



What to Expect from Children in Grades 1 and 2

Physical

These children are growing rapidly. Younger first graders may be physically more like preschoolers, while the ones moving toward third grade have hit a new level of physical maturity that shouts, "I'm not a little kid anymore!" Even though these kids may be expected to sit during school, they still need frequent opportunities for movement during every class session.

Small-muscle coordination is still developing and improving. Girls are ahead of boys at this stage of development.

Teaching Tips: Use activities that involve simple folding, cutting and writing skills. Always offer drawing in place of writing for those who struggle with writing. Give them frequent opportunities to change position and to move around the room or outdoors. Vary the kinds of activities to help keep attention high and discipline problems to a minimum.

Emotional

Children are experiencing new and frequently intense feelings as they grow more independent. Sometimes the child finds it hard to control his or her behavior. There is still a deep need for approval from adults and a growing need for approval by peers.

Teaching Tips: Seek opportunities to help each child in your class KNOW and FEEL you love him or her. Show genuine interest in each child and his or her activities and accomplishments. Learn children's names. Use them frequently in positive ways. Smile often!



Social

Children this age are greatly concerned with pleasing their teachers. Each child is struggling to become socially acceptable to the peer group as well. The Golden Rule can still be a difficult concept at this age—being first and winning are very important and taking turns is hard! This skill improves by the end of the second grade. A child's social process moves gradually from I to you to we.

Teaching Tips: Give kids the chance to practice taking turns. Help each one accept the opinions and wishes of others and think about the welfare of the group as well as his or her own. Notice and thank kids when they cooperate successfully. Thank them for ways you see them sharing, taking turns, etc.

Cognitive

Kids this age ask many questions—they have an intense eagerness to learn! They like to repeat stories and activities (this makes them feel successful). Their concept of time is limited. Thinking is here and now rather than past or future.

Listening and speaking skills are developing rapidly; girls are ahead of boys. A child tends to think everyone shares his or her view. Children see parts rather than how the parts make up the whole and think very literally.

Teaching Tips: Consider the skill and ability levels of your kids when planning activities. For example, some can handle reading and writing activities well; others may do better with music or art. Vary activities to help everyone have a chance to connect and to keep brains alert and functioning at optimal levels.

Use pictures to help them understand Bible times and people. Avoid symbolic language, which often confuses them.



Spiritual

Children can sense the greatness, wonder and love of God when given specific examples. The nonphysical nature of God is baffling, but God's presence in every area of life is generally accepted when parents and teachers communicate this in both their attitudes and their actions.

Children can think of Jesus as a friend but need specific examples of how Jesus expresses His love and care. This understanding leads many children to belief and acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior.

Children can comprehend talking to God anywhere, anytime in their own words and need regular opportunities to pray. They can also comprehend that the Old Testament tells what happened before Jesus was born and the New Testament tells of His birth, work on Earth, return to heaven and what happened in God's family on Earth.

Teaching Tips: The gospel becomes real to children as they feel genuine love from adults. When you demonstrate your faith in a consistent, loving way, you are showing, rather than telling, the loving nature of God. This helps children to understand in ways that have real meaning for them!