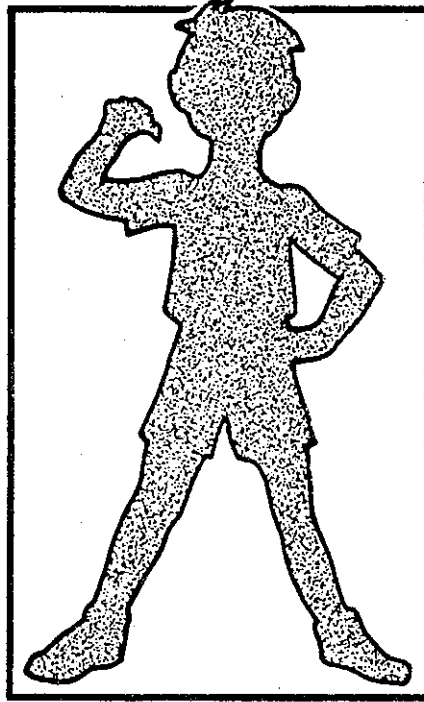


## Grade 1 Week 1

### Now I Am Six

When I was One,  
I had just begun.  
When I was Two,  
I was nearly new.  
When I was Three,  
I was hardly me.  
When I was Four,  
I was not much more.  
When I was Five,  
I was just alive.  
But now I am SIX  
I'm clever as clever,  
So I think I'll stay SIX  
for ever and ever!

(From *Now We Are Six*, a  
Christopher Robin Book,  
by A.A. Milne)



A typical six-year-old is full of self! He's supremely confident that *his* way is the only way.

Most six-year-olds approach first grade with joyous abandon, but these positive feelings are just one part of a six-year-old personality. The other part is a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde contradiction.

At five-years-old, most children are well organized. At five-and-one-half years, they change.

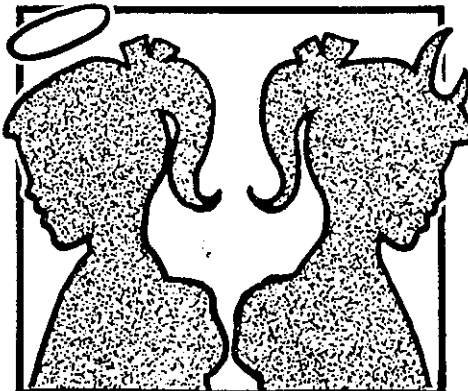
- They're brash and combative one minute; hesitant, dawdling, and indecisive the next.
- They're affectionate now; antagonistic later.
- They're overdemanding and explosive this morning; delightful, co-operative, and polite this afternoon.

What is happening?

Nothing more or less than "just being six-years-old!"

Six is a year of transition physically and mentally.

- Milk (baby) teeth are shedding. First permanent molars are coming in.
- Body chemistry changes make six-year-olds more prone to infectious diseases.



- Infections of the inner ear as well as nose and throat difficulties are frequent.

- Developmental changes that you'll be reading more about in future issues of *Growing Up* are affecting vision, nerves, and muscles.

Because of the profound growth and changes in the nervous system, SIX is not only just one year older than he was at five. He is a different child altogether.

Besides the changes going on inside him, SIX is experiencing radical changes in the world outside himself, too. He goes to school with both pleasure and fear. When he was five, his awareness and capabilities were in better balance. Now he is exposed to a much wider world than he can easily handle with his limited experience.

Helping SIX achieve balance requires tender and wise management. Praise is a magic tonic. Praise helps him choose which of many directions he will take.

Are you ready for SIX? These weekly issues of *Growing Up* will contain much information about six-year-olds that can help you understand and encourage your child in a successful transition from home to school.

## Grade 1 Week 2

### The first week of school: A NEW WORLD

Starting school is tremendously exciting! SIX wants to go to "real school" and do "real work." The transition from home to school is not easy or simple, though, and your child is going to need all the patience and understanding you can muster to help him adjust.

### Why can't he hold still?

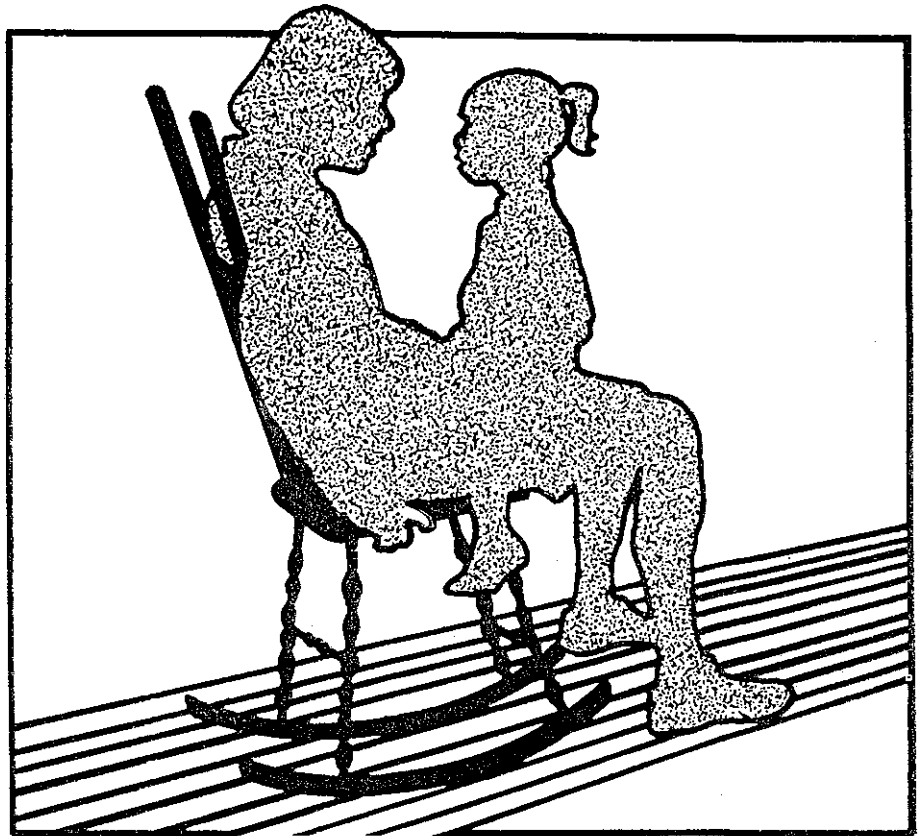
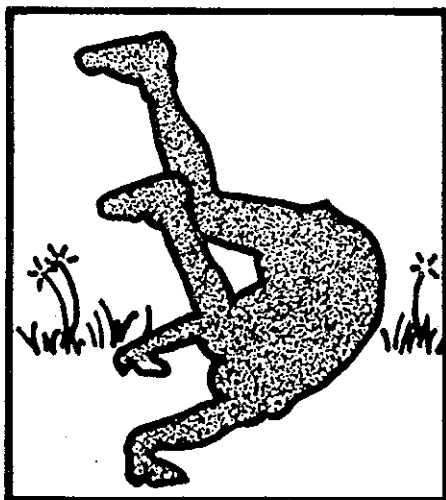
He wiggles.

He swings his legs.

He bites his nails, makes faces, chews on pencils, hair, collars.

Why can't he be still?

Blame it on the intensity of his school experience. The squirming lets off steam. Punishment won't help; understanding and ignoring these nervous habits is the best treatment for now.

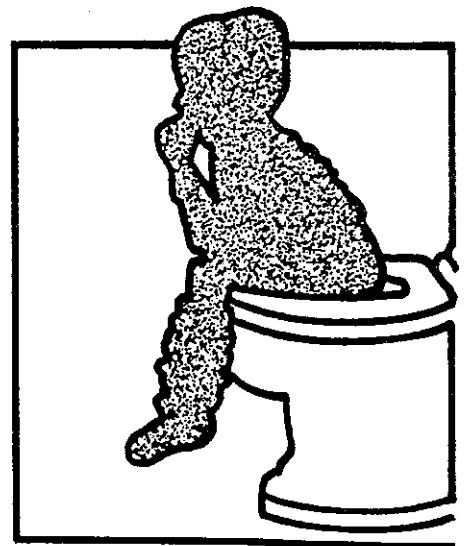


### Make time for talking

SIX likes to have you read to him before bedtime. He especially likes to talk about his day after the lights are off. This is a good time for SIX to tell about his achievements, concerns, or fears.

### Accidents will happen

Ability to use the toilet at school is not always mastered until about the age of eight. SIX may have a few accidents at school. Shaming or spanking are not the way to handle this. A better way is to allow time each day for the first bowel movement before leaving for school.



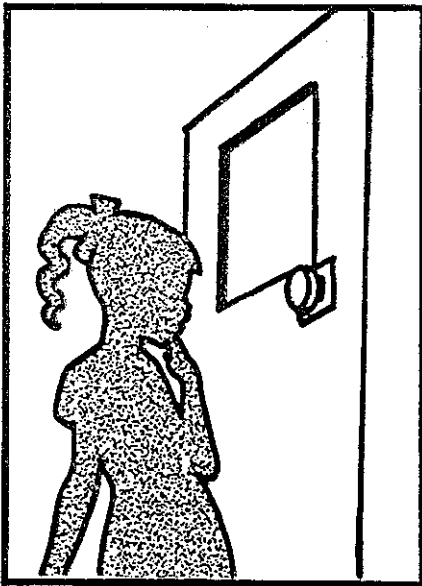
*"What one knows is, in youth, of little moment; they know enough who know how to learn."*

—Henry Brooks Adams—

## Grade 1 Week 3

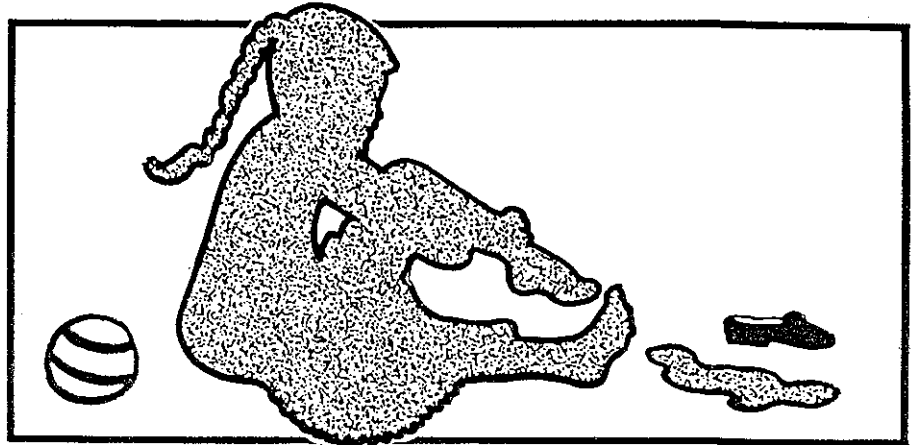
### Unexplained fears

Don't be surprised if SIX refuses to go to school after a week or two. It doesn't necessarily mean she dislikes school. Some experience unpleasant to her, such as being asked to count before the class or to pass out the milk, may be the cause. Send her on to school. Plan a special treat for afterward.



### Why doesn't she talk?

SIX doesn't talk much about her school experiences at home. If she does, she often tells of "bad" things other children have done or boasts beyond reality of her own accomplishments. The daring classmate who misbehaves most is sure to be reported on in great detail. This "tattling" and enlarging on the truth will stop when SIX is more at home at school.

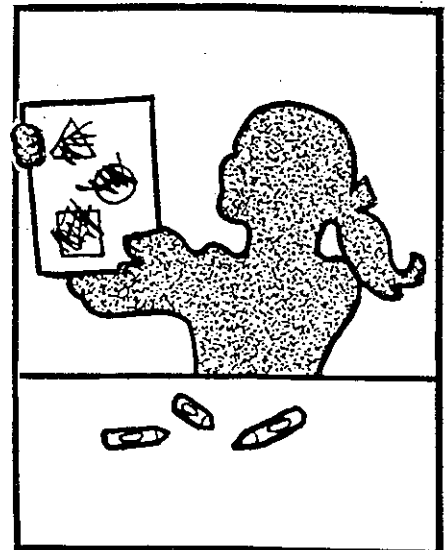


### Morning dawdling

SIX usually needs 11 hours of sleep to avoid fatigue and strain. When she wakes, she usually goes to the bathroom and then begins to play. This playing causes problems. SIX must dress, have breakfast and be ready for the bus or car-pool if all is to go well. It helps if her clothes are already laid out — singly, not touching, so she can see every piece she will use. She will gradually begin to shift her playing habit to a dressing habit and will be able to get herself dressed before breakfast.

### Fast and sloppy

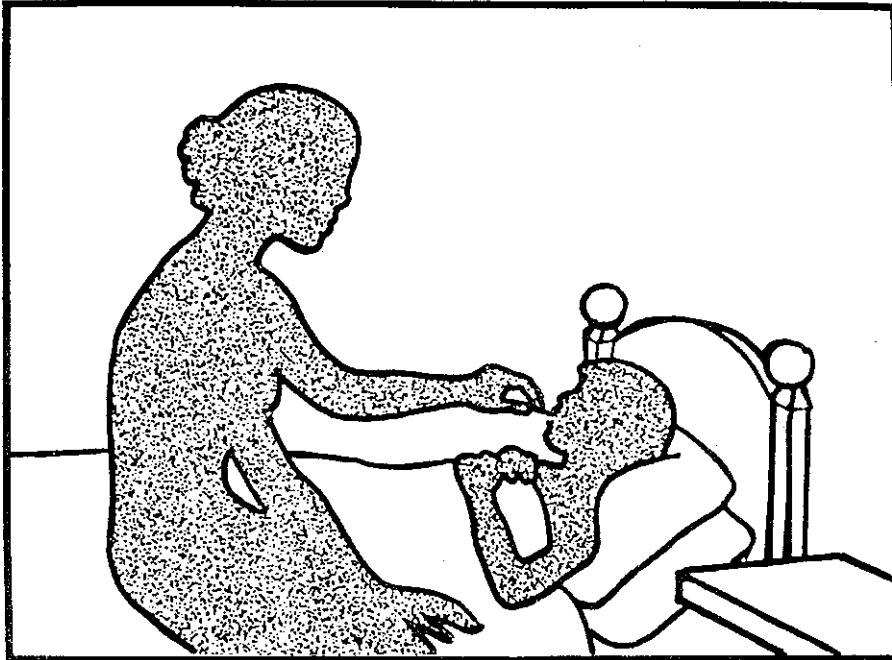
SIX may bring home papers she has colored, cut, or pasted that are alarmingly messy. In speedy and joyous abandon, she wants to do everything, and so finishes little. SIX is also easily distracted and often shifts her eyes to watch another's activity, while her own hands continue to move.



*"To me, raising kids is just about the most exciting, maddening, rewarding, exhausting, puzzling, and satisfying occupation there is. There's no foolproof system, because all kids are different. But there's no area in the world where loving common sense and a touch of humor pay such big dividends."*

—Art Linkletter—

## Grade 1 Week 4



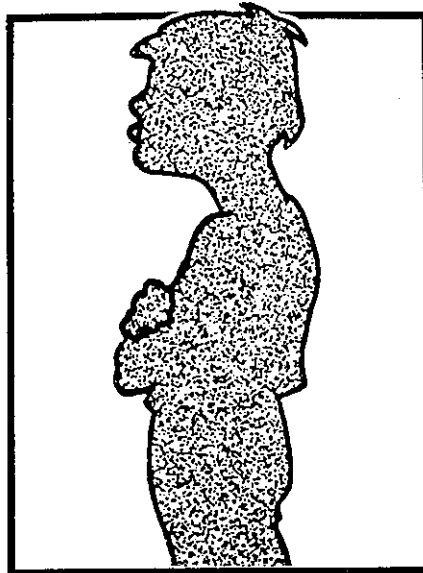
### "No! I won't!"

Even without the stress of adjustment to school, SIX can be a frustrating age at home. The initial response to any demand is usually "No!" or complete disregard of the request. Nagging only increases the stubbornness. The pleasant touch works best. Allowing SIX a little time or several false starts will save face by allowing her to come around on her own.

### Finishing tasks

SIX really likes to work in school. She likes to "begin" work, that is, but she doesn't really like to "finish." This behavior is typical. (Parents may notice it when SIX half-way does chores at home.)

Encouragement and praise will help. Encourage SIX by saying, "You're almost through, only two more to go." When she sees the end in sight, her enthusiasm returns, and she'll hurry to finish.



### Why all the illnesses?

After a few weeks of school, absences become common. SIX gets tired from all the adjustments and is more susceptible to illness. Colds may come back off and on all year. Be on the lookout for inflammation or infection of the middle ear. SIX must be able to hear to learn, to listen and follow directions.

### Why does she "steal?"

Taking things at school that belong to others is much more common at six than parents may wish to believe. However, SIX will confess (and really be sorry) if indirectly approached ("Where did you find this?") rather than directly accused ("You stole this eraser!"). SIX wants to be good and is aware of "goodness" in herself. Active listening by parents at bedtime will give SIX the chance for "absolution" and a good feeling about herself again.

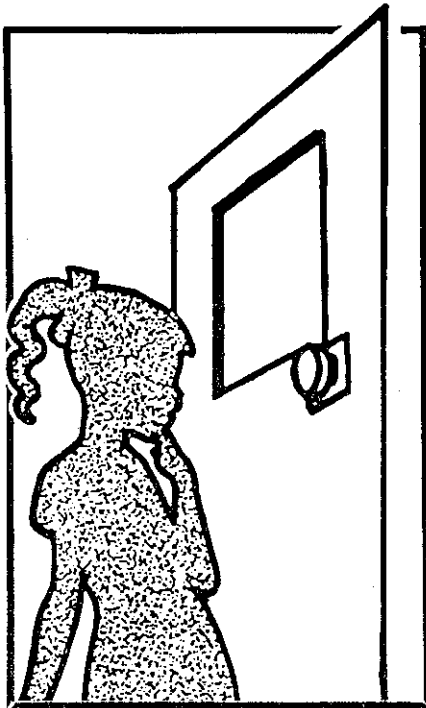
### Book list

For a free list of recommended books for first graders, send your name and address to "First Grade Book List," Growing Up, P.O. Box 620, Lafayette, Indiana 47902.

*"Be careful of sharp words. You may have to eat them."  
—Franklin P. Jones—*

# Grade 1 Week 5 Summary 1-4

# Growing Up



## Handle with care: Child adjusting!

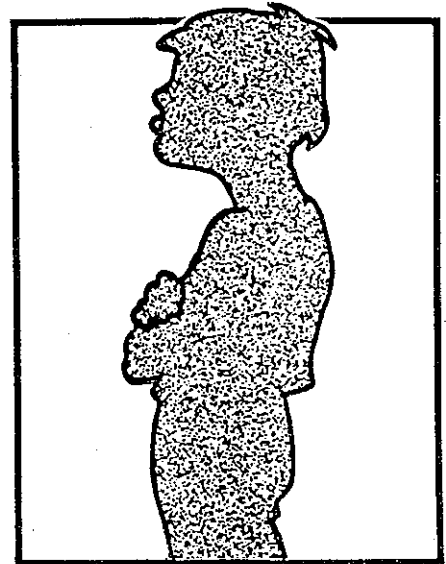
Starting school is wonderful but scary!

SIX has lots of adjustments to make. All his senses are alert and working overtime. Sometimes he gets overloaded and goes wildly out of control.

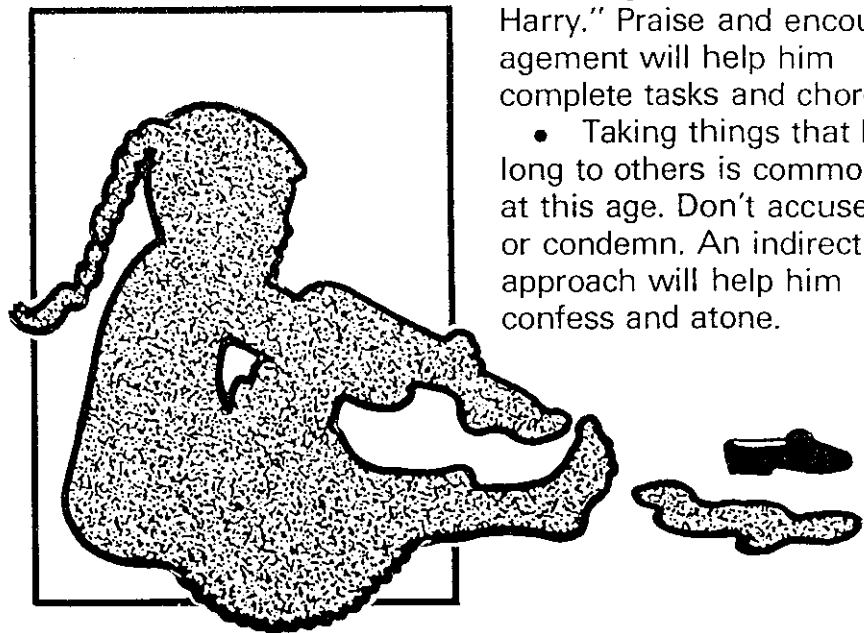
- When SIX wiggles and fidgets, he's just releasing tension. Ignore these behaviors as best you can. They'll pass.

- SIX needs routine now more than ever. Lay out all his clothes the night before. Read to him at bedtime. Stop for a minute after the lights are out, and listen to what he'll tell you. Make sure he gets at least 11 hours of sleep a night to recharge those internal batteries.

- Watch his health carefully. Fatigue and stress of adjustment make him susceptible to illness.
- If SIX refuses to go to school, it may be because he's had an upsetting or frightening (to him) experience. Send him along anyway and plan a treat for afterward.
- Bowel control is not always perfect in the new school environment. Shaming or spanking will not prevent accidents. Try making time for this function in the morning.
- Tattling and enlarging on the truth will stop when SIX is more at home with school.
- Face it, six is a stubborn age. When he shouts "NO!" or completely disregards your request, a round-about approach works better than confrontations.



- You may think about renaming SIX "Halfway Harry." Praise and encouragement will help him complete tasks and chores.
- Taking things that belong to others is common at this age. Don't accuse or condemn. An indirect approach will help him confess and atone.



*"Experience shows that exceptions are as true as rules."  
—Edith R. Mirrielees—*

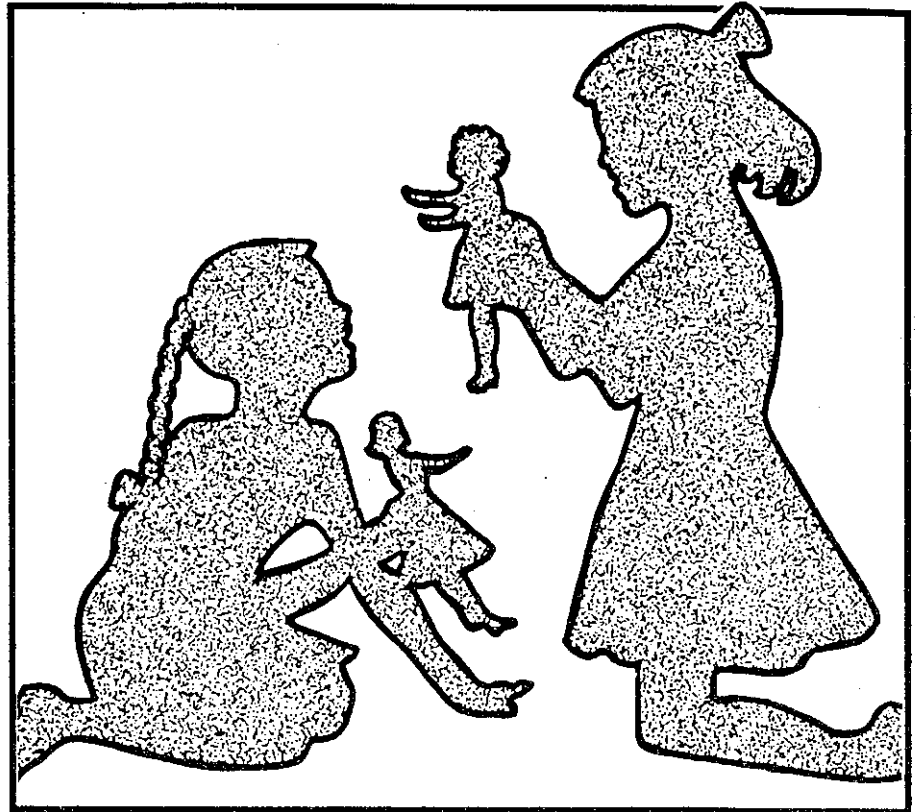
## Grade 1 Week 6

### Play times

SIX may play well alone, but wants — and needs — someone to play with. Who? The best playmate is someone her own age or older. Six-year-olds tend to tease and boss younger children, especially siblings. One-half hour inside play is maximum before bedlam sets in; outdoor play is better sustained. Twosomes at play are the rule, but small groups will become desirable before the end of the year.

### Letter reversals

Don't be alarmed if SIX's early attempts at copying letters and words show reversals or letters out of order in a word. If SIX has selected a hand that she uses consistently for writing or eating, and if she has selected a foot she uses consistently for kicking a ball or stone, she will become consistently correct in letter placement in time.



### Praise the child!

SIX feels everything she does deserves praise — and there is no time when praise is more welcome and more helpful. SIX can never get enough of it — and it won't spoil her. If she gets enough praise now, she won't need it so much later on.

### Fueling the body

A six-year-old seems like a perpetual motion machine. She needs a snack to "refuel" after school before going out to play. A quiet time of TV before supper should also help restore emotional calm.

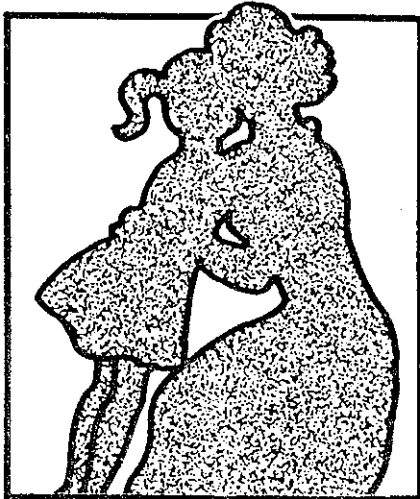


*"Children need love, especially when they don't deserve it."*  
—Anonymous—

## Grade 1 Week 7

### The terrible transition

SIX appears to be Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde! One minute he will say, "I love you." The next minute he will shout, "I hate you! I wish you were dead!" Relax, he will outgrow it. It's all part of the "terrible transition" and will disappear if not reinforced by nagging or attention. A quick, loving hug at such times will be a more effective response than a lecture or punishment.

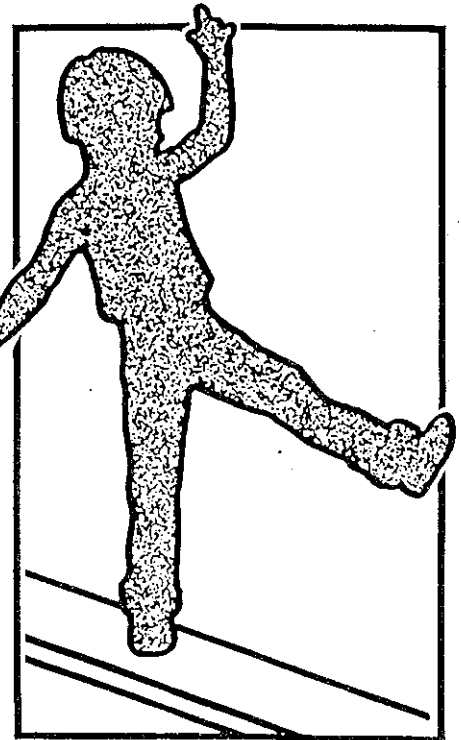
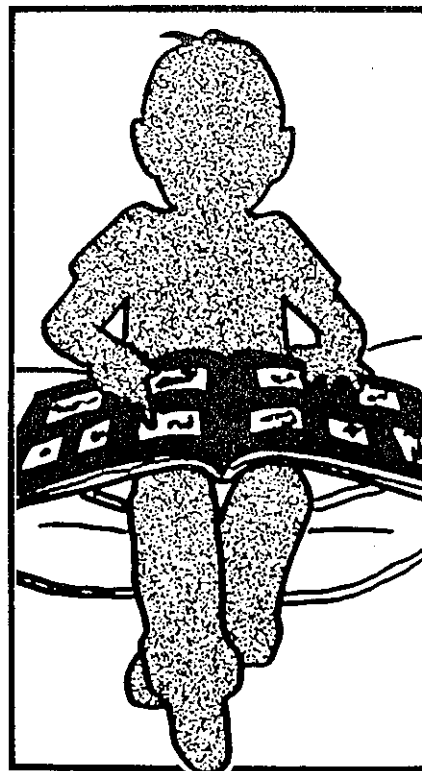


### Fight or flight?

At play time, SIX can either be "king of the mountain" or "wee timorous mousie." SIX may play rough, threaten to go home, quarrel, call names, push, pull hair, kick, and fight when things are not going his way. However, some children this age cannot play rough and are terrified by physical combat. Fear not, the "wee timorous mousie" will be ready for combat by eight years of age, and the self-appointed "king of the mountain" will be ready to share the throne in another year. Lectures and scolding will only aggravate either condition at this time.

### "Speedy SIX"

"Speedy SIX" is very much concerned with balance. He hurries, flings arms and legs, trips, and falls often. He seems compelled to walk along curbs, lines, and atop fences. Broken arms are common with six-year-olds.



### Past, present, and future

SIX is beginning to explore time. He understands what "yesterday, today, and tomorrow" mean. Through stories about himself and his parents as babies, SIX begins to perceive the vastness of the past. He also gets some idea of the future through the sequence of family birthdays and holidays. But remember, SIX really has not the faintest idea yet about the duration of time. You're expecting too much when you give permission for a visit to a neighbor and say, "But stay only a few minutes."

*"Before I married I had six theories about bringing up children. Now I have six children and no theories."*

*—Lord Rochester—*

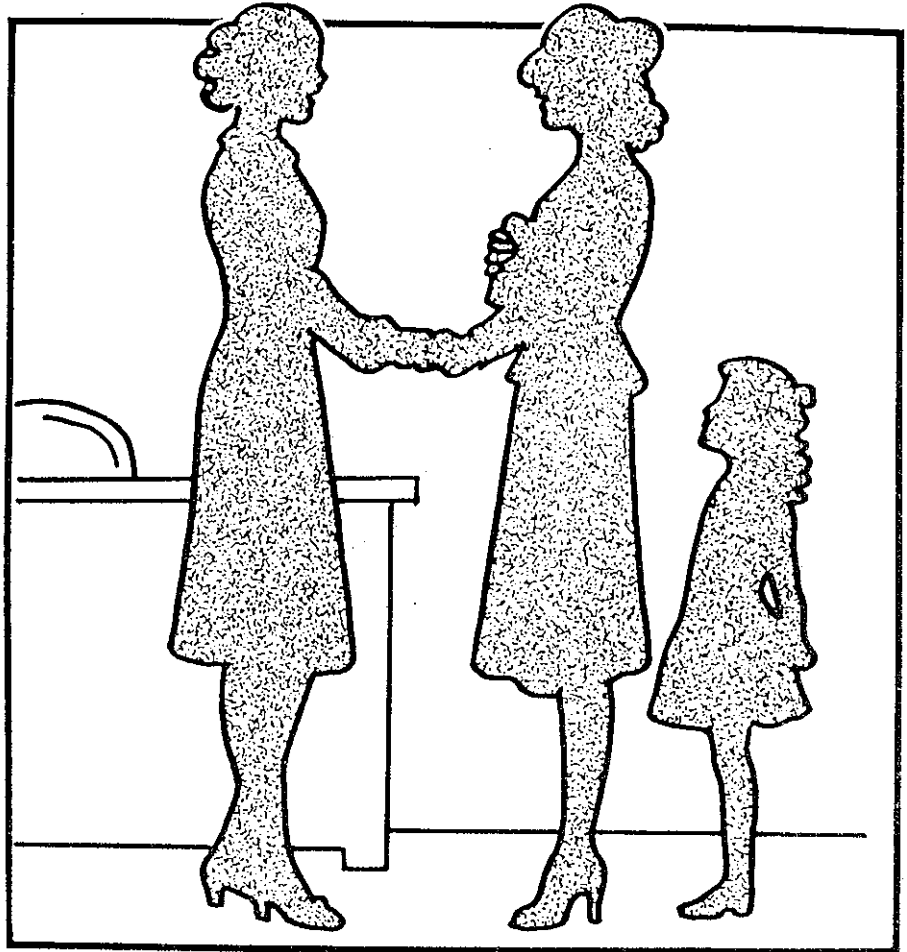
## Grade 1 Week 8

### An eye exam is important

A thorough vision exam is in order now. Most pre-schoolers tend to be slightly far-sighted. At around six years, though, eyesight often begins to change. Some children become nearsighted. Tasks which require seeing well at a distance become increasingly difficult for them. Others may remain too far-sighted to see the print in their books clearly. The close seat work in Grade 1 can also hurt eyesight, especially if a child slouches or is uncomfortable in a chair that is too high or too low.

### Real and imagined fears

SIX has fears. After the Halloween party at school, she may dramatically act out what witches and ghosts do. The fearful, excited tone in her voice gives away the fact that she lets her imagination re-ignite her dread. Now is the time to read stories about friendly ghosts, dress up in costumes, and dramatize until such fears are gone. One day she will shiver with pleasure at ghost stories instead of shivering with dread.



### Parent-teacher relations

It's the end of the first grading period. SIX wants her teacher and her parents to know and like each other. Take advantage of this attitude to arrange a conference with the teacher. He or she will have much to share with you about how to help SIX make the adjustment to peers, school work, and the long school day. Schedule your meeting for after school. Visits during school hours resulting in mysterious conversations in the corner between parent and teacher can produce some real anxiety and fear in SIX, although parent/teacher interviews by phone usually pose no problem.

*"There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots, the other wings."  
—Hodding Carter—*

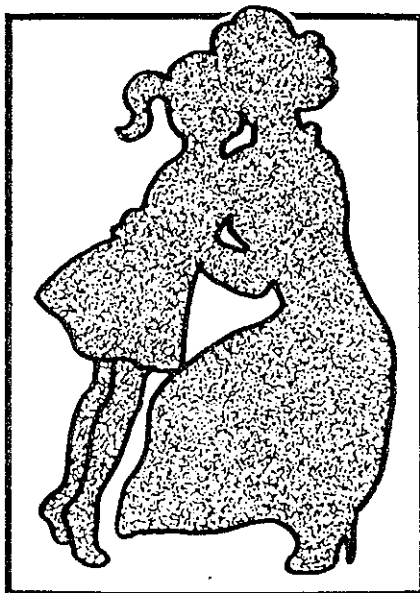
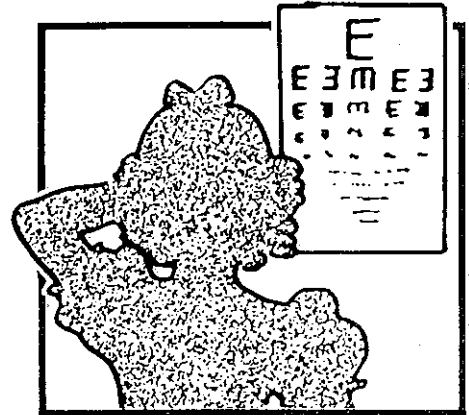


# Grade 1 Week 9 Summary 6-8

# Growing Up

## Eye exam, teacher's meeting, and praise keep SIX actively learning and happy

What a mixed-up stew of contradictions a six-year-old is! One minute she's saying she loves you; the next minute she's throwing a tantrum! She's speedy, then slow; independent, then clinging. She's in a transition period, when everything she does seems to be followed by an equal, opposite, and sometimes violent reaction. At this time, remember:



- It's about the end of the first grading period at school. SIX wants you to know her teacher; and her teacher will be able to give you valuable guidance in helping SIX adjust. Have an after-hours conference for this purpose.
- An eye exam is important for first graders. Children's eyes are changing as they start school, and they must be able to see (the board, across the playground, the papers on their desks) if they are to succeed.
- Letter reversals ("01" instead of "10" or "saw" instead of "was") are common. If a dominant hand and foot has been chosen, the reversals will gradually lessen.

• Praise the child. It won't spoil her. Encouraging her to try, try, try again is better than criticizing.

• "Refuel" that active little body with an afternoon snack. Play is better in twosomes of the same age; aggression and timidity equal out by the end of the year. Broken arms are a common first-grade hazard.

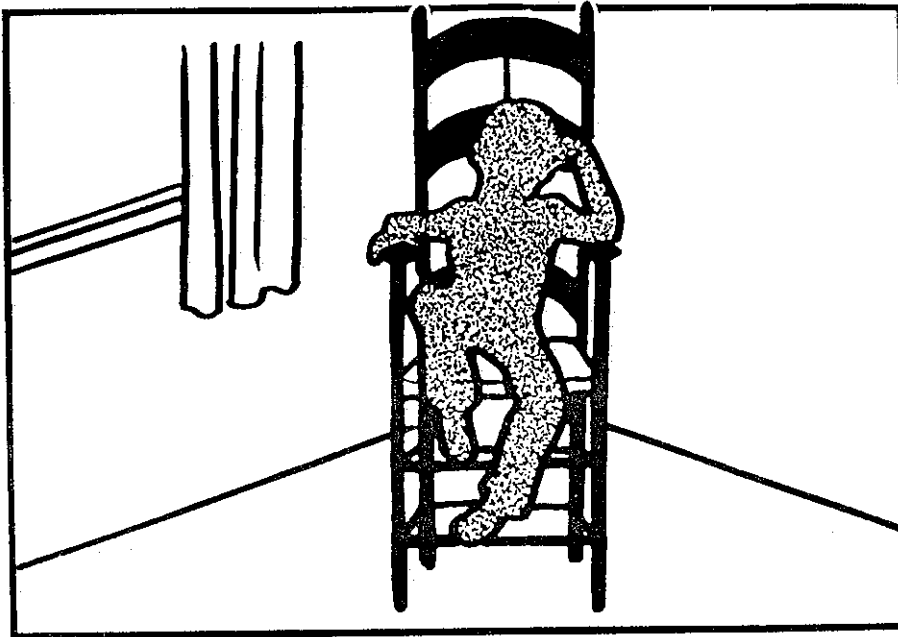
• SIX is just beginning to understand time. She knows what yesterday, today, and tomorrow mean, but she hasn't the faintest idea what you mean by "just a little while."



*"Every citizen of this country, whether he pounds nails, raises corn, designs rockets or writes poetry, should be taught to know and love his American heritage; to use the language well; to understand the physical universe; and to enjoy the arts. The dollars he gains in the absence of enlightenment like this will be earned in drudgery and spent in ignorance."*

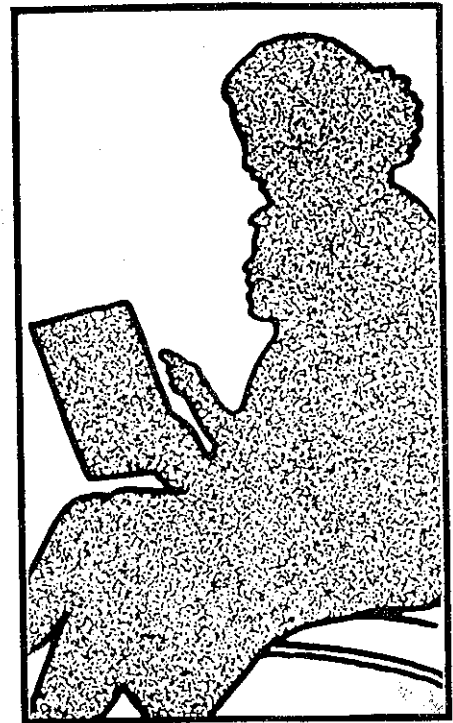
—Calvin Gross—

## Grade 1 Week 10



### No criticism, please!

SIX will now have his first pre-reading workbooks. For him, this is the beginning of "real reading." He will bring home his completed books with great pride. Try to avoid criticism of errors, neatness, or the like. Praise is the magic formula to bring out the best in SIX.



### "Real work" stress

SIX is now becoming involved in "real work" — numbers and reading in his workbooks. At the same time he is in a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde stage where he is alternately sweet/sour, quiet/noisy, calm/explosive. He will be critical of his achievements at school. At home he will react wildly before he finally settles down, seeking forgiveness. If parents make a demand, SIX might reply, "NO, I won't!" or, "How are you going to make me?" If giving him face-saving delays does not work, then use another form of discipline that SIX responds to: isolation, play in his room, or sitting in the "thinking chair" in a quiet spot away from older siblings. Remember, "real work" at school is new to SIX and can be unsettling.

### Learning to read

#### Playing

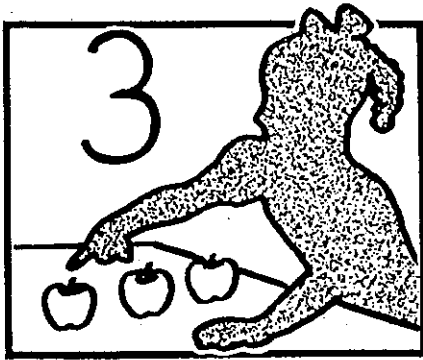
SIX is in almost constant motion, whether standing or sitting. Family trips to the playground or swimming pool, as well as bike riding, ball throwing, and catching will help get SIX ready for the playground activities that are so important to his social and emotional well-being.

SIX really wants to learn to read. He likes to be read to and will listen to almost anything. The best way to prepare the young child for reading is to hold him on your lap and read aloud to him, allowing him to trace under the line with his finger. The printed page, the physical comfort and the security of being close to you, the reassuring voice, the fascination of the story — all combine in the child's mind to identify books as a pleasant experience.

*"Education is a kind of continuing dialogue, and a dialogue assumes, in the nature of the case, different points of view."*

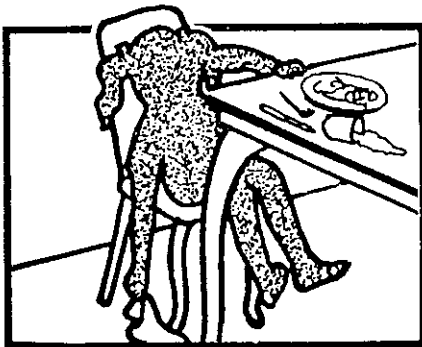
—Robert Hutchins—

## Grade 1 Week 11



### Table manners

At mealtimes SIX is spilly, wiggly, and a napkin-dropper. Why? She seems driven to be active just because she is six. She must touch, handle, and explore everything. As a result, she drops her utensils, turns over her milk, feels her mashed potatoes with her fingers. Forcing her to sit still, if that is even possible, often results in non-stop talking (another form of movement) with her mouth full. Sending her away from the table is no solution, either. She would really rather eat alone, happily dawdling. Taking away her food causes a belligerent reaction. She will outgrow these behaviors in time and adopt the model you set with your table manners. By the way, how are your table manners?



### Learning about numbers

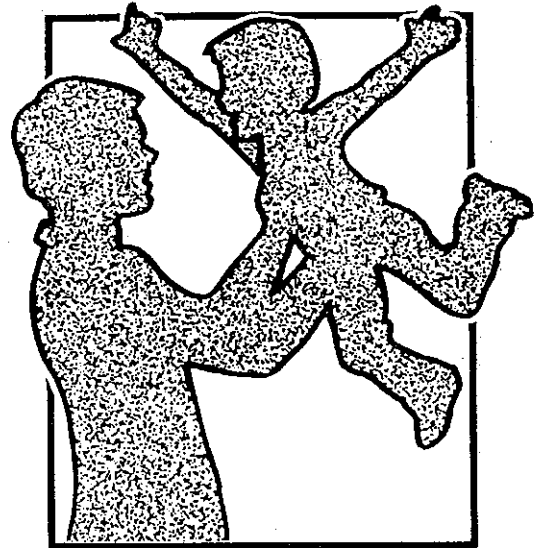
At school, SIX is involved with numbers of things and with the numerals that represent them. She may even be combining groups of objects and writing the numeral for "how-many-ness." Six-year-olds like games that develop their number prowess: dominos, lotto variations, cards. SIX loves the table games that let her spin the arrow, shout the number, then move her marker, counting the steps loudly. Such games help develop the automatic "knowing" that is so helpful in understanding more abstract concepts.

SIX would love a game before supper or bed. No older siblings, please, unless they can treat SIX as a peer without teasing or jeering!

### For fathers

Fathers play an important role in the life of SIX — especially for boys who are beginning to build the father-son relationship of affection and admiration and their own identity of "boyiness." Since the response by both boys and girls to Dad is so great at this time, it would be well that he take over some of the bedtime talks several times a week. Dressing in the morning is usually done quicker and with new independence when Dad is around, or in and out, chatting occasionally, as the child gets dressed.

With such help from Dad, Mom and SIX would adjust better to each other. Why? SIX is making the transition to a larger world outside his home. Right now he can't get along with Mom — but he can't get along without her, either! A six-year-old, boy or girl, needs Dad!



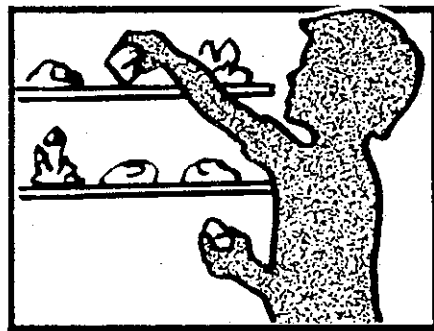
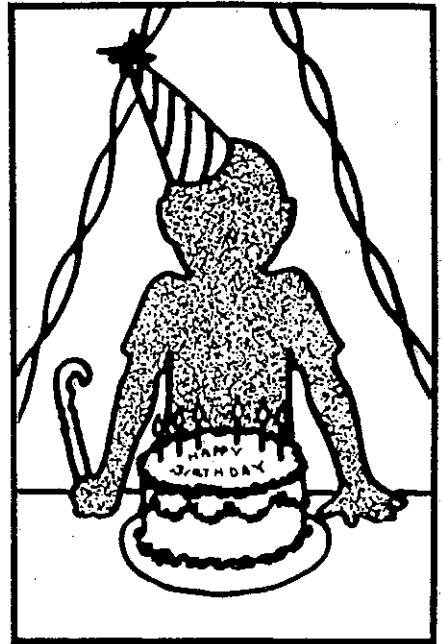
*"A child should always say what's true  
And speak when he is spoken to,  
And behave mannerly at table  
At least as far as he is able."  
—Robert Louis Stevenson—*

## Grade 1 Week 12

### Birthday parties

A birthday party is a big social event for SIX, whether it be his own or someone else's. At school, the classroom structure helps him stay calm. In the home, though, the excitement of a party is often too much. SIX may withdraw from the scene completely and observe from a corner. Or he may become wildly excited and babble ("I'm going to eat the couch!") or run around completely out of control.

An ideal size for a birthday party for SIX is six friends. One familiar party game and ice cream and birthday cake are really all that's needed. SIX is rather rigid this way and thinks it fitting and proper to do the traditional things.



### Developing coordination

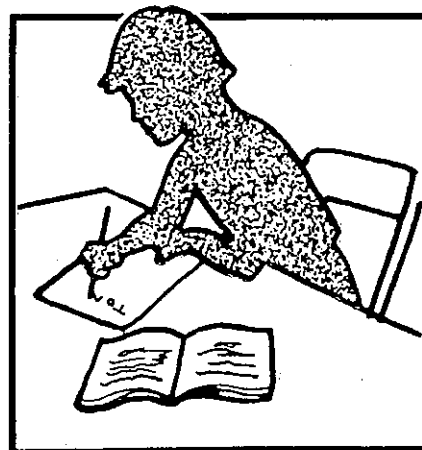
Six-year-olds are usually clumsy. Their coordination is poor. Yet being able to run, kick, hit, and catch is very important for acceptance at school. SIX needs active games with simple rules (like kickball) to develop attention, coordination, and body control.

### Learning to write

Learning to write is important—but hard. Writing requires sitting still. It means copying from a board. SIX gets tired. His hand hurts. To learn to write, he must have practice. A chalkboard placed flat on the floor or on the kitchen table can offset his negative feelings about writing. (You can make a chalkboard by putting two coats of chalkboard paint on a 4x6 piece of masonite.) Writing on the board teaches relaxation of hand and fingers, as well as mastery of the formation of letters, words, and numbers.

### Getting and saving

SIX is eager for more and more possessions. He is also a great "saver", although what he treasures may seem like messy clutter. You can capitalize on his desire to "get and save", which will help develop his mental powers! Don't push it, but make possible the beginning of "collections" of whatever takes his fancy: rocks, bugs, buttons, matchbox cars. A collection of similar objects helps SIX see small differences in like objects. Later, this skill will help him see the difference between similar letters — "b" and "d" or "p" and "q". Sorting socks or knives, forks, and spoons is learning—and fun too!



*"A child miseducated is a child lost."  
—John F. Kennedy—*

# Grade 1 Week 13 Summary 10-12

# Growing Up

Practice is the name of the game in reading, writing, numbers

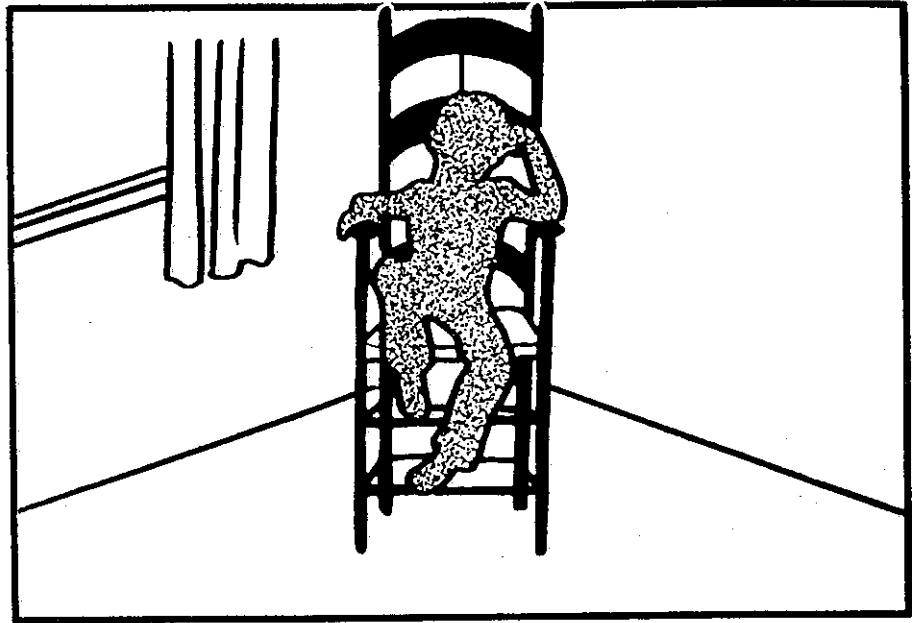
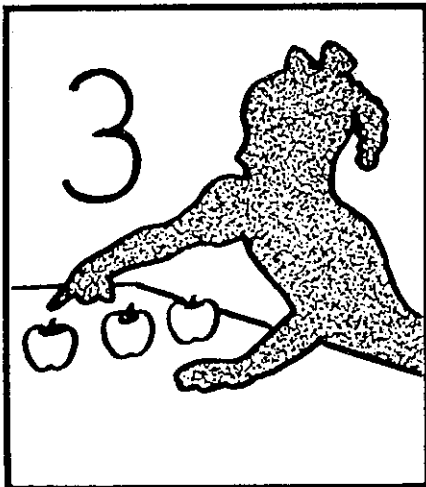
Numbers, reading, and writing are important and interesting to six-year-olds. The best way to learn them is repetition. And the most fun way to learn them is practicing with parents.

- **Reading.** Read a book with your child. Hold him on your lap, and let him trace the line with his finger.

- **Writing.** A homemade chalkboard will encourage writing practice.

- **Numbers.** Play number and board games—lotto, dominoes, cards.

SIX is often clumsy. A poorly coordinated child who is always picked last (or not at all) on the playground is more likely to have trouble with emotional and social adjustments later on. All kinds of active outdoor games and activities help build skills.

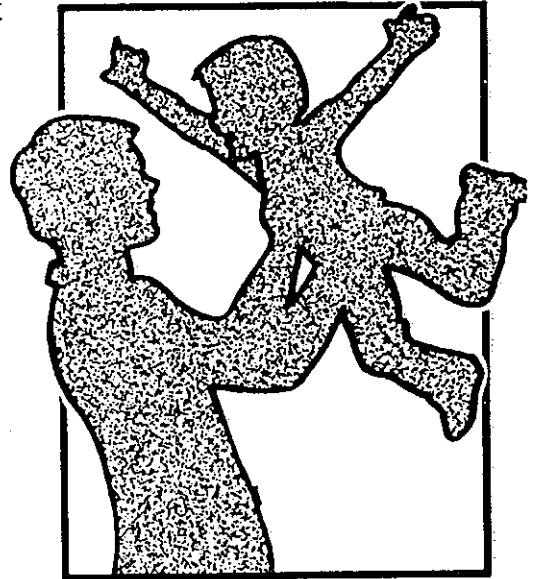


This is still a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde personality period. A six-year-old is probably scared of ghosts and yet struggles mightily against his dependence on mother. Six-year-olds also make trying dinner companions. A consistent example of good manners will accomplish more than punishment here. Likewise, discipline has a better chance if it's applied in a round-about way rather than head on. Praise is particularly cherished by the child.

Fathers are very important now. His example in dressing, playing, and getting along is valuable for both boys and girls.

Collections are helpful in learning to tell the differences between similar things, like the letters "b" and "d". Practice will help in reading and writing.

A birthday party is about the neatest thing ever for six-year-olds. Keep it short, simple, and small for best results.



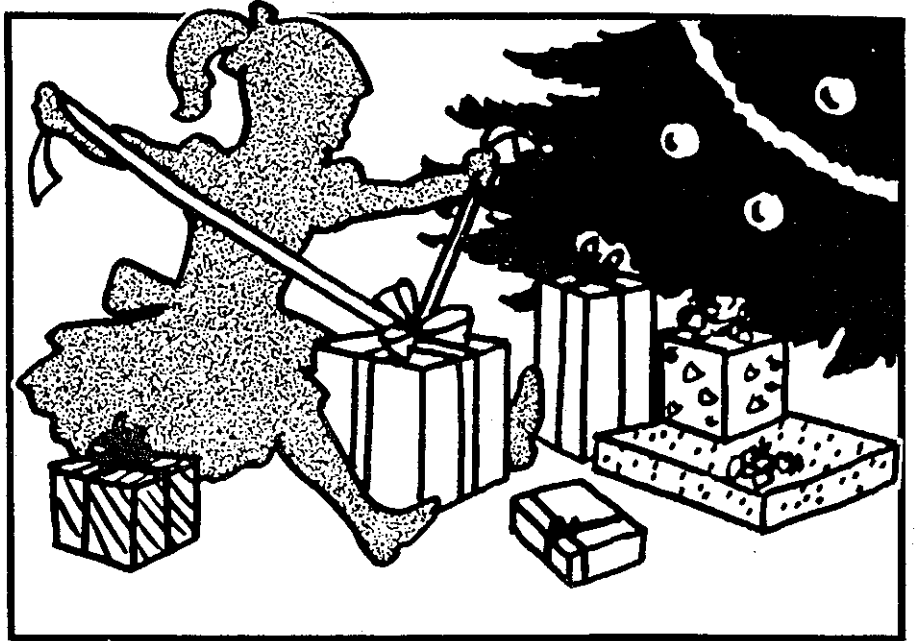
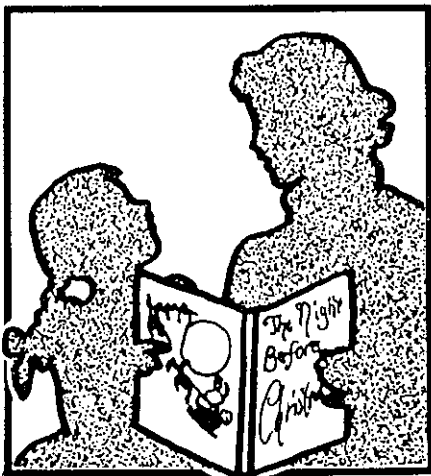
*"Don't reprimand a child in the evening. Darkness and a troubled mind are a poor combination."*

—Frank Boyden—

## Grade 1 Week 14

### Holiday reading

As mentioned earlier, SIX likes to be read to and will listen to almost anything. Perhaps the warm feeling of security, being close to a parent, and the continuous and pleasant flow of sound makes listening to stories "one of the pleasantest things ever a child could do." Or it may be that SIX finds such an activity a rest from the intensity she feels as the "active and curious explorer." Whatever the reason, as the holiday season approaches, get ready to read the stories that will help her get the real message of the season. SIX will especially like to hear the stories read to you long ago by your grandfather when you were just her age.



### Holiday presents

Holidays are coming! By now you have noticed that what presents SIX says she wants changes from day to day. What will she really want when the day comes?

The problem is that she really can't decide. She wants "lots of presents," but doesn't know exactly what they should be. Since "lots" of presents is important, wrap many little, inexpensive but creative gifts like a hand magnifying glass, an ant farm, a kaleidoscope, a paper weight that shakes up a snow storm. These will give her "lots" and at the same time relieve her indecision problem.

When shopping for SIX, think also of one "big" gift. "Big" doesn't always mean expensive. The "big" may be one of the many "latest things out" that the first grade set chatters about at recess.

Whatever the "biggie" is, check the item and packaging for:

- (1) Developmental age-level compatibility
- (2) Safety
- (3) Durability

*"The most beautiful and the most profound emotion that we can experience is the sensation of the mystical."*

—Albert Einstein—



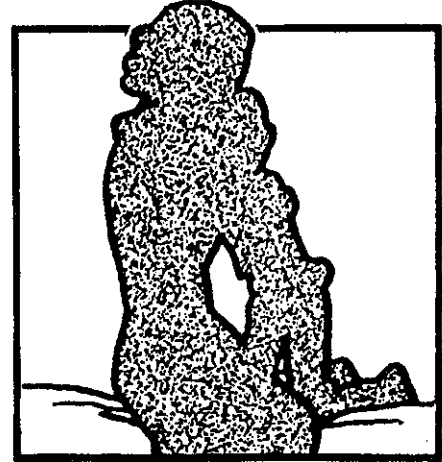
### Holiday strain

The "Big Day" will finally arrive, though you may not be ready for it. No matter how tired you are or distressed about the expense of the celebration, you will have made a tremendous emotional investment in the spirit of the day and want everything to go well.

Be prepared. Be prepared for the fact that SIX's behavior may not be compatible with your plans.

SIX is going to be at his most intense. He will behave accordingly. If he acts inappropriately, running off moodily to his room, it's the intensity of his nature reacting to the excitement of the day. Nothing you can do in a punishing way will "teach him a good lesson." Instead, be alert for familiar symptoms. Provide a respite that takes him away from the activity for a brief time.

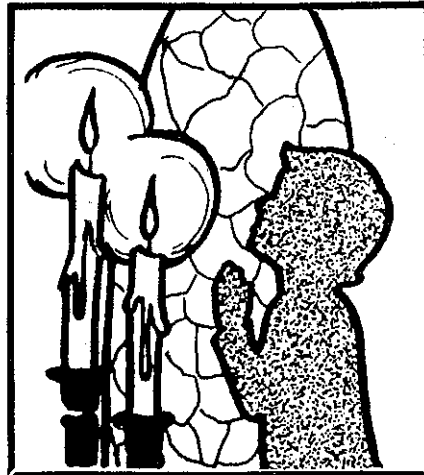
So remember the nature of SIX and, when possible, distract him **before** intensity builds up. He will respond to a long hug, a little kiss, and a quietly spoken "I love you."



### Holiday visitors

During the holidays there will be visitors. Some visitors are "grown-ups," your friends, who are not a part of SIX's daily experience. These people "crash," according to SIX's feelings, into his world.

Get ready for SIX's unpredictable behavior. He may be a silly, giggly life of the party or totally anti-social. In view of SIX's multiple difficulties in interpersonal relationships, don't expect him to be at ease. If he is not wildly showing off for attention, he will be giving a blank look and unable to say "hello" beyond a mumble. Help him save face. Give him something to do ... quickly ... like bringing in the cookies.



### Religious interest

SIX has a keen interest in a creative religious power. Whatever your religion may be, use this school vacation period for sharing with SIX the richness, awe, and wonder of your own religious heritage. He will be rewardingly receptive.

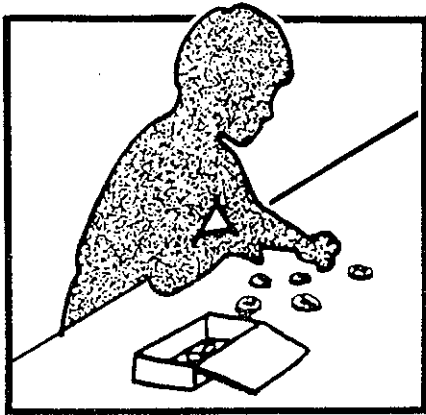
*"May the road rise with you  
And the wind be ever at your back  
And may the Lord hold you in the hollow of His hand."  
—Gaelic Blessing—*

## Grade 1 Week 16

### Playground acceptance

Remember how important it was to be quickly chosen for a team in school contests? Good physical skills are very important for acceptance and for leadership. A trim, healthy six-year-old will be able to hold his own on the playground, where he can be accepted — or rejected.

If SIX has been overweight, he should begin to slim down about now. If he continues to be overweight, it is important to his physical, as well as his social and emotional development to get medical help. Most six-year-olds, if left to themselves, will not overeat and will eat foods that are not fat producing. They like raw vegetables better than cooked ones. Perhaps the compulsion to be always moving makes SIX like foods that can be eaten "on the run."

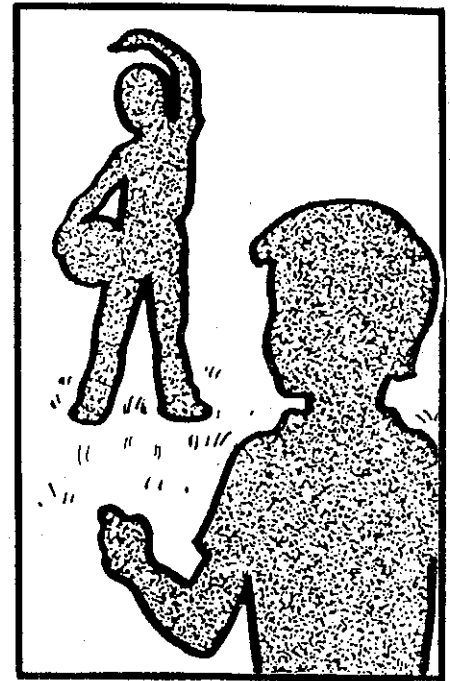


### Money sense

Money is becoming of real interest to SIX. Both an allowance and rewards of money give him familiarity with the names of coins and a vague knowledge of how many it takes to buy a desired object. SIX tends to be a "saver," squirreling away his hoard in a special place. When SIX counts his pieces of treasure, he enhances his math readiness. When he spends his money, he must "decide" — and "deciding" for him is hard since his "wants" change so quickly and drastically.

### Contradictions

SIX is full of contradictions. Sometimes he acts mature; other times he will revert to using baby-talk. If you approach him gently about this, he might whisper the reason: "So I won't have to do hard things." His new experiences in school do overload SIX from time to time, and he becomes fatigued. A reversion to earlier patterns of behavior alerts you that he needs rest.



### Religion and ceremony

SIX likes to participate in short ritualistic services (as in church school or synagogue) and more so if there are candles and simple ceremony involved. This shows his very real attempt to conform to what is demanded of him. Prayers are important to him now, and he truly believes that whatever he asks for will be granted. SIX's feelings of belonging and order in this aspect of his life help counteract the frenzy he feels in other new experiences.

*"Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress,  
no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate,  
no despotism can enslave."*

*—Joseph Addison—*



## Grade 1 Week 17

### Winter reading

Bad weather means SIX will be confined indoors more than normal. Just another reminder of the benefits of reading to SIX. Reading only 10 to 15 minutes a day, with discussion, yields a significant increase in verbal intelligence in only three months. Read, read, read — for profit as well as pleasure.



### Winter television

Television is a powerful rival to reading. To get the most and the best out of time so spent, have each member of the family suggest programs for viewing. Open a discussion about which programs to watch, watch them together, and later discuss what was seen and enjoyed. Planning, looking, and discussing together improve attention and understanding.

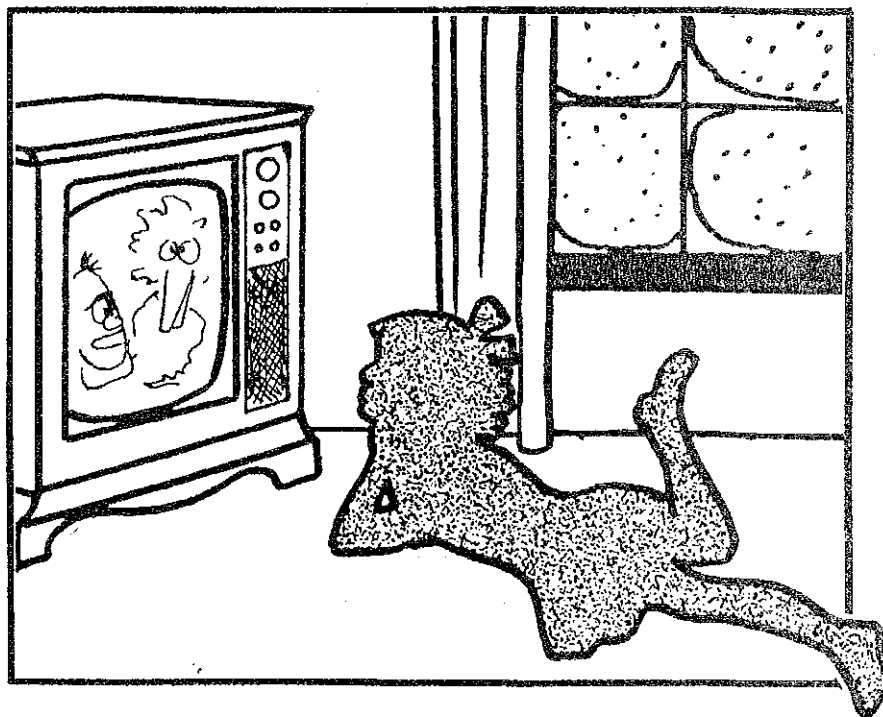
### Keeping healthy

January days are dark and cold in much of this country. Families may be feeling the pinch of holiday spending. Emotional and physical resistance is lowered — and the common cold abounds.

If SIX has ever had an ear infection, be aware that such infection often flares up again at the end of a cold. Many experts are now saying that any child treated for an ear infection should be re-examined after two weeks to make sure the infection is cleared. There is concern about the developmental lag the child may experience as a result of a hearing loss, however temporary.

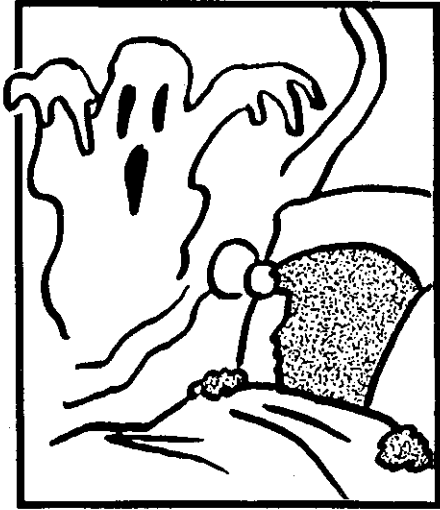
So, at the end of a cold, watch for ear infection symptoms. The first sign may be irritability. A youngster who can't hear will be frustrated and will spend a lot of emotional energy coping with this handicap. After-school crankiness should tell parents to seek medical attention.

An increasingly loud television, inattention to requests, and a new kind of stubbornness may actually be the unresponsiveness that signals a hearing loss. When absorbed in an activity, SIX may occasionally pull on her ears — another sign of hearing loss.



*"You know...everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects."*  
—Will Rogers—

## Grade 1 Week 18



### Dreaming

SIX's dreams tend toward opposite extremes: funny or frightening, nice or bad, jolly or angry.

The most common thing six-year-olds dream about is fire. TV creatures like ghosts or skeletons also bring dream-fright. Girls dream about bad men at their windows or under furniture. Girls may also dream their mothers may have been injured or even killed.

SIX may cry out in his sleep and wake, but a brief period in bed with parents restores his equilibrium. Then he can be put back in his own bed where his next dream could be funny or happy. SIX is also known to laugh, talk out loud, call names, and give orders in his sleep: "Don't do that! Put that down!"

When SIX is frightened about a dream (and remember, all six-year-olds get frightened) let him tell you about it in great detail. Ask questions to help him recall as much as he can. If the same dream occurs with the same details time and time again, be alert for sources of stress in his life.

### Scheduling

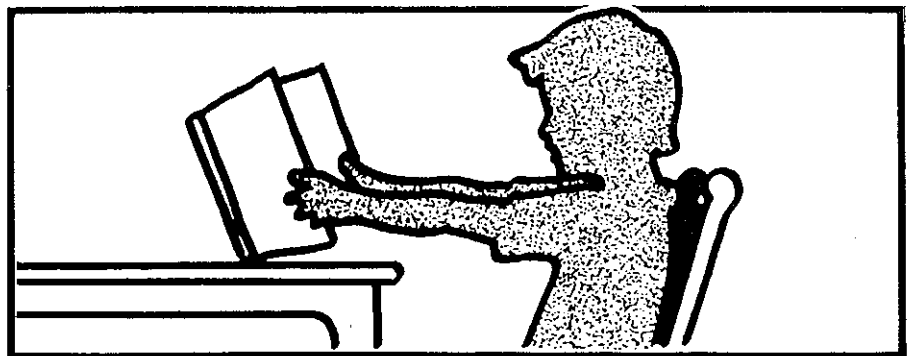
Since SIX is inside for longer periods of time due to shorter days and wintry weather, and since he is now involved in "real work" as he calls it, this is a good time for him to start a quiet time after the evening meal for homework.

He will not have much real homework yet, but he will be bringing home his papers and possibly some supplementary readers or an addition sheet. These will let you check on his progress, his strengths, his weaknesses. This quiet time (not a long time, though) for extra practice is a positive beginning for structuring SIX's day. He will need this structure later when there will be real homework responsibilities. SIX will be happy to have your full attention for a bit and to "do work" like older siblings. Most of all, he will like your praise for a job well done.

### Attention eyes

Watch SIX write. Is he tilting his head too far to one side? Does he lay his head on his other arm? When he reads, does he hold the book too close to his eyes? Does he make fewer mistakes, or read with greater smoothness when he holds a book at arm's length?

These are all behaviors that tell you he needs an eye examination. At this time, don't worry too much if he runs his forefinger along the line of print to keep his place. After all, this reading is new and he wants to do it well for you.



*"Children generally hate to be idle. Take care then that their busy humor should be constantly employed in something that is of use to them."*

—John Locke—

## Grade 1 Week 19

### Me first!

SIX wants to be first in everything. Therefore, younger siblings who require care and attention often threaten SIX's feeling of "firstness."

SIX may appear at times to be consumed by "Me first!" For example, her whole day may be spoiled if a younger sibling gets to the breakfast table before she does. And she can also be most jealous of the very sibling of whom she is most proud.

She is also jealous of any attention or present given a younger sibling by a guest, but is reassured of her position with some simple attention — an "I love you" smile or an arm around the shoulder. The lecture approach ("You mustn't be jealous, that's not nice!") only aggravates the situation. At this stage when her intense awareness exceeds her ability to manage self and events, she is terribly vulnerable. If her needs are met now, she can more easily discard her egocentric demands later.

Take heart. At least SIX gets along fairly well with older siblings — as long as they don't treat her "like a little kid!"

### More about TV

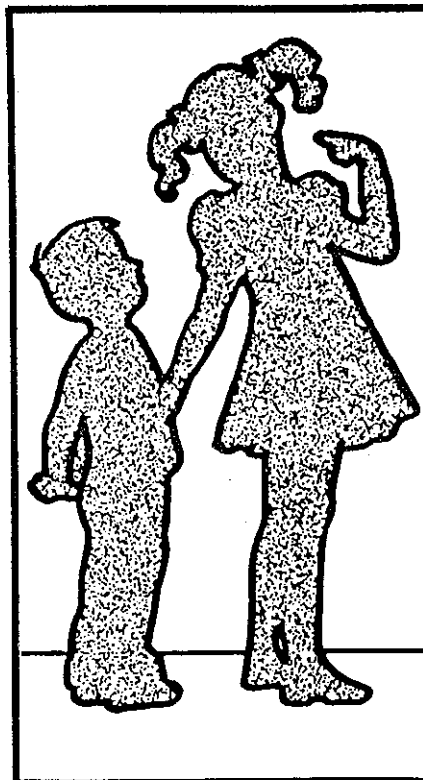
Whereas television may help increase children's vocabularies and supply them with facts, it seems to have a dampening effect on creativity.

Why? The passive nature of television viewing is the important factor, especially if television becomes a substitute for socializing with other children or adults. Get the child involved in the real world, interacting with real people and real places — and most important, in **doing**.

Some alarming statistics:

- The average American child devotes more time to TV before entering first grade than she spends in school during the first six grades.
- By the time a student is 18, she will have spent nearly two years in front of a television.

Families can engage in a variety of real activities in their home. There's lots to share, work, and also play.



### Warning: strangers

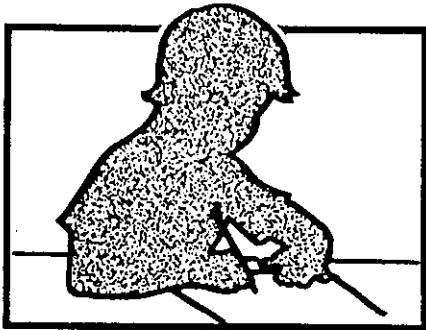
Now is a good time to remind SIX again about not talking to strangers or accepting rides or candy from them. Six-year-olds have to be reminded often because of their vascillating, impetuous nature. Besides, even if she rides the school-bus, her range in neighborhood play has probably increased from next door to this block or perhaps even further. The greater the range, the greater the likelihood she will encounter strangers.

*"Children have more need of models than of critics."*  
—Joseph Joubert—

# Grade 1 Week 20

## Summary 16-19

# Growing Up



### Check now for good vision, hearing

Physically, winter can be a rough time. Watch closely for ear infections that often recur or appear at the end of a cold. Symptoms:

- Crankiness
- Inattention to requests
- Louder television
- Pulling on ears

A hearing loss, however temporary, can put a student behind developmentally.

Also make sure your child can see well. While she's reading watch for head tilting or holding the book too close or too far away. Make sure she can both see the blackboard and hear the teacher. Otherwise, she will miss some important learning experiences.

SIX should begin to lose any extra weight she's been carrying. It is extremely important that a child be healthy, trim, and able to hold her own on the school playground. Being welcomed in team play can strongly affect a child's social and emotional development and acceptance among peers.

"ME FIRST!" seems to be SIX's constant demand. This is very typical, and if you humor her now as much as possible, she will soon outgrow the need to always be first.

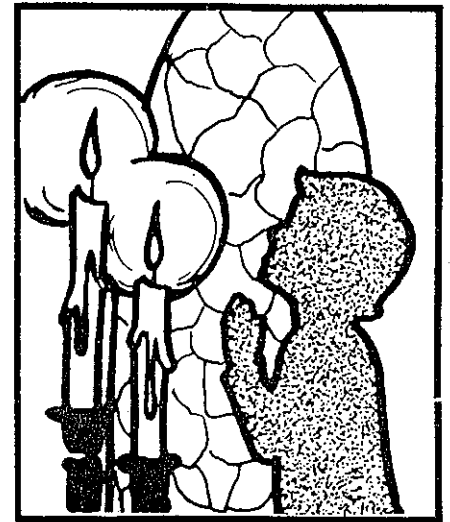
You may also notice that SIX swings from being very mature to being very babyish. Especially when she gets fatigued, she wants to go back to the comfort of being a baby and not having to do hard things or take any responsibility. Quiet time, adequate rest, and a little extra loving will calm and reassure SIX.

Her dreams are very vivid now, too, and they're sometimes funny, sometimes scary. Listen to the details of the scary ones: if they repeat, be on the lookout for sources of stress in your child's life.

Excessive television-watching can dampen a child's creativity. Rather than having the set on from supper until bedtime, try scheduling a "homework" session for SIX. She'll enjoy the extra attention and you can check on her progress, strengths, and weaknesses.

Remind SIX once again to be wary of strangers. Because six-year-olds are so impetuous and changeable and are extending their boundaries ever further from home, it is important to repeat safety messages often.

SIX is gaining more money sense now and enhancing math readiness by saving and counting money. She's also learning what it means to save something today in order to get something else with it later. She's also getting practice in decision-making.

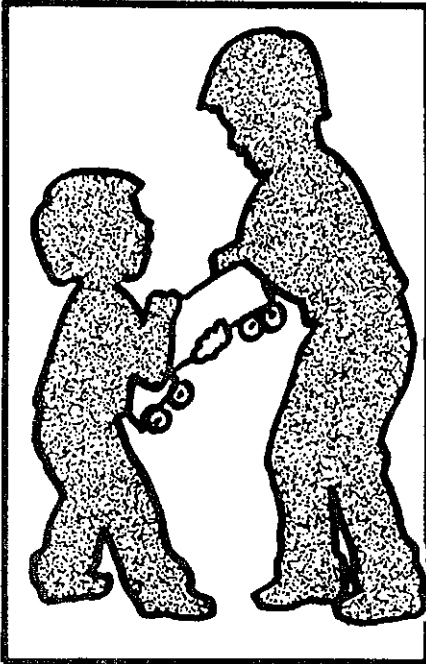


SIX is also very receptive now to religious teachings, stories, and ceremonies. Use this opportunity to share your family and religious heritage by reading, talking, acting out, and participating.

*"I love these little people; and it is not a slight thing when they, who are so fresh from God, love us."*

—Charles Dickens—

## Grade 1 Week 21



### Taking stock

SIX has been in "real school" doing "real work" for one entire semester. Looking back, it has been "real" for you too, hasn't it? And it has been intensely "real" to SIX with all his built-in-but-normal developmental foibles. Now, during the next semester things are going to become a bit different.

The pace will quicken and SIX will learn even more. Subtraction is now center-stage, and if addition is sometimes a mysterious operation to SIX, subtraction will become sinister.

It is time to phone for a visit with the teacher. You need the whole truth and you need it now. If there have been "gaps" in his learning caused by absences, his teacher can tell you how to be of help.

### Good times and bad

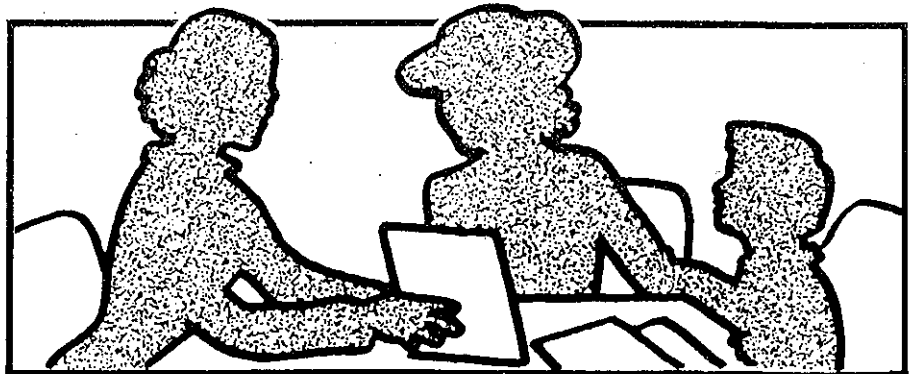
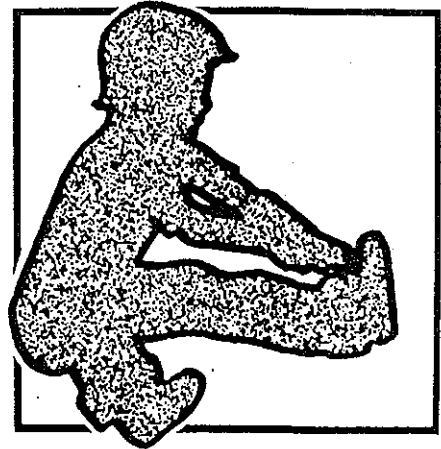
SIX is often hard to live with. At times he goads his family into an uproar. He's bossy with younger siblings. He argues, teases, bullies, frightens, torments, makes them cry, hits, gets angry, and may on occasion fight ferociously. Younger siblings irritate him.

His main problem is simply being six-years-old. Are there any solutions? No certain ones except the passage of time. But calm and firm removal from the scene to the "thinking chair" or distraction before he is totally involved helps. Spanking or a good tongue lashing will only prolong the problem.

### Healthy feet

Spring will soon be here. At recess the playground will be filled with noise and motion: jumping, running, hopping, ball-play with its many variations. Healthy feet at this age want to move, but ill-fitting shoes can make even healthy feet sluggish.

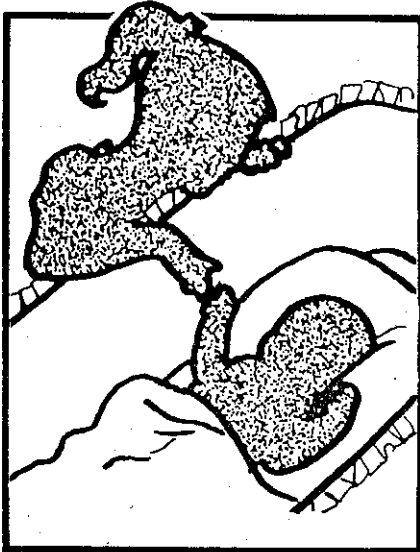
Check those shoes. If new ones are needed, consider the proper shoe for active play. SIX must hold his own on the playground because there, even more than in the classroom, he makes or loses his place among his peers.



*"I do not know how I appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."*

—Issac Newton—

## Grade 1 Week 22



### And babies

Is there going to be a new baby in your family? SIX will be delighted! When should you tell her? And what should you tell her?

Don't tell her too soon. A month or two is quite long enough for her to wait. The pregnancy period is not of much interest to SIX. She acts as if she were blind: she is scarcely aware of an enlarging abdomen, even if it is her own mother's.

What do you tell her? SIX is only vaguely interested in how a baby starts. She now seems to grasp the idea of the baby starting from a seed. She is quite satisfied with that much information at this time. What she is interested in is that there will be another baby in the family. She likes babies. She has been known to ask for another when she already has a sibling two or three months old.

### Talking about sex

If you have not decided how you are going to approach sex education with SIX, it is time to think about it. The relative unconcern that five-year-olds show toward sex vanishes at six years of age.

SIX's interest in sex now covers many new and varied fields: marriage, the origin of babies, pregnancy, birth, the opposite sex and a new baby in the family. The "how" is still beyond her grasp. A few children who may be told about the "how" by older children usually go to a parent to have them confirm or deny the facts. Then the matter is usually dropped and SIX shows little interest until the age of eight or older.

SIX shows her level of interest by giggling over "bathroom words" or the exposure of a "belly button." An older child, eight or older, may "play doctor" with SIX. This happens frequently. Take it calmly but in the future prevent the circumstances that allowed it to happen.

You should also know that generally children who have their sex questions answered indulge less in experimentation. Those who continue to wonder about the differences in the sexes are more likely to experiment to find out.

Also, don't worry about giving the child "ideas" by offering information that is too advanced. The child will simply be bored by it, not excited. She will stop listening or will change the subject.

Additional reading: Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 549: *Sex Education: The Parent's Role*. Cost: 50¢. Order from: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 381 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

### Riddles

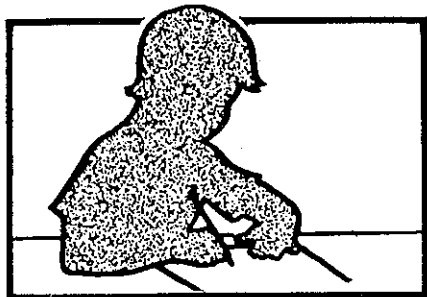
What did one stick say to the other? (I'm broke!)

What did one salad say to the other salad? (I'm all mixed up!)

Riddles! SIX will love them if you keep them simple. When you first try one, SIX will be perplexed. When you tell her the answer she will generate a huge amount of mental activity trying to understand. She will laugh out loud when she finally catches on. And she'll feel great when she passes it on to one of her peers. But primarily, riddles are for thinking!

*"What good are straight teeth and trumpet lessons to a person who cannot see the grandeur the world is charged with?"*

—Katherine Paterson—



### Keeping vision on the level

Have you observed your six-year-old laying her head on one arm while she writes or draws? That's a danger signal to you that she may have vision problems.

When a child lays her head on her arm, she is using only one eye — the eye on the same side as the hand she's using.

She needs, instead, to use both of her eyes together — called "binocular" vision. If she doesn't, she may develop "lazy eye" (where one eye works harder than the other) or inadequate depth perception (which hinders gathering of visual information and leads to accidents).

If you see your six-year-old "laying down on the job," interrupt her immediately. Ask her to put her elbow on the table, then make a fist with that hand on that arm, and last tuck the fist under her chin. That's the distance her chin should be from the writing surface. Get a higher chair or a lower table if necessary to maintain the proper distance.

### Scheduling for work and play

With all of SIX's intense needs taking turns hammering away at her, she really needs some constants to give her structure. Is she getting 11 hours of sleep? Is she rising early enough in the morning to dress, toilet, and breakfast so that leaving home for school is not a frenzied, unsettling hassle? Has she settled into a routine of coming home, putting books and papers in her spot, getting a snack, playing outside a while, doing her particular family chores, watching a television program or playing a table game before dinner? (Take a deep breath, there's more to come.) A little homework, bath, being read to, lights out, and most important, time to talk about what's on her mind?

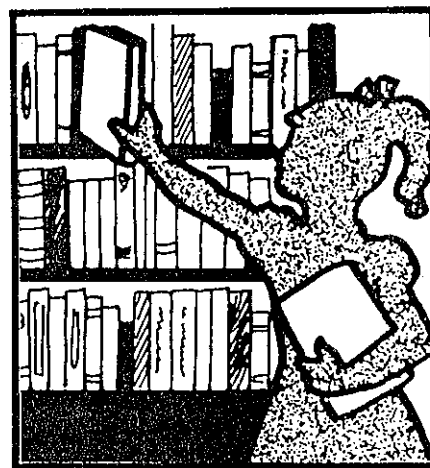
"It can't all be done," you say. Granted that such a routine is the ideal routine and family structures are very different. But consider which elements of this routine will be most helpful to your six-year-old and try to include those, if possible.

### Library time

Earlier in the year SIX was described as acquisitive, gathering collections of this and that, saving it all, much to your inconvenience at times. She wants her own things. Strike while the iron is hot, and let her get her very own library card!

On your next trip to the library make the event "ceremonious" (SIX will love this). You can unobtrusively monitor her selections, but she should take the lead. She will enjoy the ritual of checking out. She won't remember the return date, but even adults forget sometimes!

Remember, Grade 1 is one of the first steps out of the home toward her taking responsibility for her own life. As she pushes outward, it won't hurt to give gentle nudges in good directions.



*"It's not easy to be crafty and winsome at the same time, and few accomplish it after the age of six."*

—D. Suttin—

# Grade 1 Week 24 Summary 21-23

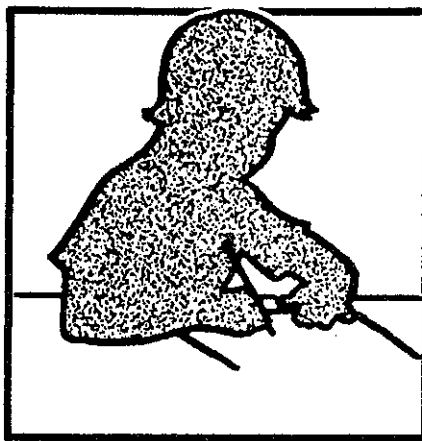
## Growing Up

### New year, new challenges

The second part of the school year brings new academic challenges. Now is a good time to confer with your child's teacher and take steps to correct any problem areas. Getting—or keeping—your child on a structured, regular, consistent schedule will help control the worst of the emotional swings, although you will have to suffer a while longer until SIX grows out of his tendency to goad the family into an uproar by teasing, tormenting, and fighting with younger children—a typical SIX action.

Last fall's shoes are probably worn out or outgrown by now. Buy new ones with an eye to the increased physical activity spring will bring.

A free, and very useful, addition to SIX's collections of "things" is a library card. Picking out books gives decision-making practice and encourages the enjoyment of reading.



### Reinforce good habits

Also, notice if SIX is "laying down on the job" when he writes or draws. Don't let him work with his head down on one arm. This practice can lead to "lazy eye" or inadequate depth perception. The distance from elbow to fist is the proper distance to be from table work.

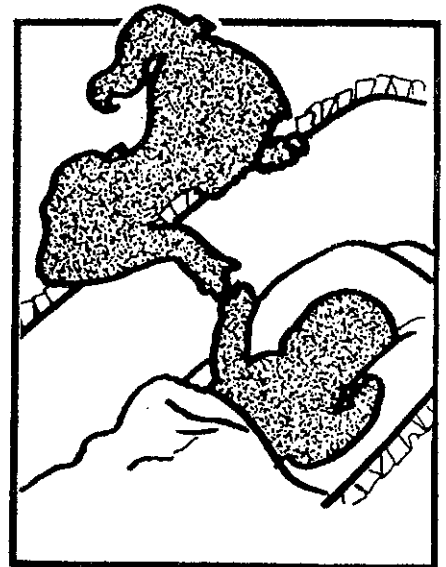
### Talking to SIX about sex

Think, too, about talking to your six-year-old about sex. He's not ready for in-depth discussions yet, but he is interested in marriage, babies, pregnancy, birth, and the opposite sex. Tell him as much as he's interested in hearing.

If there's going to be a new baby in your family, don't tell too far in advance. A couple of months is long enough for a six-year-old to have to wait.

SIX will go along with older children who want to "play doctor." Don't overreact when this happens: in the future simply prevent the circumstances that allowed it to happen in the first place. Studies show that children who get answers about sex from their parents are less likely to experiment anyway.

Be an askable parent.



*"If I were asked what single qualification was necessary for one who has the care of children, I should say patience—patience with their tempers, with their understandings, with their progress. It is not brilliant parts or great accomplishments which are necessary for teachers, but patience to go over first principles again and again; steadily to add a little every day; never to be irritated by willful or accidental hindrances."*

—Francois de la Fenelon—



## Grade 1 Week 25

### Writing skills

Are you concerned with SIX's printing? When she hands you a slightly-rumpled, much-erased paper with letters crooked and spaced unevenly, you may think she should be doing better by this time of year.

Before you give a lecture on neatness, you should know that sloppy printing is not unusual at this time. SIX will tell you that she does not like to copy from the board. She may say, "I hate writing, especially from the board. It makes my hand hurt. It takes too long." Teachers confirm that most children do not like writing.

There is a good physical reason for this. At this age, children's vision is still not entirely developed. SIX is just becoming able to see the words on the board at a distance, then see them on paper without losing her place.

As the ability to focus back and forth from distance to close work gets better, SIX will be able to give more attention to the formation and placement of letters. Now, however, she is under stress just "keeping her place." Toward the end of school, if there has not been a significant improvement, then begin to search for underlying reasons.

### Pilot to co-pilot

Have you noticed that SIX's understanding of space and distance is expanding? She probably has made comments on the way to the library, for example, that show she knows where she is. She may say, "We're almost there. I know because there's the water tower."

She is interested now not only in specific places but in the relationship between home and other special places like the shopping center, the park, the church, and the school.

Even with this growing awareness, SIX sometimes has a vague fear of becoming lost if she does not stay on a specific route from one place to another.

You can help her over this fear by reinforcing the usual routes and then changing them slightly. Play these games:

- Let SIX be "navigator." You are pilot. Pilot to navigator: "Tell me where to turn at the next intersection. We are going to pick up the cleaning."

- "We are going to the store a new way today. Watch closely. We will be going by the Dairy Queen. First one to see it has Magic Seeing Eyes!"

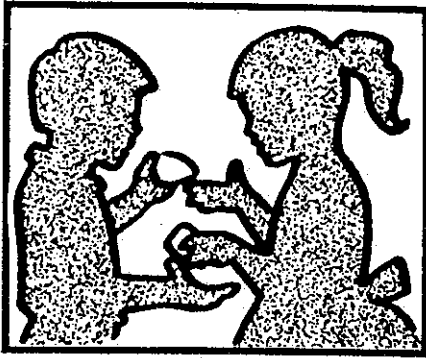
- SIX is navigator today. "Six, tell me where to turn to take us home if we leave the library by this street instead of the usual one."

Such games not only help the development of space orientation but they also turn a sometimes discontented, tired, and whining child into an alert observer. Try it! And remember, whenever you're in a car, to buckle your own seat belt and your child's seat belt, too.



*"The great end of education is to discipline, rather than to furnish the mind, to train it to the use of its own powers, rather than fill it with the accumulations of others."*

—Tyron Edwards—



### Miser, magpie, swapper

SIX continues to crave possessions. He still hoards things: he is a miser. He may be so "overcome" with desire for something that in his impulsiveness he "takes" a small trinket. SIX is a magpie.

There is still another side to SIX: he is a swapper. He has found that "swapping" is another way to acquire possessions. Here again SIX demonstrates the to-and-fro swings of this age level.

Whereas he is almost greedy for possessions, he may also overdo his generosity — and primarily because of a greater interest in giving than in receiving.

SIX really needs to be protected from giving away his really valuable possessions. So you may need to step in diplomatically and say, "SIX can't swap this. It was a gift from his grandmother."

Miser, magpie, swapper. Ah, SIX, you are so interesting, frustrating — and lovable. You are an enigma.

### Why is he rude?

If you have your child in any kind of day care arrangement, you will certainly hear, sooner or later, that he was "fresh, nasty, insulting, impudent, rude, and argumentative."

This happens to single parents raising their children alone. It happens to two-parent families where both parents work, and it happens to families where one parent is home most of the time and the day care is only occasional.

Why?

It's because SIX feels that his parents — his mother, especially — are the only ones who have the right to correct him.

When caregivers — even close relatives — take on rights SIX feels belong only to his mother or father, he reacts — and quickly. Mother and father have the right to "make him do things," to talk to him about "bad things he has done," and tell him what he can and can't do. But he resists this mightily from anyone else.

Mothers are privileged people. SIX's mother is actually the one person who is his real support. A relative or babysitter may expect a reply like, "I won't. You're not my mother. You can't make me."

It's all so logical to SIX. "They" are not the authority: mother and father are. Don't chastise him with an angry reaction when this happens. Try to keep the relationship intact. Even though he is growing away from his parents a bit every day, he will need to know you are there a while longer.

You may think that it's not good for him to get by with such "smart backtalk." Punishment by the caregiver will not be logical to SIX. You, the authority, should give the punishment.

Furthermore, the rude incident will have happened long before you return home. As far as SIX is concerned, it never happened. It is better to talk to the caregiver about how to frame requests, not demands, in a way that will get a positive response. Remember, this is a temporary situation, and it will pass.

*"Never fear spoiling children by making them happy. Happiness is the atmosphere in which all good affections grow."*

—Thomas Bray—

## Grade 1 Week 27

### Reading progress

Does SIX still read with a finger under each word or a marker under each line? Depending on the reason, this may not be a cause for alarm.

If she wiggles, repeats, and reads in spurts, relax! She is simply under pressure to show you the miracle that has happened: she can read! We forget that this newly-acquired skill is the result of bringing together a highly complex operation using many different parts of the brain. Like learning to catch a ball or jump rope, it requires practice to become smooth and automatic.

If, on the other hand, she cocks her head on one side or the other, rubs her eyes more than at other times, or has moist or watery eyes after reading, it may be that she needs her finger to mark her place for another reason: her eyes are not working efficiently.

Eyes do a lot of "growing-up" between six and seven years of age. The changes normally should make SIX's reading become smoother and permit her to read without using her finger to hold her place. If changes do not occur as they should, the stress SIX feels, plus the comments she gets, could greatly alter SIX's positive feelings about school.

Observe carefully. Another visual exam may be in order.

### Agile thinking

Here is a thinking exercise to help SIX develop an agile mind. It's called "What if?"

Ask SIX to recall a story and predict the outcome if the circumstances were different. For example, read *Jack in the Beanstalk* and then ask "What if..."

...Someone cut down the beanstalk while Jack was still in the giant's castle?

...Jack sold the cow just as mother told him to and brought her the money?

You and SIX will have a few laughs and you will be surprised at how agile her thinking already is.



*"You cannot teach a child to take care of herself unless you will let her try to take care of herself. She will make mistakes; and out of these mistakes will come her wisdom."*

*—Henry Ward Beecher—*

### "I've told you three times!"

"I've told you three times to pick up your things!"

Does that sound familiar? With a certain tone of voice and on the third time you probably get action, even though it is accompanied by a bit of frowning and a dirty look. She's normal!

Many children, especially six year olds, need to be reminded of a thing two or three times before it sinks in enough to spark a response.

You think she can't hear you? She heard. But it takes a repetition or two for the request (or sound) to register and penetrate the active, multi-faceted, disorganized processing going on continually in SIX's brain.

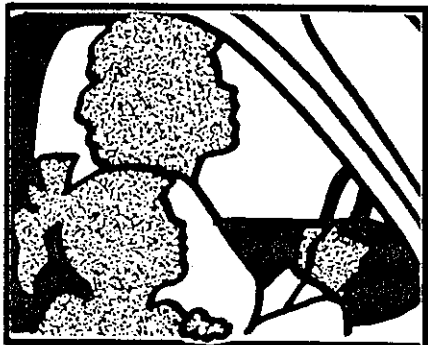
Try this. Go to SIX. Gently touch her so that she looks as well as listens to you. Make your requests quietly and politely.

Why? Since she's SIX, her response may vary with her mood. A sharp demand may arouse the tyrant in SIX. Whatever the age, most people respond quicker to a request than a demand.

# Grade 1 Week 28

## Summary 25-27

# Growing Up



### Abstract concepts of space, time, distance become clearer

SIX's understanding of space and distance is getting better. He can tell you where you are according to familiar landmarks. He gets afraid sometimes, though, of getting lost, so play "navigator" games with him to increase his sense of direction.

- Have him tell you where to turn on a familiar route.
- Have him watch for landmarks on new routes.

His thinking is more agile now, too. He can talk about abstract concepts. A good game to play to increase this skill is "What if?" Ask a question, any question, starting with "What if...?" The question can be absurd, "What if you could only eat purple food?" And the answer could be absurd, too, "Then I'd eat grapes and purple cows!"

Asking "What if" also prepares a child for real-life situations: "What if a stranger offered you a ride?" "What if you woke up at night and smelled smoke?"

Along with being better at distances and abstract concepts, SIX also seems sometimes to be incredibly rude and disobedient. Babysitters and other care givers will tell you that SIX is rude, fresh, nasty, insulting, argumentative, and impudent.

This happens because SIX thinks only his parents have the right to tell him what to do. When anyone else tries to make him do something or correct him for something, he feels they're infringing on his parent's domain.

The best way to handle these incidents is to talk with the babysitter or caregiver about ways to frame requests so that SIX will comply gladly.

You may also think SIX is hard of hearing, after you've told him three times to do something. Actually, the problem is that while his hearing is probably fine, his concentration is on something else and your words or sounds simply do not penetrate.

Try this: go to him and touch him gently. Make him look at you as well as listen to you while you tell him what it is you have to say. You'll get better results — in less time.

Reading and writing are skills that SIX is polishing in this last half of his first school year. His printing will still be crooked and the letters will be grouped awkwardly. This is because his eyes have not yet finished adjusting to having to focus first on a distant blackboard and then on a close paper on his desk. He sometimes has trouble keeping his place. Practice will help.

Many first graders still use a finger or marker to keep their place in reading. It may be because he's excited that he's reading to you. But if you notice him rubbing his eyes or cocking his head, it may be because he has vision problems. Observe him, then take action if needed.

SIX loves to swap things with his friends. Erasers, pencils, matchbox cars, lunches. You may have to intervene when he tries to swap his baby sister or his new winter jacket.

He also loves collecting things, and having things. But most of all, he loves *giving* things. It's a nice habit to have.

*"With children we must mix gentleness with firmness. They must not always have their own way, but they must not always be thwarted. If we never have headaches through rebuking them, we shall have plenty of heartaches when they grow up."*

—Charles H. Spurgeon—

## Grade 1 Week 29

### Plain speaking

When SIX is speaking — rapidly or slowly — you may still notice a few errors in articulation. It's as if her tongue gets lost in her mouth.

Some children are still putting the finishing touches on the complex area of speech development. S sounds and v-f-th sounds may now and then be mispronounced, especially when a child is under stress.

The best treatment: Don't let SIX know you noticed. And don't let older siblings comment or imitate. Contact her home-room teacher about a check from the speech and hearing teacher, however, if the problem continues next year.

In the meantime, speak clearly, in short sentences, and not too rapidly. Make sure you have eye contact with SIX before you state your message. A good model provides a good learning experience.

### Hyperactive or six?

You may wonder, "Is my child hyperactive?"

He seems to move through the house like a tornado, leaving a cluttered path of destruction. He can't sit still during meals. He wriggles and flings his arms and legs about. He is easily frustrated and his moods appear to change from one extreme to another.

If your child exhibits most of these behaviors on a very frequent basis, it is possible that he may be truly "hyperactive" and therefore in need of professional help. On the other hand, if he exhibits these behaviors only occasionally, it is likely that his behavior is just what is characteristic of some very healthy six-year-olds.

In other words, it is not just the behaviors that need to be observed, but also the frequency with which those behaviors occur. Most children outgrow the tornado-like behavior that is a part of being SIX. But if the problem appears to be more acute, then a professional evaluation should be sought.

### Give SIX the respect she deserves

Although SIX is more emotionally stable now, the joy she feels will change quickly to resentment and anger if you forget to respect her as a little person.

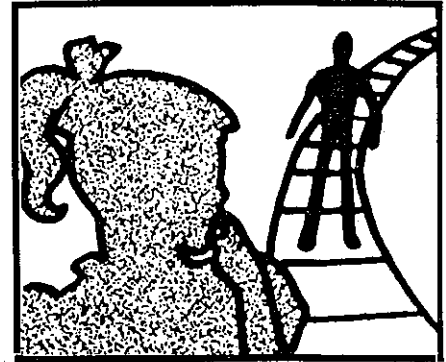
She resents authority arbitrarily imposed. "Be-

cause I said so!" won't do.

She also resents punishment or being reprimanded before company — and rightly so.

*"The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil."*

—R.W. Emerson—



### Sex abuse

Statistics regarding increased sexual molestation and abuse of children are alarming. Six years old is a dangerous age. Your child needs protection — but you cannot always be there.

Molesters and abusers are not always strangers. Neighbors, old family friends, even relatives have been known to sexually abuse a child. This means you can't describe a certain kind of person to avoid, nor can you warn about specific places to stay away from.

Simply tell SIX that her body belongs to her and that she should allow no one to touch her in special places. Go on to say that if the person persists, SIX should run to where a group of adults are, and by all means, tell Mother.

You don't want to create a fearful, neurotic SIX, but she should realize that she does not have to submit to such treatment.

## Grade 1 Week 30

### Cheating

"Tattle-tales" are not favorites of parents or teachers. One wonders, "What's wrong with that kid to be so happy about someone else's misfortune?"

However, if you get a report that SIX had to "stay in at recess" because he "cheated," be glad someone told you. You need to look into the matter before it becomes a problem.

The problem is not the actual act of "cheating" — or copying off a neighbor's paper. Little folks in kindergarten and first grade think of copying simply as sharing. And "sharing" is greatly emphasized. If a child doesn't know what to put down, his neighbor shares.

The real problem is: Why did he need to copy? That's the important thing. Is there a gap in his learning somewhere? Or was he talking instead of listening?

What to do? Go to school, see the paper, bring it home, and watch how SIX performs on similar problems you give him. You may need to re-teach him the skills he's lacking. This is a better way to prevent "cheating" than preaching.

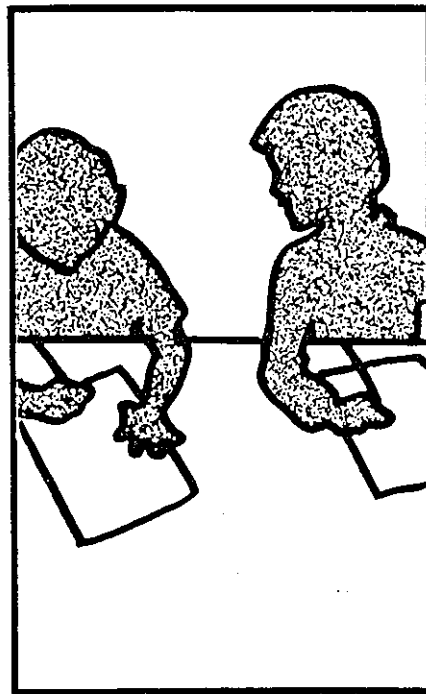
This is not one of the seven deadly sins now. Nip the need to look at a neighbor's paper before it becomes a habit.

### Enjoying school?

Does SIX still have that same good feeling about school that he had in the beginning? He was so confident. Remember, he couldn't wait to go to "real school" and do "real work."

Dislike of school, if it does develop, occurs toward the end of the year if a child, for one reason or another, has not been able to maintain his place in the group. If he dislikes school, it is very important to know why.

Remember, this is going to go on for at least eleven years more, so it's important that he like it. So observe, listen, and act quietly and wisely. SIX needs you.



*"If, when instructing a child, you are vexed with it for want of adroitness, try to write with your left hand. Then remember that a child is all left hand."*

—J.F. Boyse—

### Bicycle time

Most six-year-olds will ask for a bicycle. If at all possible, buy or borrow one for him. It's not that he simply wants another possession. He needs it for development of balance and locomotor skills.

Many children would be satisfied if they could borrow a small bicycle until they have learned to ride and have some successful experience.

### A new attitude

By this time, joy begins to figure more strongly in SIX's emotional life. Parents report a new kind of enthusiasm: he "loves" to do things.

He enjoys books, he enjoys the effort of working on things, and most of all he enjoys surprising his parents.

This is a pleasant new attitude emerging, but at times there is backsliding to earlier typical SIX behavior. However, the positive trend is strong enough so that SIX can resolve to "be good all day" — and do it!

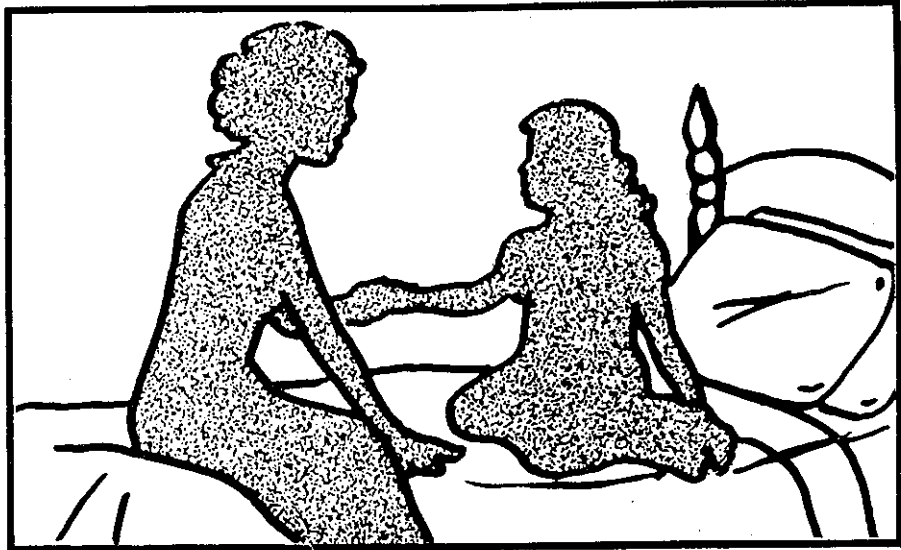
### Death

Six-year-olds think about death a lot. They are most fearful that Mother will die, and they have bad dreams about this.

SIX is beginning to be aware of deaths that occur in her immediate surroundings: neighbors, relatives, people at school. She is now realizing that besides dying of old age, people can be killed in auto accidents or wars.

There is also more pre-occupation than is outwardly observable about graves, funerals, and being buried in the ground. Six-year-olds discuss these matters with each other and don't like the thought of their relatives or themselves being buried.

Pictures of dead children can cause bad dreams. Seeing a dead animal is an experience a six-year-old doesn't forget easily.



### When SIX tells "tall tales" or lies

"Mom! SIX told a lie!"

Before you deliver a lecture, think.

Was it a "tall tale" or a "real lie?" Most six-year-olds are compulsive tall-tale-tellers, much more so than adults would like to believe. A clue to the tale being "tall" is that it is highly illogical, events do not naturally arise from the original "opening scene," and the tale in general is absurd.

When is it a lie?

When it appears that it could be a defensive act — a cover-up or protective story.

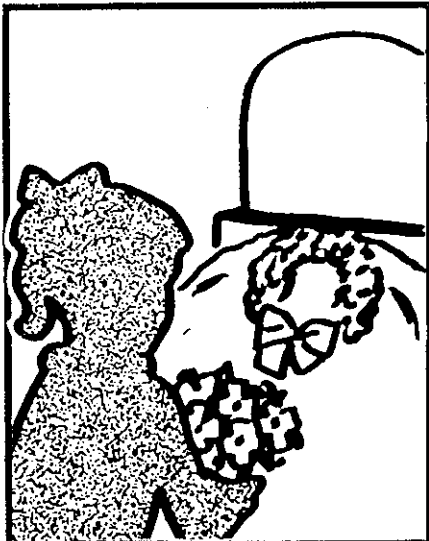
Fibbing is a habit that you don't want SIX to develop. But more important is the reason behind the fib. If it is defensive, then there is a problem SIX is concerned about. She doesn't know how to solve it. She has "fibbed" — but the problem is still there bothering her.

Punishing and shaming a child may make you feel like you have set her on the "straight and narrow," but it doesn't do anything for her. She still has the problem.

Tell SIX you think she is worried about something. Say, "Maybe I can help." Talk about it quietly at bedtime after the lights are out. She'll sleep better. You'll have greater insight into her needs. Best of all, SIX will be developing the habit of finding and looking at the truth squarely.

*"Parents who wish to train up their children in the way they should go, must go in the way in which they would have their children go."*

—Bacon—



# Grade 1 Week 32

## Summary 29-31

# Growing Up

### How to deal with lying, cheating, death

Now that SIX is in the wider world of school and away from home so much of the day, you may be more concerned about negative influences like lying and cheating.

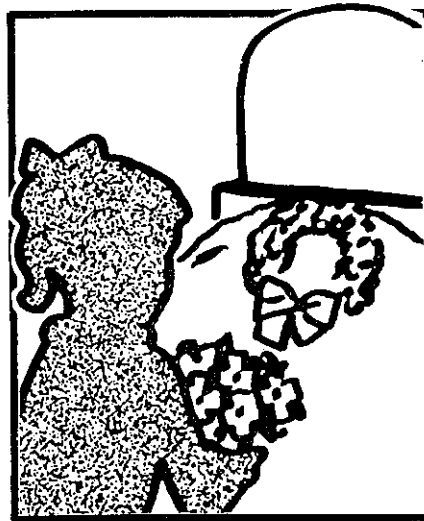
"Liar" is a hard word to apply to a six-year-old. Most SIX's are natural tall-tale-tellers, and this really doesn't do any harm. You can usually tell tall tales because some part—or all—of them is absurd.

Deliberately telling an untruth to cover up or protect an action or circumstance is another matter, however. SIX will usually "fib" when he faces a problem he doesn't know how to solve. It is much better to gently ask him to tell you about his problem than confront him with his "lie." That way you can help him over the trouble and teach him something about facing truth squarely.

Cheating is also something that bothers adults more than children. At the first grade level, copying off someone else's paper is considered "sharing," not "cheating." It is more important to find out why SIX did not know the answer—and then teach him what he didn't know—than to punish him for copying.

Death is a subject that holds morbid fascination for six-year-olds. They talk about it among themselves, and they often have nightmares that their mothers may die. Be alert to fears, remember that they *feel* real to the six-year-old. Reassurance will help.

On the brighter side, SIX is enjoying almost everything now. He enjoys books, school, and surprising his parents. He enjoys working and playing. He wants a bicycle, and if you possibly can, buy or borrow one for him. He needs it for development of his muscles and nerves and for balance. It's an important physical experience.



### Activity list

For a free list of recommended summer learning activities for first graders, send your name and address to "First Grade Summer Activities," Growing Up, P.O. Box 620, Lafayette, Indiana 47902.

*"Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not."*

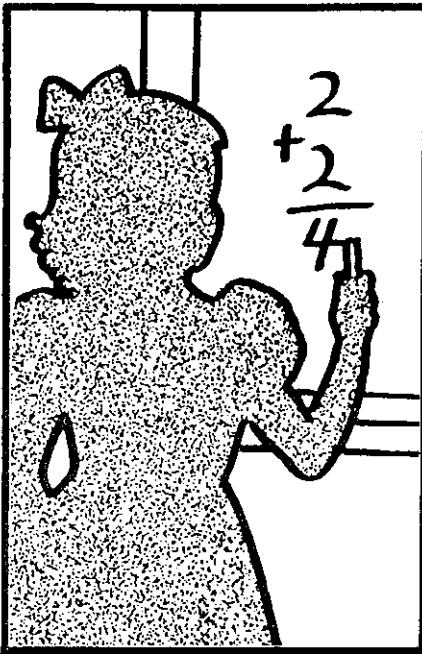
—John Ruskin—

Because SIX gets so excited about things, he often mispronounces words or sounds. This is natural and will go away by next year. If it doesn't, consult the speech and hearing teacher. But for now, just ignore slips, and don't let older siblings tease.

You may wonder if SIX is hyperactive. He tears through the house like a tornado and is rarely still. Here's how you can get a good idea: If he can snuggle quietly for a bedtime story and be relaxed, then he's probably not hyperactive. He's just SIX!

Sexual abuse is a constant concern for parents of both boys and girls. SIX is a dangerous age for this type of crime. Without making SIX fearful of everything and everybody, make sure he knows that no one—not babysitters, not relatives, not strangers—should touch his body or his "special places." Tell him his body is his, and if someone is bothering him, he should run to where grown-ups are, and then be sure and tell mother.





### Repeating grades

What if the teacher tells you your child should repeat the first grade?

Your initial reaction is probably anger. Then confusion. Then indecision. You think of reasons not to repeat:

1. She won't be with her friends.
2. Repeating doesn't do any good. It just makes kids feel "dumb."

In answer to Reason #1: Not so. She will make a new set of friends and have some from each grade. She won't be friends with everyone, anyway. And it's easier to make new friends at this age since cliques have not yet begun to form.

Grade One is absolutely the best level to repeat a grade. Children at this age really don't care for long who repeats. It is their older siblings and parents who feel the stigma.

In answer to Reason #2: Not so. Repeating a grade is beneficial if the reasons for repeating are due to immaturity, prolonged absence, or lack of mastery of basic skills.

Consider the teacher's reason why SIX needs another year in first grade. To function well in second grade, a child must have developed automatic functioning in skills of reading, writing, spelling, and using single digits in adding and subtracting. Although these operations are at a very simple level, they are the foundation for increasingly rapid growth in the next three years in the use of language and math.

There are also many bright children who, for a number of reasons, have what is classified as a "learning disability."

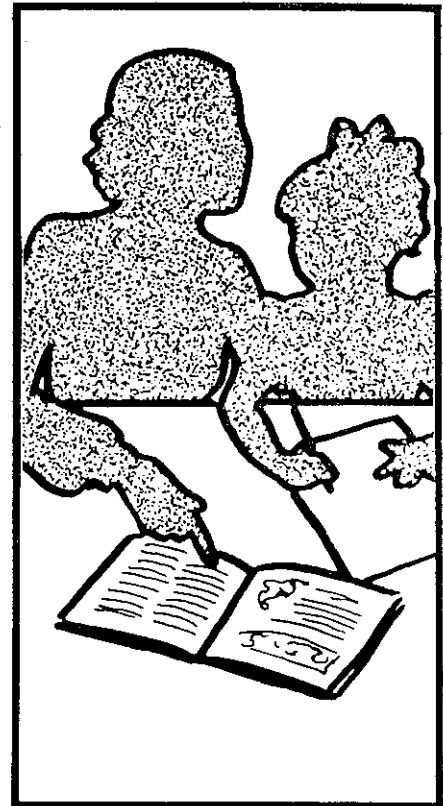
If the disability is tackled early and intensively, the problem can be minimized so that the child can make normal progress in school and not develop negative feelings about herself.

If you decide to let SIX repeat first grade, or even if you decide to send her on to second, find out why the teacher felt she was not ready. Then work with SIX to remedy the lack.

Where do you find someone to advise you about this? First consult your child's school. Also contact your local ACLD group (Association for Children with Learning Disabilities). This is a parent and professional organization which can offer help and support.

Ask at the library for resources.

It is unnecessary and unfair to SIX to send her on to second grade without a firm foundation.



*"America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what it is taught, hence watch what we teach it, and how we live before it."*

—Jane Addams—

## Grade 1 Week 34

### Summer learning

SIX doesn't stop learning when school dismisses for the summer. In fact, several important aspects of learning can occur that are as important as instruction by the teacher.

- SIX now applies her previous learning to new situations. For example, she can read many words by now, but if she always reads these only in the same books, the breadth of her learning is narrow. Have her read road signs, easy readers from the library, and whatever else she fancies. Now that she has "cracked the code", you will be surprised how easily she remembers new words you name for her.

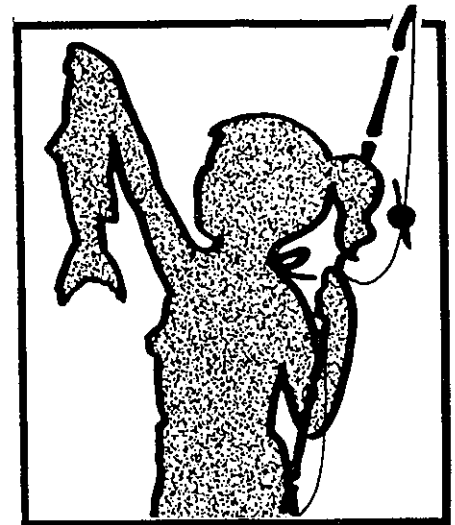
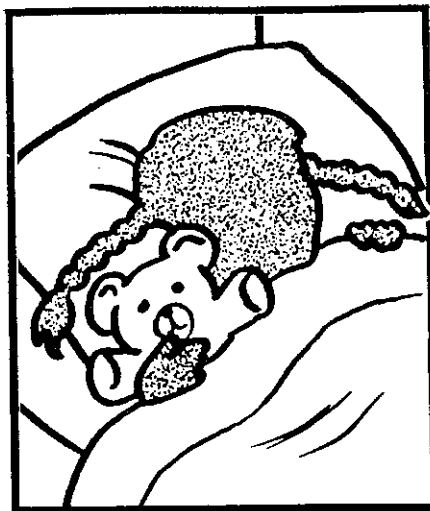
She can also apply her knowledge of arithmetic. If she has her addition facts fairly well stored away, give her opportunities to apply this learning by making change. Start with amounts under one dollar.

- Don't undervalue the aspect of learning about self. This includes SIX learning what she can do, what she likes, what she does not like—and why.

Where does this self-learning come from? In the back yard or the park playing throw, catch, bat, hopscotch, jump rope. Or just sitting still and patiently waiting for her bobber to go under to catch a fish, taking it off the hook, and putting on another worm—very demanding on attention and eye-hand coordination. Or hiking and collecting rocks, frogs and leaves, using powers of identification, categorization, and differentiation. Or learning the words to the family's favorite songs and playing travel games during a car trip—great for memory, visual scanning, attention—and a sense of belonging.

### Importance of sleep

Is SIX getting eleven hours of sleep a night? It is very important for growth. Investigators are still puzzled about why we sleep and have tried to assess the role of the various stages of sleep. We do know that the pituitary gland releases the growth hormone during the deepest stages of sleep and that this growth hormone plays a vital role in children's development.



### The devil made me do it!

SIX is developing a sense of right and wrong. Right now, she thinks in terms of "good things to do" and "bad things to do."

SIX thinks that everything her parents allow her to do is good; things which are forbidden are bad. Pinching, spilling milk, and slamming doors are bad things. Regretting such acts, even though they are not truly "wrong," shows that SIX has begun the art of differentiation. It is a lovely, innocent beginning.

SIX associates good and bad with what she has learned about God—and "the devil." With all her developing sensitivity to good things and bad things, SIX can make one of her turns and say, "the devil made me do it!"

*"If telling were teaching my child would be perfect."  
—William L. Howse—*



### Right! left! right!

SIX is just now learning to tell his own left hand from his own right hand. He has been "feeling" the difference inside him for several years now. His neuromuscular development has caused this "feeling" to become stronger each year. But getting the labels correct—left and right—is another matter. By the beginning of second grade, this skill should be securely established.

Even though SIX may be giving his hands the proper labels most of the time, don't expect him to tell you which is *your* left or right hand. His spatial concepts, like so many others, are not matured sufficiently yet.

### Summer schedules

Vacation is the time to work out the kinks in SIX's daily routine. There were probably many school mornings when there was a frenzied dash to the school bus with only a nibble for breakfast, unbrushed teeth, and dangerously trailing shoestrings.

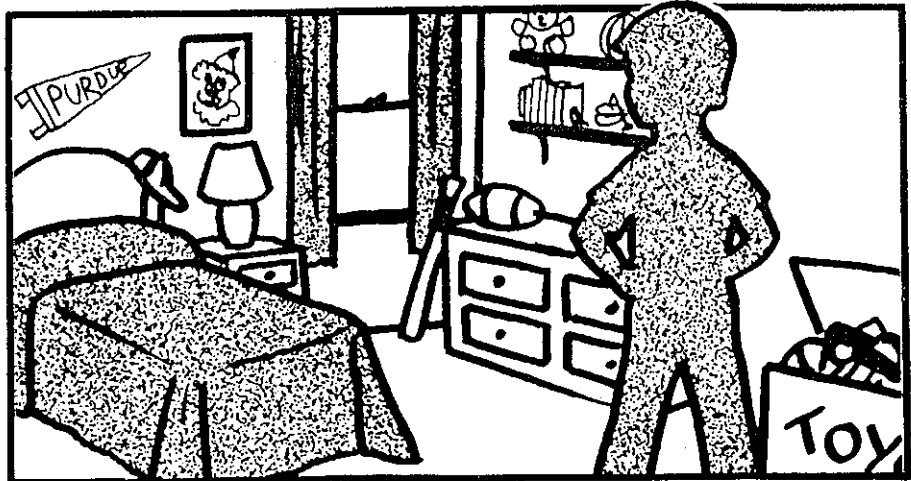
You might prefer to relax the routine just about now, but if some structure to the day is not organized the very first week, you may find yourself like the parent in Phyllis McGinley's poem *Vacation Time*:

"Breakfast is served from eight till ten,  
Lunch from eleven to three.

Dinner is also a staggered affair,  
And who does the staggering? Me!"

Hold a family meeting to discuss vacation schedules and rules. Point out the priorities: everyone has responsibilities so everyone can enjoy the recreation.

SIX can be responsible for keeping his room clean. There wasn't time during the year to really show him how and where to take care of his own things. Now is a good time to fully explain your criteria for a clean room and help him master one task at a time. If you teach him to see the whole problem—the messy room—and how to identify, separate, and deal with the parts one at a time, then by the end of summer, SIX won't be frustrated, and you won't be disappointed when you tell him to clean his room.



*"As are families, so is society. If well ordered, well instructed, and well governed, they are the springs from which go forth the stream of national greatness and prosperity—of civil order and public happiness."*

—William R. Thayer—

# Grade 1 Week 36

## Summary 33-35

# Growing Up

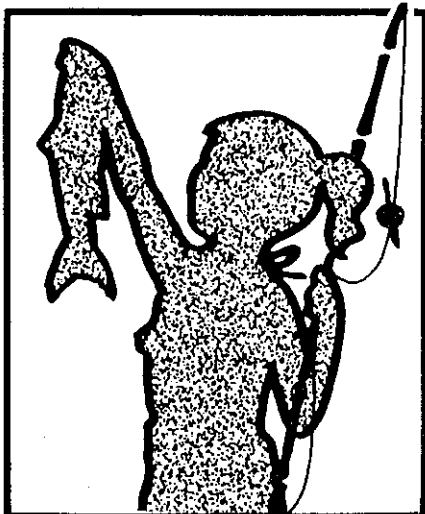
### Summer's here!

This too will pass!

The wild emotional swings that you've been seeing all year in SIX are finally beginning to moderate. SIX is able to hold a good mood much longer now and takes positive joy in working, doing, being. He is still prone to exaggerated fears, but can be easily reassured.

One of his fears this spring may have been that he wouldn't "pass" into second grade. So what happens if his teacher *does* tell you that he needs to repeat Grade One?

The most important thing is to find out why. If he is immature, if he has not gained automatic skill in reading, writing, and numbers, if he has had a prolonged absence, or if he is one of many children with some type of "learning disability," repeating the first grade may be the very best thing he could do.



If his teacher says he needs to stay back a year, make it your business to find out why, to help him learn needed skills over the summer, and to make the next year a good one for him.

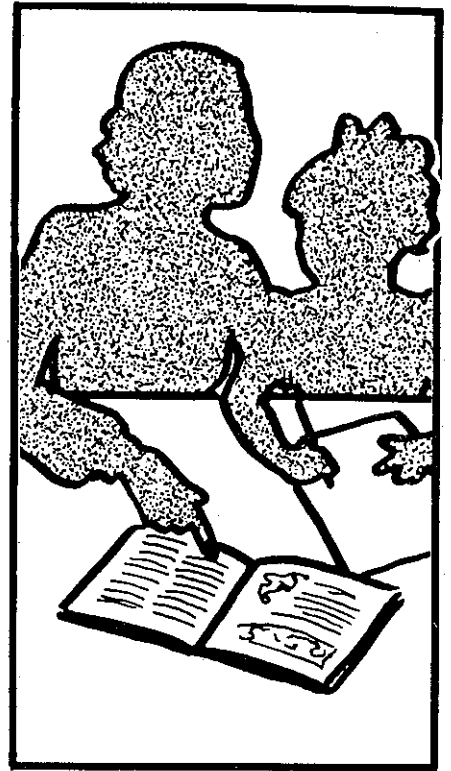
Repeating a grade is not a social stigma among first graders (although it may be among their older siblings or parents). Children at this age make friends easily and are not worried for long about who is repeating a grade.

And if there are academic skills SIX is weak in, his performance and attitude toward school may become negative if he is forced on to higher grades without a firm foundation.

Summer is also a good time for continuing or developing schedules. Scheduling chores into a daily routine will help SIX learn to take responsibility around the house. Take the time to show him exactly what you mean by "a clean room" and how to achieve that goal bit by bit. This will reduce the frustration he feels about not knowing what you want.

In the summer, learning can come in different ways than during the school year.

- Arithmetic skills are honed by money play—making change for \$1.
- Reading skills are reinforced by scanning road signs and taking out library books (on his own card).
- Physical skills are refined by running, jumping, swimming, throwing, hiking, fishing.
- Memory and attention are helped by learning songs and travel games.
- Differentiation and classification skills are sharpened by collections of similar natural things—rocks, bugs, leaves.



*"To each is given a bag of tools,  
A shapeless mass and a book of rules,  
And each must make, ere life has flown,  
A stumbling block or a stepping stone."*

—Anonymous—