

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD / 5 YEARS

Promotion of healthy habits

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

Ensure that your child gets adequate sleep. For children through 5 years of age, the suggested bedtime is 7-8 P.M.

Limit television and video use to an average of two hours per day of appropriate programs. Watch the programs together and discuss them.

Teach your child about personal care and hygiene.

Injury prevention

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

Use a forward facing car safety seat with a harness up to the height and weight allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. Car seat should be secured in the rear seat.

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

Ensure that swimming pools in your community, apartment complex, or at 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.

Always put sunscreen on your child before going outside to play or swim.

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

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

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

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

Discuss playground safety with your child.

Ensure that your 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 your child about safety rules for interacting with strangers (e.g., answering the telephone or the door, never getting into a stranger's car).

Teach your child rules to be safe with adults; no adult should tell your child to keep secrets from their parents, no adult should express interest in private parts.

Ensure that your child's school curriculum includes information on how to deal with strangers.

Nutrition

Serve your child three regular meals and two nutritious snacks per day. Your child should be eating 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables and, have at least 2 cups of low fat milk or dairy each 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 your child to eat a balanced breakfast or ensure that the school provides one.

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

Promote Physical Activity

Encourage regular physical activity. Be sure that your child is active for one hour or more each day. Promote physical activity in a safe environment.

Oral health

Ensure that your child brushes their teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste and floss once daily. Regularly supervise tooth brushing.

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

Learn how to prevent dental injuries and handle dental emergencies.

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

As your child's permanent molars erupt, ensure that the 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.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD / 5 YEARS

Promotion of social competence

- Praise your child for cooperation and accomplishments.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about her school or friends. Answer their questions.
- Encourage your child to express their feelings.
- Encourage interactive reading with your child.
- Spend individual time with your child, doing something you both enjoy.
- Enhance your 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 your child learn how to get along with her peers.
- Set limits. Use time out and establish consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Encourage self-discipline and impulse control.
- Expect your child to follow family rules, such as those for bedtime, television viewing, and chores.
- Teach your child to respect authority.
- Teach your child the difference between right and wrong.
- Teach your 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 your 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 your 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 your 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 your child's teachers.
- Prepare your child for school. Talk about new opportunities, friends, and activities at school.
- Tour your child's school with them.
- Be involved with your child's school, perhaps as a volunteer.