

### MIDDLE CHILDHOOD – 5 YEARS

#### Promotion of healthy habits

Be a role model for the child by having a healthy lifestyle.

Ensure that the child gets adequate sleep. For children through 5 years of age, the suggested bedtime is 7-8 P.M.; for those ages 6-10, it is 8-9 P.M.

Encourage regular physical activity.

Limit television watching to an average of one hour per day of appropriate programs. Watch the programs together and discuss them.

Teach the child about personal care and hygiene.

#### Injury prevention

Establish and enforce consistent, explicit, and firm rules for safe behavior.

Ensure that the child wears a seat belt in the car at all times.

Teach the child about safety rules for swimming pools. Teach the child how to swim.

Ensure that swimming pools in the child's community, in her apartment complex, or at her home have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Children should be supervised by an adult whenever they are in or near water.

Continue to put sunscreen on the child before she goes outside to play or swim.

Continue to keep the child's environment free of smoke.

Test smoke detectors to ensure that they work properly. Change batteries yearly.

Teach the child about safety rules for the home. Conduct fire drills at home. Lock up poisons, matches, and electrical tools.

Ensure that guns, if in the home, are locked up and that ammunition is stored separately. A trigger lock is an additional important precaution.

Teach the child about safety rules for getting to and from school. Teach pedestrian and neighborhood safety skills.

Teach the child about safety rules for bicycles. Teach the correct signals for traffic safety (e.g. right turn, left turn, and stop). Ensure that the child always wears a helmet when riding a bicycle.

Discuss playground safety with the child.

Ensure that the child is supervised before and after school in a safe environment.

Choose caregivers carefully. Discuss with them their attitudes about and behavior in relation to discipline. Prohibit corporal punishment.

Teach the child about safety rules for interacting with strangers (e.g. answering the telephone or the door, never getting into a stranger's car). Ensure that the child's school curriculum includes information on how to deal with strangers.

#### Nutrition

Serve the child three regular meals and two nutritious snacks per day.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable.

Encourage conversation.

Provide nutritious snacks rich in complex carbohydrates. Limit high-fat or low-nutrient foods and beverages such as candy, chips, or soft drinks.

Model and encourage good eating habits. Serve a variety of healthy foods.

Encourage the child to eat a balanced breakfast or ensure that the school provides one.

Ensure that the child eats a nutritious lunch at school, either through the school lunch program or by packing a balanced lunch.

#### Oral health

Ensure that the child brushes her teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Regularly supervise tooth brushing.

Give the child fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the child's drinking water.

Learn how to prevent dental injuries and handle dental emergencies.

If the child regularly sucks her fingers or thumb, begin to intervene gently to get her to discontinue.

Schedule a dental appointment for the child every six months, unless her dentist determines otherwise based on her individual needs/susceptibility to disease.

As the child's permanent molars erupt, ensure that her dentist evaluates them for application of dental sealants.

#### Sexuality education

Recognize that a child's sexual curiosity and exploration are normal.

Use correct terms for all body parts, including genitalia.

Obtain picture books on sexuality for family reading.

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#### **Promotion of social competence**

- Praise the child for cooperation and accomplishments.
- Encourage the child to talk with you about her school or friends. Answer her questions.
- Encourage the child to express her feelings.
- Encourage interactive reading with the child.
- Spend individual time with the child, doing something you both enjoy.
- Enhance the child's experiences through trips and visits to parks, libraries, and other places of interest.
- Provide opportunities for the five year old to interact with other children.
- Help the child learn how to get along with her peers.
- Promote physical activity in a safe environment.
- Set limits. Use time out and establish consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Encourage self-discipline and impulse control
- Expect the child to follow family rules, such as those for bedtime, television viewing, and chores.
- Teach the child to respect authority.
- Teach the child the difference between right and wrong.
- Teach the child how to manage anger and resolve conflicts without violence.
- Assign age-appropriate chores.

#### **Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health**

- Serve as a positive ethical and behavioral role model. Listen to and show respect for the child.
- Show interest in school and after-school activities.
- Set reasonable expectations.
- Show affection in the family.
- Spend some individual time with each child.
- Participate in games and other physical activities with the child.
- Encourage the development of good sibling relationships. Acknowledge conflicts between siblings. Whenever possible, attempt to resolve conflicts without taking sides. Do not allow hitting, biting, or other violent behavior.
- Share meals as a family whenever possible. Spend time talking to each other.
- Handle anger constructively in the family.

Discuss with the health professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g. using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).

#### **Promotion of community interactions**

**Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g. WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.**

**Discuss with the health professional possible programs for the child: schools, swimming, soccer, or other exercise programs; or other community programs.**

**Participate as a family in school and community organizations and activities.**

**Contribute regularly to school or community activities that require adult supervision.**

**Explore or continue to participate in social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations.**

**Find out what you can do to make your community safer. Advocate for and participate in a neighborhood watch program.**

**Advocate for adequate housing and play spaces/playgrounds. Recommend that schools provide early and regular comprehensive health education that encourages healthy lifestyles.**

#### **Promotion of successful school entry**

- Meet with the child's teachers.
- Prepare the child for school. Talk about new opportunities, friends, and activities at school.
- Tour the child's school with her.
- Be involved with the child's school, perhaps as a volunteer.