

Typical Growth Patterns of 6-Year-Olds

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ More aware of their fingers as tools; can use their fingers to count on, trace a maze, maneuver electronic devices, balance a scale, pour exact amounts
- ◆ Noisy, sloppy, and in a hurry; fingers are sometimes clumsy and tasks need slowing down or repeated practice to achieve desired results
- ◆ May fall backward out of their chairs at this age rather than sideways as at five
- ◆ Children at this age are teething, so they often chew on pencils, fingernails, hair, books, and other objects
- ◆ Work in spurts and will tire easily; frequent illness and absence is not uncommon
- ◆ Enjoy being active, both inside and outdoors
- ◆ Good visual tracking from left to right and back to the beginning of the next line is normative as sixes begin to read
- ◆ Some will still have difficulty copying from board or chart; provide handouts for students to copy from at their desks
- ◆ When writing, find spacing and staying on the line difficult because they are more interested in process than product
- ◆ Often more comfortable standing up to work, even at their desks

How Growth Patterns Relate to Learning

READING

Provide opportunities for children this age to:

- ◆ Continue partner reading
 - ◆ Continue phonics learning through guided reading with the whole class and in small groups
 - ◆ Continue reading predictable books while beginning to move on to easy chapter books
 - ◆ Use writing, drawing, clay, painting, drama, or blocks to show their thoughts and feelings about a story
 - ◆ Show their understanding of differences between genres (for example, poetry versus a report; fiction versus nonfiction)
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WRITING

Expect from these children:

- ◆ **Writing** Story development still strongly influenced by drawings, for example, stories based on a collection of drawings; writing whole sentences that are early phonemic or use “letter name” spelling strategies—“I WNT TO HR HS” for “I went to her house”
- ◆ **Beginning spelling** Letter naming and “transitional” spelling (“My frends ride bickes”); emerging sense of phonetic clues