

Back to Basics



How it feels to be a school-age child

6 to 8 years old

- I like running, roller skating, bike riding, climbing, playing ball games, and swimming.
- I'm losing my baby teeth and feel glad when a permanent one comes in.
- I bathe myself and don't want others to see me naked.
- I'm curious about how my body works, and I tease with friends about "snot," "spit," "farts," and "poop."
- I can read simple books and I'm beginning to recognize words in newspapers and magazines.
- I can write my name and many simple words.
- I can tell you the time of day, day of the week, and month.
- I love riddles, silly rhymes, and jump rope verses.
- I like fairy tales and adventure stories.
- I like making things, exploring, and testing what works.
- I have a best friend, and we play together a lot.
- I love to "play like" I'm someone else and act out a story.
- I prefer playing with children of the same sex as me, and I like older children better than babies.
- I like sharing secrets with my friends.
- I'm curious about what Mom and Dad do at work.
- I'm beginning to recognize how people and families are different.
- I try to be honest because you say I should be.
- I want you to see how well I can do things, and if you criticize me, I'm easily hurt.
- I'm likely to be cranky, tearful, or argumentative when I'm tired and need a nap.
- I'm not too old for your hugs, my stuffed animals, or books that you read to me.

9 to 11 years old

- I notice that girls are starting to outgrow boys. I'm afraid of being too tall or too short.
- I have special interests and hobbies such as playing board games, collecting things, and taking care of pets.
- I can tell you which athlete or TV star I like best.
- I have a strong opinion about whether I like school.
- I like pizza, comic books, and movies.
- I'm realizing that what I learn in school can be used other places, as in using arithmetic when I'm buying something.
- I like doing special things after school such as clubs, music or dance lessons, gymnastics, and sports.
- I think people should be treated fairly and get mad when they're not.
- I have strong loyalties and will defend my friends, family, school, and town to anybody who talks against them.
- I try hard to behave well most days so you'll like me.
- I do chores at home but don't like them.
- I wonder what it's like to do things grown-ups do, like wearing make-up, smoking, and drinking beer.
- I'm starting to see why everybody needs to be honest. I try not to tell lies, but sometimes I need to give excuses so I'll feel better.
- Some days I like being with my friends more than my family.
- I'm starting to think about what I'd like to be when I grow up.
- I understand what past, present, and future means.
- I understand that I live in this state and the United States, and I know the world is bigger than that.
- I feel good about myself when I accomplish something and when my friends like me.

This is the fourth of several pages of development information. Look for each one, printed on card-stock for durability, in our upcoming newsletters; we encourage you to collect each one for your files.

Secret Coded Messages

Literacy Activities for Independent Readers

Introduce the concept of coding and decoding messages. Explain that in coded messages a symbol, number or letter may stand for a certain letter or word. Read stories to the children that involve the use of codes, such as "Lu & Clancy's Secret Codes" which is available from your CCR&R Lending Library. Discuss reasons for using coded messages (these may include actual historical instances or made-up scenarios). To begin, introduce a simple coding system such as:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Invite the children to write messages to each other in code. Example: 8 5 12 12 15!

You may wish to provide a topic to guide the children as they write and also set rules to ensure the messages are not hurtful or inappropriate in any way. For fun, encourage everyone to decorate their papers with pictures or designs that pertain to the secret messages.

Once the children get the hang of writing and deciphering codes, allow them time to explore other coding systems. Be creative; there are several effective methods to use for coding. Here are a few examples to get you thinking:

z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Example: s v o o !

Down - Across	1	2	3	4	5
1	a	b	c	d	e
2	f	g	h	i	j
3	k	l	m	n	o
4	p	q	r	s	t
5	u	v	w	x	y/z

Example: 2-3 1-5 3-2 3-2 3-5!

.-	-. .	-.-	-..	.	..-	---	-.-	.-.	--
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m

-.	---	.-.	-.-	.-.	...	-	..--.	-.-	-.-	---
n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

----	.-.-	.-.-	...-	-....	-...	Full stop	,	?
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			

Example: -.- -.- -.-

a	b	c	j	k	l	s	t	u
d	e	f	m	n	o	v	w	x
g	h	i	p	q	r	y	z	!

Example:

