appreciate fairy tales and adventure stories—especially those with young heroes—and build play on extensions of those stories.
 - Increasingly understand concepts of time and permanence. Young schoolagers begin to grasp the irreversibility of death and the long-term impact of familial divorce or illness.
 - Like frequent opportunities for physical activities like skating, running, biking, and climbing. They are building balance and coordination skills and need time to build stamina and strength.
 - Start to lose baby teeth and feel proud and awkward when permanent teeth grow in.



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- Have best friends, usually of the same sex, with whom they spend time, share secrets, and build extended play scripts.
 - Are self-conscious about their bodies and dislike having others see them naked—when changing clothes or using the toilet, for example. Develop a plan that provides supervision while allowing children the privacy they need.
 - Are curious about how their bodies work and frequently joke about *snot*, *poop*, and *farts*. Appreciate the humor while helping children learn how all human bodies function.
 - Love riddles, silly rhymes, jokes, and new, multi-syllable words. Expect unusual endings to jump rope songs and handclap games.
 - Continue to build literacy skills and need help matching books to their reading level and their interests.
 - Agree to do chores—reluctantly.
 - Are not too old to be frightened when adults fight, disagree, and can't solve problems peacefully. ■

8- to 10-year-olds

- Continue to be self-conscious about their bodies. They notice that girls are starting to outgrow boys and are concerned with—and afraid of being teased about—being too tall, too short, developing breasts, or wearing glasses.
- Have special interests and hobbies such as playing competitive board games like chess, building collections, caring for pets, playing video games, and listening to and playing music.
- Have strong opinions about school, activities, food, and people, including teachers.
- May pretend to be older and want to experiment with temporary tattoos, hair color, make-up, teen clothing styles, and dance moves.
- Have strong loyalties and defend their friends, families, schools, and neighborhoods to anyone who talks against them.
- Try to keep a brave face but are often upset by TV, movies, and video violence—both in fantasy and reality.
- Are eager to master new technology and often prefer phones and computers to face-to-face interactions with other people.
- Begin to recognize the value in universal honesty. They try not to tell lies but sometimes offer excuses for their behaviors in order to justify their point of view.
- Believe people should be treated fairly and are upset when they are not.