

# Seven to Eight Years

## Developmental Tasks

Acquiring a sense of accomplishment centered on achieving greater physical strength and self-control

Increasing own ability to learn and apply skills, deal with peers, and engage in competition

Developing and testing personal values and beliefs that will guide present and future behaviors



## What's Happening in the Brain?

During this stage, the child's brain:

- ❖ Grows enormously in the frontal and temporal lobes, which leads to improved cognitive functions (e.g., memorization, math, thinking about the concrete world instead of make-believe) and better control of emotions
- ❖ Increases its capacity for moral reasoning—children can generally distinguish between right and wrong and have some understanding of consequences

## Domains

### Physical

Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Drives self until exhausted	Assist child in changing activities to avoid complete exhaustion; be aware of the child's physical limits and teach the child to be aware of them as well.
May frequently pout	Be patient, as the child is not necessarily unhappy or dissatisfied but is only going through a stage.
Shows well-established hand/eye coordination and is likely to be more interested in painting and drawing	Provide opportunities and materials for drawing and painting.
May have minor accidents	Ensure a safe environment; provide reassurance while bandaging cuts and scrapes.

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	Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Physical	Is less interested in sex play and experimentation; may be very excited about new baby in family	Encourage child-infant relationship (if applicable).
	Has fewer illnesses, but may have colds of long duration; appetite decreases	Provide rest and treatment as needed.
	May develop nervous habits or assume awkward positions (sitting upside down on couch, constant foot tapping, etc.)	Be patient with annoying habits, and don't draw attention to any awkwardness.
Emotional	May complain a lot ("Nobody likes me," "I'm going to run away," etc.)	Provide reasonable sympathy.
	May not respond promptly or hear directions; may forget and/or be easily distracted	Remind and check as necessary.
	May withdraw or not interact with others (in an attempt to build sense of self)	Provide personal support and reassurance.
Social	Will avoid and withdraw from adults; has strong emotional responses to teacher and may complain that teacher is unfair or mean	Show understanding and concern.
	Enjoys/wants more responsibility and independence; is often concerned about "doing well"	Assign responsibilities and tasks that can be carried out successfully, and then praise child's efforts and accomplishments; help the child accept his/her own performance without negative judgment.
	Participates in loosely organized group play	Encourage and provide opportunities for group activities.

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	Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Social	Is concerned with self (may fear being late and/or having trouble on the playground) and may complain about the reactions of others (“The other kids are cheating!” or “Teacher picks on me!”)	Help child evaluate his/her perceptions of the behaviors of others.
	May use aggression as a means of solving problems	Attempt to prevent conflicts before they erupt.
	Girls play with girls/boys play with boys	Accept such behavior as typical of this stage.
Mental	Uses reflective, serious thinking and becomes able to solve increasingly complex problems, using logical thought processes; is eager for learning	Ask many thought-provoking questions; stimulate thinking with open-ended stories, riddles, and thinking games; provide opportunities for discussions about decision making and selecting what he/she would do in particular situations.
	Enjoys hobbies and skills-based activities; likes to collect things and talk about personal projects, writings, and drawings	Encourage the pursuit of hobbies and interests.
	Favors reality over fantasy	Provide biographies to read, and suggest other books with realistic characters, plots, and settings.
	Likes to be challenged, to work hard, and to take time completing a task	Provide challenges appropriate for age and ability level; allow plenty of time to accomplish tasks.

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	Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Mental	<p>Understands basic mathematical concepts such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computing the number of objects in a group</li> <li>• Knowing that a particular number of objects has a fixed value despite the size or nature of those objects</li> <li>• Grasping relative size and being able to sort objects by size and shape</li> <li>• Following a sequence of two- and three-step commands</li> <li>• Performing simple addition and subtraction computations</li> </ul>	<p>Pay attention to the child's progress with math concepts and create opportunities to reinforce these concepts, e.g., have the child count the number of boxes of cereal on the shelf, remove one, then ask the child to compute the remainder. Seek help from his or her school if the child is having a hard time with simple computations or with following word problems.</p>
Moral	<p>May experience guilt and shame</p>	<p>Acknowledge and support the child's standards, discuss the reasonableness of personal expectations, and encourage self-forgiveness; if/when negative behaviors occur, work on changing the behavior but focus on the worth of the child rather than the behavior itself.</p>

## Indicators Related to Developmental Lag or Potential Trauma

Excessive concerns about competition and performance (especially in school)

Extreme difficulty concentrating in school

Physical symptoms (headaches, nervous stomach, ulcers, nervous tics, bedwetting, etc.)

Procrastination (unconcern with completion of tasks)

Overdependence on caregivers for age-appropriate tasks (combing hair, going to the store, tying shoes, finding a restroom in a restaurant, etc.)

Social isolation and lack of friends and involvements; few interests

Inappropriate relationships with "older" people (teenagers)

Stealing, pathological lying, fire-setting, or other reckless or dangerous behavior