

# Growth and development of a 6-year-old child

## 6-vuotiaan lapsen kasvu ja kehitys (englanti)



A six-year-old child begins to form their own opinions about things. Friends are often very important, and skills for working in a group continue to develop.

A child's emotions can be intense, and they may test the limits set by their parents. The child is becoming more independent but still needs plenty of security and affection from their parents.

### **Eating and oral health**

Daily routines increase a child's sense of security. A regular eating schedule and a varied diet support the child's healthy growth and development. Shared family mealtimes help to support the child's eating habits. The child follows the example of other family members. Parents decide what and when the family eats. The child can decide how much to eat.

A child's first baby teeth usually start to fall out between the ages of 5 and 6. They are replaced by permanent teeth. It is important to take good care of oral health. A parent should brush the child's teeth in the morning and evening using a fluoride toothpaste suitable for the child's age. Healthy eating habits also support the wellbeing of the teeth and mouth.



## **Development of skills**

### **Physical activity**

At the age of six, a child often grows quickly in height. A variety of physical play activities support the development of the child's skills and body control.

It is important for the child to spend time outdoors and be physically active every day. Outdoor activities and exercise increase appetite and help improve sleep. A child should be active for a total of three hours each day. Physical activity means active play, for example, in the yard or at the playground. Nature walks and obstacle courses in the living room are also examples of physical activity.

With the child, you can practice activities such as skiing, ice skating, or swimming. Hand skills development is supported by crafts and building games.

### **Rest**

It is important for a child to get enough sleep and rest. When a child sleeps enough, learning new things is easier and the child is in a good mood. The need for sleep varies from child to child. Most of 5-year-olds sleep about 10–13 hours in a 24-hour period.



## Screen time

Preschool children should have no more than one hour of screen time per day. Too much screen time can cause restlessness, irritability, and difficulties to concentrate. It can also disturb the child's sleep.

Familiarize yourself with videos and games that are appropriate for the child's age. Help the child find other activities and games to do as well.



## Development of a child's thinking

A child's memory and vocabulary develop. Children learn best by playing and exploring. Play is an important part of a child's day.

A six-year-old is usually interested in letters and numbers. Often, a child can write their own name, and some children can read words. However, reading and writing skills develop at an individual pace.





## Social skills and independence

A six-year-old child often enjoys being in a group. Some children prefer to be alone, and some find it difficult to form friendships. The child needs adult guidance to join in play with other children. When playing with others, the child learns negotiation, taking turns, and considering the feelings of others.

At this age, children go through a phase of becoming more independent. Their emotions can be intense, and they may test boundaries. The child may sometimes be angry with their parents but can also show great love. This phase can be challenging for both the child and the parent. Consistent boundaries provide a sense of security. Parents can create family rules together with the child and practice expressing emotions.

It is common for children to compare their abilities to others. They need encouragement and praise. When a child receives support and encouragement from their parents, it helps them build confidence in their own skills.





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## **Niitty 2 Project 2023–2026**

Working together with immigrant  
families for a better everyday life

More information about the project:

<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty2/>

Family Info Material Portal:  
[tuni.fi/perheinfo](https://tuni.fi/perheinfo)

### **Sources and further information:**

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