Six, seven, and eight-year-olds build on the important developments of the first 6 years of life and seem to settle down to a steadier pace of growing and learning. Young school-age children are interested in real life tasks and activities, and pretend and fantasy lessen considerably. School-agers want to make "real" jewelry, take "real" photographs, and create "real" collections.

School-age children have longer attention spans. They are more likely to stick with things until the project is finished, the problem solved, or the argument resolved. Doing things together with friends, teamwork, and following rules become very important. This age group is fascinated by rules and can develop games with extensive rules and rituals.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- being with friends becomes increasingly important
- interested in rules and rituals
- girls want to play more with girls; boys with boys
- may have a best friend and an enemy
- strong desire to perform well, do things right
- begins to see things from another child's point of view, but still very self-centered
- finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
- views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
- generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
- may become upset when behavior or school-work is ignored

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
- skilled at using scissors and small tools
- development of permanent teeth
- enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
- good sense of balance
- can catch small balls
- can tie shoelaces
- enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
- can print name
- long arms and legs may give gawky awkward appearance
INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT
• may reverse printed letters (b/d)
• enjoys planning and building
• doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
• reading may become a major interest
• increased problem-solving ability
• interested in magic and tricks
• longer attention span
• enjoys creating elaborate collections
• able to learn difference between left and right
• can begin to understand time and the days of the week

IDEAS FOR CAREGIVERS
• Provide opportunities for active play. Throwing at targets, running, jumping, rope, tumbling, and aerobics may be of interest.
• Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe, etc.
• Provide opportunities for children to do non-competitive team activities such as working a jigsaw puzzle or planting a garden.
• Encourage children's sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.
• Encourage children's collections by allowing them to make special boxes or books in which to store their collections.
• Encourage reading and writing by allowing children to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, produce a newspaper, record events, go on field trips, or conduct experiments.
• Help children explore their world by taking field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods. Invite community helpers to your home.