

## MIDDLE CHILDHOOD / 6 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 6-10 years of age, the suggested bedtime is 8-9 PM.

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

Reinforce with your child personal care and hygiene.

### Injury prevention

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 care seat's manufacturer. Car seat should be secured in the rear seat.

Reinforce with your child, the safety rules for swimming pools. Teach the 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.

Teach your child how to put on sunscreen before he goes 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.

Reinforce with your child 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.

Reinforce with your child safety rules for getting to and from school. Reinforce with your child pedestrian and neighborhood safety skills.

Reinforce with your child safety rules for bicycles, including use of proper traffic signals. Ensure that the child always wears a helmet when riding a bicycle.

Reinforce playground safety.

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

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

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

Teach your child about sports safety, including the need to wear protective sports gear such as a mouth guard or a face protector.

### Nutrition

Ensure that your child eats 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.

Help your child learn to choose appropriate 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 lunch.

### Promoting 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 his 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, especially the loss or fracture of a tooth.

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

Answer questions at a level appropriate to your child's understanding.

Have age-appropriate sexual education books in the home that will answer some questions and encourage your child to ask others.

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### Promotion of social competence

- Praise your child for cooperation and accomplishments.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about his school, friends, or observations. Answer their questions.
- Encourage your child to express his feelings.
- Encourage reading.
- Spend individual time with your child, doing something you both enjoy.
- Enlarge your child's experiences through family trips.
- Provide opportunities for the six year old to interact with other children, including team or group activities.
- Help your child learn how to get along with his peers.
- Help your child learn how to follow group rules.
- Promote physical activity in a safe environment.
- Set limits 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.
- Foster your child's ability to communicate with parents, teachers, and other adults.
- Ensure that your child understands the difference between right and wrong.
- Teach your child how to manage anger and resolve conflicts without violence.
- Assign age-appropriate chores, including responsibility for own belongings.
- Provide personal space for your child at home, even if limited.

### Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

- Serve as a positive ethical and behavioral role model.
- Contribute to your child's self-esteem through praise him and showing affection.
- Show interest in school and after-school activities.
- Set reasonable expectations.
- Promote self-responsibility.
- 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.

Share meals as a family whenever possible. Spend time talking to each other.

Know your child's friends and their families.

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, housing, or transportation if needed.

Discuss with the health professional possible programs for your child: schools; before- and after-school programs; swimming, soccer, and 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.

Advocate for community programs and facilities for children (recreational, sports, and educational activities).

Promote social connections with friends and neighbors and ties with extended family members.

Participate in activities that reflect cultural diversity (e.g., holidays, festivals, musical events, dance performances), and teach your child about his own culture.

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

Recommend that schools provide early and regular comprehensive health education that encourages healthy lifestyles.