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- Realistic aspirations, in accordance with their capacities, so that children have a reasonable chance of making a success of what they undertake, thus fostering favorable self-concepts.
 - Encouragement of creativity in play and avoidance of ridicule or unnecessary criticism which dampen young children's enthusiasm to try to be creative.
 - Acceptance by siblings and playmates, so that children will develop favorable attitudes toward social activities. This can be encouraged by guidance in how to get along with other people and by good home models to imitate.
 - A prevailing atmosphere of cheerfulness and happiness in the home so that children will learn to make the contributions to maintaining this atmosphere.
 - Achievements in activities important to the child and valued by the group with which the child is identified.

* Taken from *Developmental Psychology*, by Elizabeth B. Hurlock.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIVE- OR SIX-YEAR-OLD

Before the child starts first grade, he should have experienced a variety of movement activities designed to develop his motor skills. At this age, he should know how to:

1. Run in a coordinated manner without bumping into obstacles
2. Gallop, skip, hop, jump
3. Balance while standing on one foot.
4. Hit a large target by throwing a ball underhand or overhand.
5. Draw a circle, square, triangle, and rectangle.
6. Dress himself, including buttons and other reachable fasteners.
7. Tie shoelaces.

Children may not be able to do all of these perfectly, but they should be gaining control in these movements. Movement skills must come before cognitive learning.

At this age, children need to be trusted. If a child is unwilling to help a parent with a chore, the parent can say, "I know you don't want to do it, but I need help and know I can trust you to help me." Children should also be allowed to explore, play, create, and express themselves. Parents should let the child sing songs and tell stories that he composes, and let him plan, carry out, and evaluate his own learning experiences.

(Taken from *Understanding Children*, by Kay Kuzma.)