

Physical Development in Middle Childhood

The following are general developmental milestones that often happen at the specified ages. In reality, children will reach these milestones at a variety of ages. While developmental milestone guides for early childhood are prevalent, this information is less accessible for middle childhood.

Age/Stage	Key Developments
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth slows and remains steady – typical annual growth rates: 5-6cm in height and 2-3kg in weight • Gross and fine motor skills mature. Especially coordination, reactivity, attention, and cognition • Gross motor skills improve through involvement in play and sport • Bodies grow stronger, more coordinated, and agile • Immunity strengthened from natural development and completion of preschool immunisations • Loss of first baby teeth • Drawings become more detailed • Increased bilateral coordination enables skipping, balancing on one foot etc • Walk and jump backwards • Vocabulary comprises over 2,000 words

Age/Stage	Key Developments
6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscles develop further and begin accumulating fat • Boys tend to have slightly more muscle than girls do, while girls tend to have more body fat than boys • Accurately colour in and cut out shapes • Able to run faster and longer due to increased lung capacity • First permanent molars arrive • Adrenarche begins (see page 15) • Maturing of the tube that connects the ear to the nose (the Eustachian tube) resulting in fewer ear infections • Can ride a bike without training wheels
7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brains reach their adult weight by age 7 • The number of brain cells a person has (grey matter volume), representing the parts of the brain where processing occurs, peaks at age 7. • Connections within the brain, enabling communication between different parts of the brain and the body, continue to grow throughout middle childhood • Fine motor skills develop to the point of near maturity e.g. advances in their ability to write and draw etc • Similar athletic ability irrespective of gender until around age 8 • Ability to throw and catch improves with increased hand-eye coordination