

FIRST GRADE

Child Development: Ages 6–7

Physical Development

When observing these students in the classroom, they tend to:

- Be noisy and sloppy—these students are always in a hurry
- Tire easily and are ill often
- Enjoy being active
- Like confined space
- Be sensitive to real and imagined hurts

Language and Literacy Development

- First graders enjoy sharing and explaining things and using enthusiastic language.
- These students listen well and speak precisely.
- They develop their vocabularies quickly by showing great interest in the meanings of words.
- Like most young children, young first graders tend to complain frequently.

Self Concept, Identity, and Motivation:

As first graders grow and mature, they become very inward-looking and reflective. These young students can become moody, touchy, and depressed. They need humor and games to help moderate their seriousness in and outside of the classroom.

These young students need structure and to feel secure. They do not like taking risks or making mistakes. Changes to their daily environments can be very upsetting. Students at this age begin to take care in their belongings and will become neater and more organized at school and home.

First graders are quick to develop strong likes and dislikes and can be bossy and critical of others.





Peer Relations

At this age, students may:

- Care more about friends; however, they may change friendships frequently with the explanation of “nobody likes me.”
- Become very competitive and want to be first. Their competitive attitudes may result in poor sportsmanship if they do not win.
- Become sensitive to others’ feelings and develop strong likes and dislikes.
- Ready to take on individual and group responsibility, but tend to prefer to work and play along as they grow older.



Moral Development

First graders begin to seek different types of individual and group responsibilities in their classroom and school. However, as they grow older, they tend to prefer to work and play independently. They begin to develop a better understanding of spatial and functional relationships, as well as, a basic level of understanding different viewpoints.



Cognitive Development

Younger First Graders:

- Learn best through discovery activities—these students love to ask questions!
- Very ambitious and motivated to learn. They enjoy working and will produce a high number of products; however, they are unconcerned about the quality of their work.
- Love to color, paint, read, and write
- Begin to understand the past and the present

Older First Graders:

- Learn best through repetitive and review activities and hands-on explorations.
- Bothered by mistakes—they work hard to make their work “perfect.” They are comfortable with an emphasis on high-quality products.
- Enjoy memorization and classifying activities
- Not fully able to read without vocalizing—enjoy being read to
- May find tests troublesome