

# SIXTH GRADE

## Parent Guidebook



---

# Dear Parent

Welcome to the sixth grade! This is a very exciting time for your child. Your sixth grader is becoming more self-sufficient and independent every day; however, your support and guidance continue to be very important.

This book provides the information you need to help your sixth grader not only succeed academically, but to also thrive and grow. With your involvement and support, your child is sure to have a great year!



We know that many children are being raised by grandparents or guardians. For the sake of simplicity, the term "parent" refers to any primary caregiver.

# Sixth Grade Parent Guidebook

---

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Growing Up: Sixth Grade.....	5
Sixth Grade Academics.....	6
Language Arts .....	6
Math .....	7
Science.....	8
Social Studies .....	8
Work with Your School.....	9
Help Your Child Succeed .....	10
Social and Emotional Growth .....	13
In Closing .....	15



**Woodburn Press**  
Copyrighted Material  
All Rights Reserved

---

# Introduction

In sixth grade, students read more challenging texts, write longer papers, and do more complex math. Sixth graders also have multiple teachers, more homework, and they are expected to work more independently. With their new responsibilities and increased involvement with friends and activities, sixth graders need their parents to help them stay organized and on top of it all.

This book provides information on the ways your child will learn and grow this year. It also discusses what your child might study and learn in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Most importantly, it provides you with a number of simple things you can do at home to help your sixth grader be successful, both in and out of the classroom.



**Let's make this a great year!**

## Children develop at different rates

There is a wide range of what “normal” looks like at this age, and schools recognize that sixth graders have varying skill levels. Sixth grade teachers are therefore prepared to work with students with an array of skills and learning preferences.

# Growing Up: Sixth Grade

---



## Physical Development

Sixth graders vary widely in their physical development. Some are well into puberty, while others are a few years off. Discuss physical changes and differences with your child, and emphasize that everyone grows and matures at their own pace.

To help your child stay healthy and strong, have nutritious food at home, insist that your child get the recommended 9-11 hours of sleep each night, and make sure your child gets plenty of exercise (which may mean putting limits on screen time and other technology use).

## Intellectual Development

Sixth graders are able to grasp abstract concepts, such as morality, love, and justice. Find opportunities to have thoughtful conversations with your child on a variety of subjects.

Ask your child what he/she thinks about some of the complex topics you see on TV or read about online. Be sure to always show respect for your sixth grader's opinions and ideas (even when you disagree).

## Social Development

Children this age are often torn between wanting to emulate adult behaviors and being reluctant to give up "being a kid." Be patient with behaviors that fluctuate between mature and childish.

With your child's increased interest in friends and social activities, now is a good time to have a talk about peer pressure and the importance of not changing who you are to "fit in" or be liked.



# Sixth Grade Academics

Sixth grade academics vary depending on the school; however, there are certain skills and subjects you can expect your child to work on this year.

## Language Arts

Sixth grade reading focuses on understanding texts in a variety of subjects (e.g., history and science) and forms (non-fiction and fiction). Writing assignments often require online research, and there's an emphasis on the writing process—planning, writing, editing, and proofreading.

### Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ If you find an article you think your child would find interesting, read it aloud, and ask for your sixth grader's thoughts and opinions.
- ▶ Have family reading time – 30 minutes when everyone reads.
- ▶ Help your child find materials to read for pleasure (e.g., mysteries, teen fiction, science fiction, biographies, non-fiction books on topics of interest).
- ▶ Be a good role model. Let your child see you reading newspapers, books, and magazines—and talk about the interesting things you've learned at dinner.
- ▶ Give your sixth grader a journal or diary. Encourage your child to write about his/her activities, feelings, and goals.
- ▶ Encourage all kinds of writing. Have your child write a letter to a relative, a note to a sick friend, or a poem or short story to read to the family.



## Math

Sixth grade math includes sharpening existing skills and working with more advanced concepts, such as solving equations, finding the volume of objects, analyzing statistics, and calculating probabilities.

### Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Have your child help you solve everyday math problems, such as:
  - ▶ how much money to leave for a tip
  - ▶ how much paint is needed to paint a room
  - ▶ how many miles your car gets to a gallon of gas
  - ▶ which item is a better value – the less expensive smaller box of cereal or the bigger box that costs more
- ▶ Check out sports statistics. Have your child figure out how stats like batting averages in baseball and free throw percentages in basketball are calculated
- ▶ Open up a savings account for your child, and encourage him/her to deposit money from odd jobs, birthday gifts, etc. Explain how interest is calculated, and talk about the bank services you use.

**Your student may be learning math very differently from how you learned it. Ask your child to show you how he/she does math.**

### Maintain a positive attitude

Sixth graders are learning many new math skills and may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement and keep a positive attitude.

If you are looking for some help for you or your child in math, check out the Khan Academy website ([khanacademy.org](http://khanacademy.org)).

---

## Science

Sixth grade science varies from school to school; however, most sixth grade science classes study some or all of the following: atoms and molecules, cells, anatomy, photosynthesis, rocks and minerals, chemical reactions, weather and climate.

The best way to boost your child's skills in science is to nurture his/her curiosity about the world and how it works. Watch documentaries about nature and the natural world. Visit museums. Search online together to learn more about the topics your child is interested in, and to find answers to questions.



## Social Studies

While social studies classes vary in what they cover, sixth graders often study Ancient Egypt, Early China, the Roman Empire, Africa, North and South American geography, the Industrial Revolution, the types of government, and the United States Constitution.

Ask your sixth grader to tell you about what he/she is learning in social studies, and together learn more by doing online searches and watching YouTube videos. Also, include your child in conversations about current events, and ask your child for his/her opinions.



## Work with Your School

Support and work with the teachers, principals, and counselors at your school. Like you, they want your child to enjoy school and have a successful year.

By your words and actions, show that education is important and that you respect the teachers, principals, and counselors at your child's school.

- ▶ Be informed and stay up to date on what's happening. Read your school's handbook and regularly check your school's website.
- ▶ If you have concerns about your child's progress, or if your child is having any difficulties at school, talk to your child's counselor.
- ▶ Make the most of parent-teacher conferences. Before each conference, make a list of the things you want to share, along with any questions or concerns you may have. Also, ask your child if there is anything you should discuss with the teacher.

### Contact the school

Never hesitate to ask for information or help. If there's ever a situation (e.g., health problem, divorce, death in the family) that might adversely affect your child's attitude or school performance, contact your child's counselor or principal.

---

# Help Your Child Succeed

To succeed in school this year, and in the years to come, students need to be organized and have good study skills. Here's how you can help.

## Help improve organizational skills

With more homework and activities, it's important for sixth graders to develop good organizational skills. *Organization is an area in which parents can really help their children.*



Encourage your sixth grader to use a student planner every day to keep track of homework assignments, tests, quizzes, and anything else he/she needs to remember.

Check it regularly to make sure your child is using it correctly.

See that your student has a folder for each subject, and remind him/her to put handouts, assignments, and returned tests in the appropriate folders. Loose papers should never be stuck inside books or stuffed into a backpack.

Encourage your child to clean out his/her backpack every week, and to get everything ready for the next day before going to bed.

If your child has trouble staying organized, often loses things, or frequently forgets to complete homework assignments, be supportive and encouraging, but insist that your child work on improving his/her organizational skills. If your sixth grader continues to have a difficult time keeping up with everything, talk to your child's teacher or counselor together.

## Monitor homework

Sixth graders typically have homework each night. How you approach the subject of homework says a lot about the value you place on education.

*Your child needs to know that you consider homework to be very important.*



- ▶ Help your child create a schedule that makes homework a part of the regular daily routine.
- ▶ Make sure your child has the necessary school supplies and a comfortable, quiet place to study.
- ▶ Help your child learn how to organize and prioritize homework. Ask your child to explain what needs to be done, and then help him/her develop a plan.
- ▶ Large assignments can sometimes seem overwhelming. Show your child how to break large assignments and projects down into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- ▶ If your child has a tendency to rush through homework in order to get it done, insist that you look over all completed homework.
- ▶ If assignments seem excessive, or if your child consistently struggles with homework, contact the teacher(s). Work with the school to ensure that your child feels competent and capable in all of his/her classes.

## Students need to take responsibility

Students must learn to be responsible for keeping track of their assignments, completing assignments accurately, and turning assignments in on time. Parents should always be supportive and encouraging; however, the completion of homework needs to be their child's responsibility.

## Encourage independent problem solving

Parents need to monitor their child's academic progress and be aware of what's going on at school. It is, however, important for students to learn how to solve their own problems and take care of their own affairs.

Being able to get their questions answered and their problems solved helps students gain confidence and become more independent. It also gives them a sense of empowerment.

In school, most problems can be resolved and most questions answered just by talking to the right person. Whenever your sixth grader has a question or problem, try to help your child figure out how to take care of it on his/her own.

*While you want your sixth grader to become more independent; it's very important for your child to know that you are always available to help!*

## Help set academic goals

At the beginning of each grading period, help your child set realistic academic goals for the term. Also, set one or two goals regarding behavior, extra reading, and/or homework (e.g., have all homework done by 8:00).

Setting goals helps your child know what your expectations are, and having goals gives your child something positive to work toward.

# Social and Emotional Growth

---

Sixth graders are developing the social skills they need to succeed, both in and out of the classroom.

Here are some ways to help your student develop socially and emotionally—and stay on the right track.



---

## Be aware and involved

**Get to know your child's friends.** Invite your child's friends into your home, and be available to drive them to various activities. You'll learn a great deal just by listening to them.

**Be informed about social events.** Before giving permission for your child to attend a sleepover, birthday party, or social event, find out who will be there and what kinds of activities are planned.

**Be in the know.** When your child leaves the house, know who he/she will be with, where they are going, and what they'll be doing.

**Provide limits.** As children get older, it becomes more difficult to monitor their music, TV, video games, and online activities. Sixth graders nevertheless need their parents to provide guidelines and limits, and to help them make good choices.

**Discuss alcohol, drugs and smoking.** Look for teachable moments to discuss the dangers of alcohol, drugs (including over-the-counter medications), smoking, and vaping. Make sure your child knows where you stand on these issues.



## Communicate with your child

**Communicating with students this age can be challenging at times. But because it's so important, parents need to make the extra effort.**

**Make time for one-on-one activities.** It's often easier to talk to your child when you're doing something you both enjoy, such as cooking, watching a game, going out for ice cream, taking a walk, or working on a project. These are all great ways to spend quality time with your child. They are also excellent opportunities for conversation.

**Timing is important.** Be available to listen when your child wants to talk, and look for times when your child is likely to be open to conversation (e.g., after getting home from school or before going to bed). A particularly good time to talk is when you're driving in the car. It's quiet, no one can leave, and you're already spending the time together.

**Ask open-ended questions.** Instead of "How was school?" say, "Tell me about your day" or ask, "What's that book about?"

**Show genuine interest.** When talking with your sixth grader, remove distractions and take the time to really listen. When parents show that they're truly interested, children are more likely to open up.

**Recognize the importance of nonverbal communication.**

Children aren't always able to put into words what they want or need their parents to know. Pay attention to body language, moods, eating habits, sleeping patterns, and school performance. These can be good indicators of how things are going at school and with friends.

---

## Provide support

**Sixth graders are dealing with a lot of exciting, but sometimes stressful, changes in their lives. Change can be hard, but with your support, your child can handle it all—and thrive!**

- ▶ Show interest in the things your child likes and cares about. Empathize with the things that get your child down, even if they seem insignificant to you.
- ▶ When everything seems to be changing, having routines is comforting. Give your child something to count on, such as family dinners and weekly outings.
- ▶ Children this age are often very critical of themselves. Be sure to acknowledge and praise your child's efforts and accomplishments.
- ▶ Plan family activities. While friends are important to sixth graders, doing things with their family provides them with a much needed sense of security.
- ▶ Help your child find something he/she is good at and enjoys (e.g., a sport, music, art). Encourage your child to develop and pursue his/her interests and talents.



## In Closing

Helping your child have a successful year doesn't require doing extraordinary things. It's the little things you do every day that provide the guidance and support your child needs.

With your encouragement, love, and support, your child is sure to be successful this year, and in the years to come.

# SIXTH GRADE

## Parent Guidebook

**Information, tips, and advice  
for parents of sixth grade students.**

Linda O'Brien, MEd • Krystal Chenault, MA



WOODBURN PRESS  
[www.woodburnpress.com](http://www.woodburnpress.com)