

# THIRD GRADE

## Child Development: Ages 8–9

### Physical Development

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

- Do things in a hurry and are full of energy. They will often become very restless.
- Experience a growth spurt.
- Push their physical limits, but often complain about aches, pains, injuries, and hurt feelings.
- Become better coordinated as they grow older.



### Language and Literacy Development

- With rapid expanding vocabularies, third graders are very talkative and love to use descriptive language.
- Third graders enjoy exaggeration, “dirty” jokes, and graffiti.
- These students listen well, but may not remember all that they’ve heard.
- Third graders master cursive writing

### Self Concept, Identity, and Motivation:

Third graders become more individualistic, but enjoy working with a partner of their choice.

These young students often feel worried or anxious and can become very moody. They become critical of themselves and of their peers.

When faced with a challenge, third graders will often give up on their tasks due to increased impatience. In classrooms, you may begin to hear phrases such as, “I can’t do it,” or “It’s boring.” These students need adult patience and clarity when giving directions and when setting expectations.



## Moral Development

At this age, third graders begin to see the “bigger world.” They begin to look hard for explanations of facts and how they relate to their daily lives. These students have an increasing interest in rules, logic, and how things work. In all that they do, third graders seek the approval from their peers and teachers.

### Peer Relations

At this age, students may:

- Form larger friendship groups
- Become very competitive amongst their peers
- Enjoy working in groups of the same gender
- Enjoy socializing



## Cognitive Development

### Younger Third Graders:

- Begin to master handwriting, handcrafts, computers, and drawing.
- Limited attention span, but tend to become engrossed in activity. These students need more short assignments rather than a few, long assignments.
- Students are industrious, impatient, and work quickly. They can handle complex tasks, but tire easily.
- Increasing interest in rules, logic, and how things work.

### Older Third Graders:

- Industrious and intellectually curious, but less imaginative.
- Able to manage more than one concept at a time.
- Have trouble understanding abstractions (i.e. large numbers, long periods of times, etc.).
- Take pride in attention to detail and finished work.
- They begin to read to learn
- Begin to master handwriting, handcrafts, computers, and drawing.



