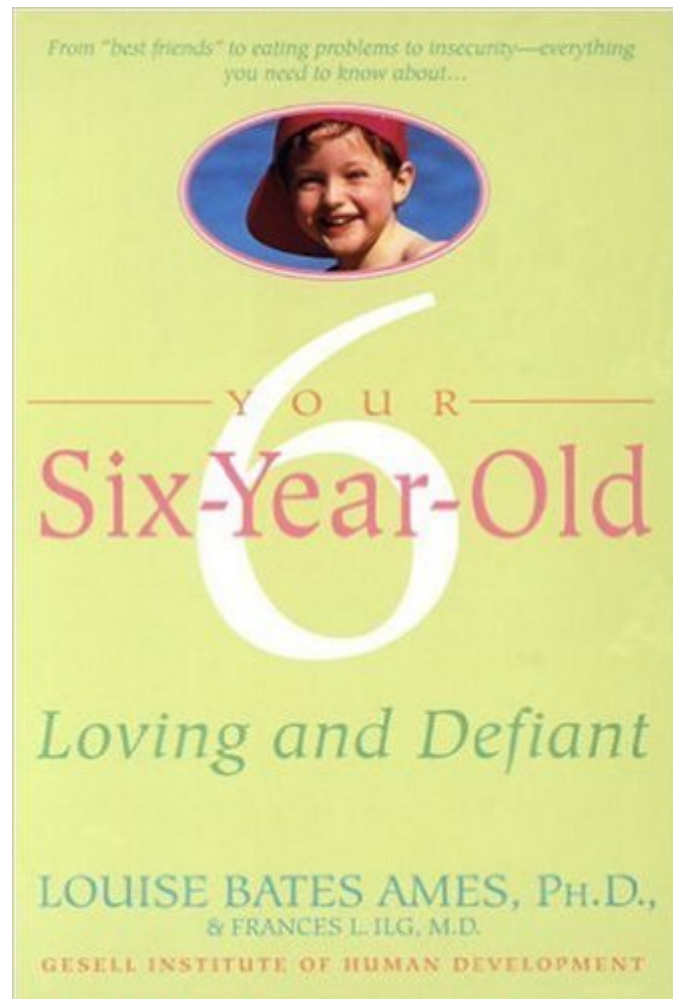


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Your Six-Year-Old: Loving And Defiant



Synopsis

The six-year-old is a complex child, entirely different from the five-year-old. Though many of the changes are for the good -- Six is growing more mature, more independent, more daring and adventurous -- this is not necessarily an easy time for the little girl or boy. Relationships with mothers are troubled -- most of the time Six adores mother, but whenever things go wrong, it's her fault. It used to be, at Five, that she was the center of the child's universe; now, the child is the center of his own universe. Parents need the expert advice of Drs. Ames and Ilg during this difficult year, to explain parent-child relations, friendships with peers, what six-year-olds excel at, how they see the world, what it feels like to be entering the first grade. Children need patience and understanding to help make this transition easier.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Overall, I liked the book. I was really looking for the 6-year-old version of "What to Expect: The Toddler Years." It didn't go into that degree of detail, but what it did cover was useful. The overriding message is that the time from 6.0-6.5 is volatile and often not much fun. Children are going through a lot of changes, very unsure of themselves, and need lots of reassurance (even when they're misbehaving terribly). The authors make the point that kids at that age typically aren't ready for advanced tutoring in morals, and suggest that simply ignoring a lot of the bad table manners, lying, pilfering, attitude, etc. can be the best approach. They observe that you can typically accomplish the same things better at age 7. I found the discussion of emotional development, mental development, and physical development -- and how to support each of those -- good background material. The

part where I think I made the most mental notes on my personal "to do" list was in the "Techniques" chapter. The authors suggest several general techniques including

1. Praise -- Sixes need more affirmation than other ages and are more fragile
2. Chances -- Say, "you've used up one chance. I'll give you two more chances to do ____"
3. Counting -- Say, "Let's see if you can do this before I count to 10."
4. Sidestep -- change the subject, change mode of interaction, etc.
5. Bargain -- "If you play nicely with your brother until lunch, I'll let you watch Scooby Doo while he's napping."
6. Give in -- think of yourself as modeling the behavior of compromising
7. Isolation -- Good old time out -- physically transporting the 6 to timeout if necessary
8. Ignoring -- Say, "I can't hear whining" or "I can't hear potty talk," i.e., let them know you're ignoring them
9. Not noticing -- just let the little stuff slide because it isn't all that productive at this age to try to reign it in

The book is somewhat dated -- not updated much since 1979 except for some of the recommended reading. This undermines the book cosmetically and to a lesser degree substantively. On the cosmetic level, the authors talk about TV as though shows come on at particular times or you miss them. They talk about being careful with records going onto record players, etc. On a more substantive level, the roles attributed to fathers and mothers are traditional, with mom at home and dad not all that involved in the kids' lives. They pay lip service to mom's working, but that concept isn't really integrated into the overall discussion very well. Since much of the discussion is about the intensity of 6's relationship with mom, I had to do some reading between the lines to apply those ideas to my situation. Similarly, much of the discussion about 6's dad seems based on the idea that dad is not physically around very much and is not all that accessible even when he's home, which I think is a lot less common today than it was 25 years ago. Overall, this is a short book (125 pages), and despite being a little dated, I thought it provided numerous good insights.

Another in the useful series "Your 'X' Year Old" from the Gesell Institute. The "techniques" section -- for how to get through daily tasks with your six-year-old -- is helpful and on-target. The book is at its best when describing the conversation and actions of "typical" six-year-olds. Occasionally the opinions expressed are quirky. For example, the authors establish that six-year-olds are often both clumsy and moody, and say that this can make mealtimes less than pleasant. They then suggest that the solution is to seat the child close to Mother and as far from Father as possible. (Presumably Mother can prevent accidents and soothe the child, while Father must not be disturbed!) For the reader who can skip over such occasional bits of nonsense, *Your Six-Year-Old* is a useful reference and helpful companion to the parent trying to understand and guide a child of six.

When my then 5 1/2 year old was behaving much differently than he had at age 5, and I thought I must have lost all of my parenting skills, my mother pulled out an old hardcover version of the Gesell Institute Books and - oh my! - much of the changes seemed to be quite common among 5 1/2 year olds! These are 'old' books (I'm one of the earliest of the baby boomers, though my child is now nearly 9), but they are still useful. This book and all in the series are little paperbacks, quick to read. Our society has changed since they were written, so a bit of the book may seem dated if you don't like 'traditional roles. However, there is much good information and wisdom in here, unencumbered by the modern day concerns about ADD and such. In expensive, a good investment to ease a parent's mind. A nice gift from grandparents to their own children, and for young parents, just nice to have on the shelf for those days when we forget that kids behaviors and interests change as they grow up.

A classic and must have for parents. It helps to know that you are not alone and going insane when such normal situations occur within your family.

As many, many, many other reviewers have stated, the language and assumptions in the book are extremely old-fashioned. I knew that going in, so my expectations were not high. I skimmed through the "old-fashioned" parts and had the whole book read in about four hours. There are some really good pieces of advice, however, and putting these "tricks" to work has helped me immensely to get my daughter moving past the defiance, and on toward the loving. Truly. Our crossed arms, defiant moments are a thing of the past. TIP #1. DONT GIVE DIRECT ORDERS. Example: "Put your shoes on now" may result in defiance. For better results: "Which shoes do you want to wear? Okay! How fast can you put them on?" We do a lot of racing now, lol. With everything. How fast can you shower / get dressed / eat / get in the car. It works every time. I just have to remember to be enthusiastic with how fast it was accomplished. "WOW! I've never seen anyone get so clean so fast!" TIP #2. DONT GIVE DIRECT ORDERS. Seriously. Just don't. It's a really hard habit to break. "Go put your pajamas on" is a natural thing to say. Then to get irritated that it wasn't done when you wanted it done, also natural. I didn't realize how often we told our kids what to do like that. In my mind we were "asking" that these things get done. But in reality, it was something that HAD to be done OR ELSE. Man - I'd be defiant too, haha. This racing that we do now has really changed so many of our interactions. No more crossed arms and refusing to do what I ask. Because I don't ask anymore. The opportunity for defiance is gone. There's a few more tips in the book provides that I used and found invaluable. Overall, the parts that helped me were about 10 pages in the whole book, but

those 10 pages have been an enormous help. Would recommend and would buy again. I took one star away for 90% of the book being something to skim over.

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