MSK Kids

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Your Child's Development From 6 to 12 Years

This information lists the skills your child will likely learn between ages 6 and 18.

Movement and Physical Development

Between the ages of 6 and 18, your child may learn to:

- Enjoy many different activities.
- Practice skills in order to get better.
- Have good coordination.
- Jump rope.
- Ride a bike.
- Skip.
- Chase.

Social-Emotional and Self-Help Skills

Between the ages of 6 and 18, your child may:

- Get dressed without help.

- Brush their teeth, wash their hands, and use the bathroom without help.
- Begin bathing or showering without help.
- Pay more attention to friendships and teamwork.
- Want to please friends.
- Experience peer pressure.
- Become aware of their own body image.

Learning, Thinking, and Problem Solving

- Between the ages of 6 and 9, your child may:
  - Tell time.
  - Understand directions that have multiple steps.
  - Know the day, month, and year.
- Between the ages of 9 and 12, your child may:
  - Enjoy collecting things.
  - Write stories.
  - Use the telephone, computer, and other electronic devices.

Speech, Language, and Communication

Between the ages of 6 and 18, your child may:

- Use complete sentences.
- Use language to draw conclusions.
- Start conversations with adults and children they do not know.

What You Can Do to Help Your Child’s Development

Your child may not have a lot of energy during their treatment. But it’s still important to help them move, communicate, and play as part of their daily routine.

Here are some things you can do to help them:

- Let your child be as independent as possible with self-care and school work.
- Give your child choices and encourage them to complete a task.
- Give them structure and a regular schedule.

When to Call Your Child’s Healthcare Provider

Call your child’s healthcare provider if your child:

- Shows only a limited range of emotions.
- Shows extreme behaviors (such as if they’re unusually fearful, aggressive, shy, or sad).

- Is unusually withdrawn and not active.
- Is easily distracted and has trouble focusing on 1 thing for more than 5 minutes.
- Does not respond to people.
- Cannot tell what is real and what is pretend.
- Does not play different games and activities.
- Cannot give their first and last name.
- Does not use plurals or past tense the right way.
- Does not talk about daily activities or experiences.
- Does not draw pictures.
- Cannot brush their teeth, wash and dry their hands, or get undressed without help.
- Loses skills they once had.
- Does not like changes in their environment, such as changes to the noise level or lighting in the room.
- Does not feel comfortable trying to balance on different types of surfaces.

Contact Information

If you have questions about your child’s development, talk with their healthcare provider. You can also ask for a referral to MSK’s physical, occupational, or speech therapy.

You can reach MSK’s Physical and Occupational Therapy department Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 212-639-7833. You can reach the Speech and Hearing Rehabilitation department Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 212-639-5856.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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