

Learning in Families Together:

“School-Agers” 5 to 8 Years

The thinking processes of 5- to 8-year-olds are getting more complex. They no longer see their parents as the sole authority.

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Parenting Secrets

- Children don't understand the concept of rules until about age 7.
- Children in the preschool years place their parents on pedestals. Later, when children reach school age, parents may think that children are getting “smart-alecky” when they are actually getting smarter!
- Children this age are impulsive.
- Reading is a critical lifelong skill.

A very large national study found what children really want is for their parents to:

- Make them feel loved and important.
- Understand their moods.
- Use constructive discipline.
- Let them know what to expect (like routines).
- Be involved with their learning and schooling.
- Be present for important life events (like performances, teacher meetings, ballgames).

- Accept them for who they are but to have high expectations, too.

Together Time

Now is the time to build strong relationships with your children. as they age, their lives get more difficult and they listen to parent less. Review the previous section to be sure all of these expectations are in place.

A few ideas are:

- Let children help make up the rules. Post the list of rules.
- Use picture chore charts as visual reminders.
- Be consistent and firm with your responses.
- Give “do’s” instead of “dont’s.”
- Offer choices.
- Find out what is causing the behavior.
- Expect to have to repeat yourself.

Talk Time

When kids talk, stop and listen. If an emotion is involved, see this as a time to connect. Use these steps:

- Be aware of the child's emotion.
- See the emotion as a time for teaching and connecting.
- Listen and take the child's feelings seriously. Help the child find words to label the emotion.
- Problem solve by brainstorming about possible ways to handle the issue.

Learning Time

Children at this age understand rules and humor, and they enjoy telling jokes and playing advanced games.

- Read together — even joke books!
- Laugh together.
- Develop family rituals such as riding bikes together, reading time, or special celebrations.

Children need some power. If they make a request and do their research, build a good argument for permission, this is a skill that will carry them far in life. Listen, weigh the options, consider, and thoughtfully respond.