

# Social and Emotional Development: Ages 8-10



During this period, children are advancing toward adolescence, and peer friendships start to become very important in their social and emotional development. They have a growing sense of independence, and with it, a growing confidence to solve problems and perhaps take risks. They also begin to show a capacity for self-evaluation and can laugh at themselves.

**At this stage, children will exhibit many of these characteristics:**

- Learn to cooperate in group settings and group games; dislike playing alone
- Spend a lot of time talking with peers
- Develop lasting friendships and begin to handle peer pressure
- Enjoy group activities and group games that focus on a common interest
- Demonstrate growing independence, leading to concern with rules that can lead to bossiness
- Use problem-solving, negotiating and compromising skills with peers
- Develop interest in long-range projects
- Begin to develop sportsmanship and learn about winning and losing gracefully
- Develop competence in competitive games and team sports
- Become sensitive to what others think of them and to adult approval
- Begin to consider clubs and groups important
- Become critical of their own performance and begin to evaluate themselves
- Become enthusiastic to tackle anything and will work hard to develop a skill
- Develop competitiveness—want to be first and best, and get things right
- Can express subtle emotions and experience moments of anger or frustration
- May be quite sensitive and overly dramatic
- Can change emotions quickly
- Can become discouraged, which may lead to being shy in public performances
- Show interest in being more grown-up and able to begin tackling more responsibilities and routines
- Begin to develop their own point of view, which is sometimes different from parents' ideas

## **What Parents Can Do**

**These activities and suggestions can help children at this stage in their social and emotional development:**

- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as a sports team, or to take advantage of volunteer opportunities.
- Talk to your child about peer pressure, and discuss any concerns about friends and their behavior.
- Help your child set their own achievable goals, which will help them develop pride and become more independent in completing household tasks and schoolwork.

- Talk with your child about respecting others and helping others, thereby developing a sense of empathy and understanding.
- Encourage your child to think about possible consequences before acting.
- Always praise your child for good behavior, and always recognize their accomplishments.
- Talk to your child about what to do when others are disrespectful or unkind.
- Be affectionate and honest with your child, and do activities as a family.
- Support your child's interest in the world by providing opportunities for activities such as building things, visiting the zoo or planting a garden.
- Help your child develop their sense of right or wrong. Caution them about risky things friends might try to coax them to do.
- Meet the families of your child's friends.
- Talk with your child about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty.
- Notice how your child is responding to changes they or their friends are experiencing.

### Keep This in Mind

It becomes obvious at this age that children are growing more independent and have a growing interest in friends. Healthy friendships are very important to your child's social development, but peer pressure can start to become a concern. Children who feel good about themselves can fend off negative peer pressure and make better choices. As their number of friends increases, social conflicts can arise. Parents should talk to their child about their daily activities so they can be aware of any trouble the child might be having.

[Read about brain development for children ages 8-10.](#)

[Read about physical development for children ages 8-10.](#)

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## 8-10 Years

ADHD

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