

Caring for your child: 5 years

Feeding your child

- Eat meals with your child. Have pleasant conversation with the TV off.
- Give your child low-fat or nonfat cow's milk or soy milk to drink (about 2 cups a day).
- Offer at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Remember that a child's serving size is equal to the amount that will fit into the palm of their hand.
- Talk to the doctor about whether your child needs vitamins or other supplements.
- You decide when and what your child eats. Your child decides whether and how much to eat. Offer a variety of foods.
- Avoid fruit drinks, soda, chips, and sweets.
- Don't bribe or reward your child with food.

Practicing healthy habits

- Don't let anyone smoke in your home or car. Smoking around children increases their risk of ear infections, asthma, and pneumonia.
- Help your child brush and floss their teeth every day.
- Schedule a dentist appointment every 6 months.
- Teach your child to wash their hands after going to the bathroom and before eating.
- Limit TV, computer use, and video games to one hour a day. Avoid programs and games with violence or sex.
- Encourage 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day for everyone in the family.
- Protect your child from sun exposure with protective clothing and sunglasses. Use sun block (SPF 15 or higher) on your child before they go into the sun. Repeat every 2 hours. Buy new sunscreen once a year. It loses its effectiveness after 12 months.

Keeping your child safe

- Make sure your child wears a bicycle helmet that fits properly whenever riding a bike or scooter. Bike helmets also provide protection for other sports such as inline skating and skateboarding. For these sports, add wrist guards, kneepads, and gloves.
- Use a car seat for every ride. Be sure that it is properly installed in the back seat, which is the safest place

for children to ride. If your vehicle doesn't have a back seat that allows a car seat to be safely installed, make sure to turn off the passenger side front airbag. Front seat airbags have been involved in the deaths of some children and small adults. For information on choosing the safest seat for your child, call toll-free **1-800-282-5587** or visit **www.800BUCKLUP.org**.

- Watch your child at all times around any kind of water. Knowing how to swim doesn't make your child "drown-proof."
- If your child is in a home that has a gun, make sure it is unloaded and locked up.
- Install and check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Change the batteries every 6 months, when you set your clocks ahead and back.
- Keep the number of Poison Control, **1-800-222-1222** (voice and TDD), near your phone.
- Teach your child not to accept anything from strangers and not to leave with strangers.

Preventing violence

- Violence is a leading cause of death in children, and more children die from violence than from automobile crashes.
- Studies show that violent behavior is often learned early in life. Parents play an important role in reducing violence by raising children in a loving, nonviolent home.
- Don't hit or spank your children. Instead, use time outs or loss of privileges (such as TV, video games, movies, playing with friends).
- Give your child consistent love and attention. Praise good behavior.
- Teach your child to tell an adult right away if someone is aggressive, threatening, or violent toward them.
- Don't allow your child to watch violent TV programs or movies, or to play violent video or computer games. Help your child understand that violence in real life hurts people.

Continued next page

- Know where your children are. Young children should always be watched by an adult. Children with no adults around have more behavior problems.
- If you keep guns in your home, unload them and keep them locked up. Know if there will be guns in any homes that your child will be visiting.
- When your child behaves aggressively (such as hitting, kicking, biting, pushing), tell them “People don’t hit. Hitting hurts, and we don’t hurt people.” Have firm rules and be consistent. Give an immediate time out: one minute for every year of your child’s age (maximum 10 minutes). Time outs help a child cool down.
- Stop aggressive behavior (such as pushing or shoving) early instead of waiting for someone to get hurt. If a time out doesn’t work, try loss of privileges (no TV, no favorite toy for a day, or no visits with friends).
- Give special attention to the child who was hurt. Pick them up or hug them.
- Teach your child to use words to express anger (“It really makes me angry when ...”). Teach them to stop and count to 10 when angry, and to walk away from a bad situation.

Other parenting tips

- Show affection. Spend fun time with your child, such as going on family walks and reading together.
- Be a good role model. Children learn from watching and listening.
- Reward good behavior with attention and praise. Don’t yell or spank. Use time outs instead. Apply rules fairly and in the same way every time.
- Tell your child not to let anyone touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, and to let you know right away if that happens.
- Get to know your child’s friends and their families. Get involved with your child’s school and other activities.

Getting ready for kindergarten

Children start kindergarten between 4½ and 6 years old. It can be hard to know exactly when your child is ready for school, and your local elementary school or preschool can help you decide. Most children are ready when they have these skills:

Behavior

- Keeps hands to themselves while in line.
- Sits and focuses attention for at least 5 minutes.

- Sits quietly while listening to a story.
- Participates in clean-up activities.
- Uses words to express frustration rather than acting out.
- Works with other children in small groups.
- Completes an assigned task.
- Dresses self and uses bathroom without help.

Coordination

- Stands and hops on one foot.
- Throws and catches a ball.
- Holds a pencil correctly.
- Cuts with scissors.
- Draws a person that has 3 to 6 body parts.

Language and math skills

- Able to spell and write first name.
- Completes 2-step directions (like “do this and then do that”).
- Converses with other children and adults.
- Sings songs with a group.
- Counts from 1 to 5.
- Identifies 2 objects as large or small.
- Understands the concepts “first” and “last.”

WEBSITES

- Kaiser Permanente: kp.org/wa
- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org
- Bright Futures: brightfutures.org

SUGGESTED READING

- *Your Child’s Health*, Schmitt
- *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, American Academy of Pediatrics
- *How to Get Your Child to Eat...But Not Too Much*, Satter
- *Guide to Your Child’s Nutrition*, American Academy of Pediatrics
- *Kindergarten: Ready or Not? A Parent’s Guide*, Walmsley, et al.

Next well-child visit at 6 years old

Content adapted and used with permission from The Permanente Medical Group Inc., Northern California Regional Health Education.