

What's Special About Me at this Age?



Character Building

- I am starting to think about how I want to live and what I want to be known for.
- I am aware of fairness. I am also aware of differences between my friends and me.
- I need you to teach me about being a good person and living a good life. I am developing my core values.
- I look up to my heroes.



Communication

- I am learning to use relationship terms. I am learning about how I am connected with others.

We never used names, even for our friends, but we used relationship terms to show that we valued and respected others as friends. Children should use these terms and know how they are connected to others



Skill Building

- I remember everything. I am very impressionable. I need you to protect me from bad experiences that will create bad memories.
- My special talents are starting to show. You can see what I might be good at in the future. I need you to notice this and encourage me.
- I need clear instructions about what the expectations are. I know you have my best interest in mind, so I trust everything you tell me.

Applying Inuit Values

Love — *Inunnguiniq* is the Way to Show Love



Commentary

We love our children, so we care about their future. Our role is to prepare them to live a good life and be successful. To do this, we must care for them from birth, always putting their needs first. We must set clear expectations and teach them discipline to meet the expectations.

In the past, we were disciplined more than kids are today. Our parents slapped us when necessary, but never without a warning first and a chance to correct our behaviour. Our parents slapped us on the bum if we didn't follow the warning and they would explain the reason.

Never slap a child without warning or explanation. That causes the child not to trust you. Never yell angrily because the child will feel humiliated. Discipline children with a quiet, stern voice.

Reminders

- ✓ To prevent sickness, teach children to blow their noses gently and often.
- ✓ Teach good hygiene routines, such as hand washing, coughing into the arm, and brushing and flossing teeth. Teach six-year olds to be responsible for their own hygiene.

Inunnguiniq

Childrearing Advice from Inuit Elders

6 Years



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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

About this Age

Six-year olds are very aware of their peers. They like to socialize with other kids, not just relatives. This is a time to teach social skills, such as being a good sport and having compassion.

At this age, kids like to tease each other. Some boys at this age will experiment with being assertive. They might fight rather than back down.

Six-year olds tend to want to compete with others. They want to slide the fastest, run the farthest, and go off the jump the highest. Teach them to admire winners and not to show disappointment. This is a time to teach children to be "good sports" and celebrate the successes of others.

Six-year olds really notice differences, so this is a time to teach compassion. All children need good treatment, good food, and proper clothes. Teach your child to have compassion and help meet the needs of other children. This will prevent bullying and teasing. Teach six-year olds that we have a responsibility to care for others, even as children. Teach this now and at every age.

At this age, children can contribute to the family. When they contribute, tell their namesake about it and make a big fuss. Encourage the child all the time. Recognize their growing role as a capable human being. This will motivate the child to keep developing their skills. Their development is a blessing for the whole group.

Ungatinguaq is a term for "playing house" as a child. Encourage six-year olds to pretend. It helps them envision what they can become in later life.

What Parents Can Do

- **Prevent negative peer influence.** Be aware of your child's friends. Prevent your child from being influenced. Teach him to stand up for his values. Remind your child about expectations, beliefs, and the importance of family reputation.
- **Build your child's self-esteem.** Your child will remember positive or negative messages she gets now. This will influence her whole life. Protect your child from negative words about her and counter any that come to her. If you say negative things in anger, apologize. But, it is better to avoid saying negative things to your child in the first place.
- **Teach responsibility.** Give your child chores that he is able to do. Support him to take ownership of the task. For example, in the past children were each assigned puppies to look after. They would feed them, develop a relationship, and be told about their progress on the dog team over the years.

More advice from elders to share with your six-year old:

"I was always told if someone was mean to me, to just move away and avoid the confrontation. Go find someone else to be with. When that person notices that you always leave when they are mean, they will know that it doesn't get to you."

"We were told not to judge others because their circumstances were different from ours. We were also told to always be aware that you are part of a family, so don't participate in something your family would not do."

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

Support your six-year old by trying these parenting activities.

- Ask your child about his friends and how they are. Suggest ways he can be a better friend. Encourage your child to notice what is happening in his friends' lives. Help him find ways to care for friends who are in need.
- Encourage your child to tell stories to the family. Give her your full attention.
- Encourage your child to practice writing the names of friends and relatives. Practice with him.
- Play games that develop physical skills. Play tag, bat and ball, and soccer.
- Play memory games, such as "concentration." Show a set of objects and then cover them. Ask your child to see how many she can remember.
- Get your child to help with everyday tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, serving others, and helping grandparents.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ The most important thing to a six-year old is to spend time with you. Spend time on the land with them. Introduce them to what they need to learn in life to be successful. Notice what they are good at and enjoy doing. Encourage them.
- ✓ Teach six-year olds about weather. Get them to experience all types of weather. Teach them to dress properly for the weather.
- ✓ Have your six-year old spend lots of time with grandparents and other elders. Help them build these important relationships.