

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-right: 10px;">S   A</div> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Developmental Stages of Children</h2> </div>			
Developmental Task	Characteristics	Signs of Stress	Child Needs
<b>Infants (0-6 Months)</b>			
To establish basic trust that needs will be satisfied.	Child is totally dependent upon parents and has no concept of self being different from other. Child cries only to get needs satisfied. Cannot purposefully disobey or willfully misbehave.	Excessive crying, eating and/or sleeping problems	Consistent response to needs, constant schedule, and lots of holding and hugging.
<b>Infants (6-18 Months)</b>			
To establish an attachment bond with parents.	At around 6-9 months, child normally shows separation anxiety and stranger anxiety (healthy signs of attachment). Child may show distress in leaving primary caregiver to go with any other person, including the other loving parent.	Crying, clinging, fear of being away from primary parent.	Consistency of schedule, important not to separate infant from significant person for lengthy periods of time or force separations even for short periods of time.
<b>Toddlers (18 Months - 3 Years)</b>			
To develop a sense of independence, autonomy, and a sense of self as separate from parents.	Child "tests limits" constantly in true "terrible twos" fashion. It is normal to be non-compliant, uncooperative and self-centered. Tests out personal power and separateness	Irritability and anxiety. Excessive fears and worries. Regression to earlier behaviors. Fear of separation, clinginess and asking for absent parent.	Predictable and safe environment. Clearly defined and enforced limits, which help child feel safe and secure! Firm, fair and consistent parenting. Very consistent and predictable schedule.
<b>Pre-Schoolers (3-6 years)</b>			
To learn to take initiative, control impulses, interact and play cooperatively with peers, and begin socialization.	Focus is on social roles and on mimicking adult behaviors. Stage of nightmares, invented monsters, vivid fantasies, and magical thinking ("If I think it, it will happen"), which creates much anxiety. Acute sensitivity to the mood of parental conflicts and parent moods and feelings. Time perspective is very limited (to about 2-3 days maximum) and when appropriate, child benefits by frequent contact (by phone or in person) with other parent.	Excessive fears and anxieties, including fear of abandonment. Blames self for adult actions (including divorce). Shows regressive behaviors (e.g. thumb-sucking, bedwetting, tantrums, clinginess). Shows transition distress and resistance to going other parent.	Reassurance with hugs and holding, and with words like "I love you," "You'll be okay," "Your father/mother and I will make sure things are okay for you." Consistent and predictable routine, with some advanced notice and explanations for any changes in routine.

**Elementary School Age Children (6-10 years old)**

<p>To learn skills to be competent, industrious and productive. Focused towards school outside activities, and peer relationships.</p>	<p>Child can for the first time begin to think logically, take the role and perspective of another person and show true empathy. No longer purely egocentric (self-centered). Time perspective strongly developed: child can maintain close relationship with other parent even with more extended periods away from that parent.</p>	<p>Problems with school performance and peer relationships. With new empathy ability, child reacts strongly to parent's pain. Child acts angry, blaming, morally and righteously indignant: avows loyalty to one parent and may refuse to spend time with another parent. Child appears sad and morose.</p>	<p>Help with solving school and peer problems at early stage. Give reassurances with clear, understandable explanations. Remove child from middle of parental disputes and/or as "caretaker" of one parent. Continue consistency in routine. Make allowances within time sharing schedules to allow child's outside activities and peer friendships develop and grow.</p>
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**Pre-Adolescence (11-12 years old)**

<p>To gain a sense of control over and comfort with their relationships.</p>	<p>Child achieves the development of true abstract thinking. For first time, child is able to think about hypothetical ideas in a truly adult-like fashion. Child can now understand what a variety of time-sharing schedules would look like, without them needing to directly experience them. Child can fully participate in developing realistic time-sharing schedules.</p>	<p>Development of intense loyalty conflicts. Acting prematurely adolescent, which stunts maturation. Depression and anxiety. School problems.</p>	<p>Flexibility of time-sharing schedule so that child can develop peer relationships and outside activities (sports, social, etc.) away from both parents.</p>
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**Adolescence (12-18 years old)**

<p>To develop separate identity from parents.</p>	<p>Child normally pulls gradually away from the family, physically, socially, and emotionally. Child develops interests apart from either parent and resists "family activities". Child challenges adults' ideas and asserts independence.</p>	<p>Breaking rules and acting out. Withdrawn, isolation, and depression. Abuse of alcohol or drugs. Suicide threats or attempts. Poor school performance. Loyalty conflicts which lead to cutting off contact with one parent and avowing loyalty to another. (Note: Adolescents often suddenly and unpredictably switch loyalties from one parent to the other, in their attempts to cope with the conflict.) Child may become the hurting parent's care taker, sacrificing outside activities, time with friends (parentification).</p>	<p>Protection from loyalty conflicts. Consistency of rules across households. Timely professional attention to any significant school, behavioral or emotional problems. Flexible schedule of time-sharing that shows respect for and fits the child's schedule first, and the parents schedule second. Usually adolescents prefer having one home base and spending flexible time with the other parent.</p>
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