

The Emerging Self

What to Expect

Child:

- Initiates own ideas and actions ("self-starter")
- Works hard to learn new skills, feels proud and wants to show what he can do
- Masters skills for success in school (sorting, counting, language skills)
- Expresses own unique personality in relating to others, handling experiences
- Has more internal control over impulses, emotions, and behaviors
- Becomes more independent and responsible in making some choices on her own
- Shows growing awareness of good and bad (conscience)

Parents:

- Accept child's unique personality
- Encourage healthy, balanced behavior (e.g., provide social experiences for shy child; calm, structured activities for impulsive or highly active child)
- Support child's interests, ideas, and activities
- Model responsible behavior, help child take on new responsibilities
- Help child balance time for self and time for structured activities
- Are aware of child's activities inside and outside the home
- Teach reasonable risks and safe limits
- Talk with child about the risks of experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, drugs (8-10 years)

When to Seek Help

If your child:

- Is often sad, worried, or afraid
- Clings to you or wants to stay home much of the time
- Seems very worried about failing or making mistakes
- Waits to be told what to do, does not express own interests or ideas
- Avoids new tasks, experiences, and challenges
- Often seems out-of-control, acts on impulse, makes unhealthy choices
- Takes unsafe risks (with bike, traffic, play, sports)
- Shows signs of tobacco, alcohol, or drug use (8-10 years)

Or if you, as parents:

- Find it hard to encourage independence yet set safe limits
- Are overly protective and afraid to let your child try new things



- Think your child is either too aggressive or too dependent (does whatever someone wants)
- Need ideas to help your child resist pressures to smoke, drink, or use drugs (8-10 years)

Growing and Changing

What to Expect

Child:

- Learns to care for her body (bathing, grooming, dressing; healthy foods; physical activity)
- Feels good about how she looks
- Has energy and a sense of well-being
- Takes pride and pleasure in mastering new physical skills
- Develops gender identity (by 5 years)
- Is aware of changes that will take place during puberty (8-10 years)

Parents:

- Encourage safe, healthy habits (healthy foods, physical activity, seat belts)
- Talk with child about sexuality and puberty; offer age-appropriate information, answer questions honestly
- Reassure child about the positive changes of puberty
- Talk together about changing body image and how to resist pressures to look "perfect" (shape, weight, height)

continued

Growing and Changing Continued

When to Seek Help

If your child:

- Wets the bed
- Has trouble sleeping or wants to sleep much of the time
- Lacks basic self-care habits (bathing, brushing teeth, dressing)
- Returns to baby-like or silly behaviors
- Shows signs of early sexual development (before age 9)
- Seems unaware or fearful of puberty and sexuality (ages 9-10)
- Has a distorted body image (thinks she's "fat" when she's not)
- Uses food to self-soothe or escape uncomfortable feelings

Or if you, as parents:

- Worry that your child sleeps or eats too much or too little
- Notice that your child can't keep up physically with others the same age
- Are concerned that your child does not speak clearly or communicate well with others
- Need tips for how to talk with your child about sex or puberty
- Think your child is overly concerned with weight or body image

Respecting Self & Others

What to Expect

Child:

- Feels good about himself and his abilities
- Is able to get over or "bounce back" from disappointments
- Learns from mistakes or failures, tries again
- Respects the rights and feelings of others, has a sense of fairness
- Has growing ability to understand another person's viewpoint
- Solves conflicts or problems by talking, not fighting

Parents:

- Talk and listen to child with respect
- Are good role models (show understanding, kindness, patience)
- Teach child to accept and respect people's differences (ethnic, cultural, religious)
- Handle anger constructively

- Help child overcome fears and cope with stress
- Share own feelings and stories about facing fears and problems
- Respect child's growing need for privacy
- Limit exposure to media violence

When to Seek Help

If your child:

- Feels that he lacks basic skills or abilities
- Often says negative things about self or others
- Has problems dealing with angry feelings
- Is preoccupied with violent movies, TV, computer games
- Is aggressive or tries to bully others

Or if you, as parents:

- Worry about how your child views himself
- Often find yourself criticizing and blaming your child
- Notice that your child seems preoccupied with violence
- Have concerns about your child's exposure to abuse (physical, verbal, sexual)
- Lack confidence or have doubts about your own abilities

Family

What to Expect

Child:

- Feels loved, accepted and valued in the family
- Shares feelings and experiences with family members
- Gets along with brothers and sisters most of the time
- Shares or takes turns (games, toys, TV, computer)
- Enjoys being part of the family and doing fun things together
- Helps out with simple chores, follows family rules

Parents:

- Show love, affection, and respect
- Set aside time each day to talk and play with child
- Support and supervise child's activities
- Praise good behavior, efforts, and accomplishments
- Have family meals together as often as possible
- Arrange fun family activities
- Set reasonable rules and consequences
- Help child learn how to solve problems with brothers and sisters
- Teach child to value and celebrate family heritage

When to Seek Help

If your child:

- Is often silent or unwilling to share feelings with family
- Does not want to join in family activities
- Stays in her room most of the time; often seems sad or sullen
- Acts angry or disrespectful with family members
- Refuses to help with chores or follow family routines (bedtime, mealtime)

Or if you, as parents:

- Find it hard to talk with your child or spend time together
- Often feel upset or angry with your child
- Feel that your child's personality does not "fit in" with the family
- Need help resolving conflicts in your family
- Are facing major family changes or stresses (divorce, job loss, substance use)



Building Friendships

What to Expect

Child:

- Has playmates and friends, feels accepted by peers
- Gets along well with others, enjoys spending time with friends
- Shares well, takes turns
- Brings friends home to play, is invited to friends' homes
- Stands up for self when hurt by peers; copes with teasing or taunting

Parents:

- Support healthy friendships (know child's friends and their families, invite friends home)
- Supervise child's activities
- Talk with child about friends, school, interests
- Encourage child's social activities, limit TV time
- Help child find ways to solve conflicts with friends or playmates
- Teach child how to be safe near strangers (home, neighborhood, cars, playgrounds)
- Teach skills to resist peer pressures and to cope with teasing

When to Seek Help

If your child:

- Does not have playmates or friends
- Is not willing to share or take turns with others
- Seems very nervous or shy with others, chooses to be alone much of the time
- Is aggressive or bullies other children (hits, taunts, calls names)
- Feels pressured by others to do things he does not want to do
- Is easily hurt by peers

Or if you, as parents:

- Worry that your child does not get along with others or has trouble keeping friends
- Notice that your child seems withdrawn or alone much of the time
- Get calls from other parents or neighbors about your child's behavior
- Need tips to help your child build good social skills
- Worry about the types of friends and activities your child chooses
- Observe that your child seems fearful with familiar adults, or too friendly with strangers