

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (AGES 6-11)

Middle childhood is a time of firsts! Likely you will see your child progress at an amazing rate and relish in all of these new life changes. Let's cover some of the basics and also learn a few activities to help us engage in healthy ways with increasingly independent child.



## Self-Development

Children in this age range are beginning to solidify their sense of self-worth and identity. You have probably heard a child describe themselves in terms of what they are good at or what they can achieve ("I am smart and strong"). With this increase in awareness, your child will be more sensitive to feedback from others. You may see a sense of self-doubt begin after hearing negative feedback. It is important to continue to empower your child. Use phrases like "I can see you are working really hard on that" or "you are showing a strong effort".



## Social Development

You may notice your child begin to qualify their friendships. "I have two best friends and 4 friends". This occurs as children develop a stronger sense of their values or beliefs. They will likely begin to gravitate toward others that they believe have similar interests. You will notice an increased ability to see the world from another perspective and an increase in prosocial behavior.



## Emotional Development

Remember those BIG emotions from early childhood? Your child in this stage is developing more emotional regulation. You may still notice your child feeling overwhelmed or becoming angry when you least expect it. Remember that anger is often an emotion used to cover up another emotion. Encourage your child to "show you how they are feeling". This can be done by drawing or using an emotions chart. Often your "angry" child is really feeling sad, hurt, or lonely.



## Cognitive Development

Your child's language abilities are skyrocketing! By the end of middle childhood, your child will likely have a range of up to 40,000 vocabulary words! Your child is likely also doing a lot of problem solving. Sometimes this will be incredible and sometimes this will be more than frustrating. Have you heard your child tell you they "can't find" an item just outside their direct line of sight? This is your child continuing to work on abstract thinking.



## Physical Development

Your child's growth is continuing at a sometimes painful rate! You will see them begin to develop more muscle and increase their athleticism. Want to play hop-scotch or ride a bike? Go for it!

## Now what?

Wondering how to encourage further development in any of these areas? The answer: GET OUTSIDE! Engage your child with jump rope and ball games. Encourage your sense of humor. Find some of those award winning "Dad Jokes".

Have more questions? Talk to your primary care doctor or your counselor!