

Healthy Kids

6 YEARS

WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN DO

At this age your child can probably:

Can dress and undress himself...

Is very active, always on the go...

Knows the difference between sexes...

May ask questions about where babies come from...

Shows a fear of the dark, dogs, or bodily harm—

Although this is not a fearful age...

Likes to please adults and be good...

May tell lies or blame other for wrong doings

Because he wants to please and do right...

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD

Try to channel his energy into an organized sports program thorough his school or neighborhood.

Answer his questions simply and accurately.

Listen to and comfort your child. His fears are important to him.

Don't be shocked by his lying. Help him to learn to accept responsibility for his own actions.

Being a parent is enjoyable but hard work. There is so much to learn! Sometimes it helps to talk to other parents or get some advice from someone outside the family. If you would like to find out more, call this number and ask about parenting programs in your area.

LIFE LINE 275-5151

HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN

Continue to read, play and interact with your child. Watch appropriate educational television programs with him, and encourage discussion.

Be active in your child's education at school. Communicate often with her teacher and become a team. Focus on what your child is learning, not on her grades.

SAFETY

Accidents and injuries are the number one cause of death in children. Be sure to take advantage of the many programs offered in school and the community to educate your child about bicycle, skateboarding or rollerblading, auto safety, water safety and fire prevention. Be sure your child knows that he should not approach wild or unfamiliar domestic animals, and that he should notify you immediately if he is bitten.

All guns should be equipped with trigger locks, as well as stored in a locked case.

THINGS YOU MAY BE WORRIED ABOUT

Talking To Your Child About Sex

Your child may be beginning to show an interest in basic sexuality, both his own and that of the opposite sex. He may ask where babies come from. He may want to know how boys' and girls' bodies are different.

Parents are a child's best source or information on love and sex. Many parents are reluctant to talk about these issues. Don't worry—there is help available for you. The public library has many good books on these issues for all ages. Your pediatrician can give you a list of books that would be right for your child. The library can also help you pick out some books.

When discussing love and sex with your child answer his questions honestly, be straightforward with your child.

It is important to talk about both the physical and emotional aspects of the subject.

Don't put off answering your child's questions until another day, week or year. Answering them as they come up will be easier.

Don't give your child more information than he needs or wants. You can satisfy a young child's curiosity without going into too much detail. Young children can get confused and overwhelmed by more information than they are ready for.

Along with an increased interest in sexuality, your child will probably also play with his genitals. This is a sign of normal curiosity. Do not punish your child but teach him appropriate boundaries, for example, interest in genitals is natural but nudity and sexual play in public is not okay.

It is important to teach your child about good touches and bad touches. Teach him that no other person including even close friends and relatives, may touch his "private parts" without permission. The exceptions to the rule are doctors and nurses during an exam and his parents when they are trying to find the cause of any pain or discomfort he's feeling in the genital area.

SIBLING RIVALRY

Most brothers and sisters fight at times. They can find almost anything to fight over—a basketball, the last cookie or a favorite chair! They can go from loving each other one minute to hating each other the next. It can be frustrating for you as their parent. Here are some ideas to help deal with siblings who fight.

Teach your children that they must settle their own arguments.

Make a rule—no hitting, breaking things or calling each other names.

If they break the rules, both children should be punished. If they are hurting each other, send them both to a time-out in separate places no matter who hit first. Name calling hurts feelings and should never be allowed.

If the argument becomes too loud or annoying, do something about it. Tell your children to settle their problem quietly or find another place to argue. If they are still too loud send them to the basement or the backyard. If they are fighting over the TV—turn it off. If they are fighting over a toy—take it away.

Avoid choosing sides in your children's fights. It is very important that all punishment be grouped punishment. Don't label them as "the good one" and "the bad one". Do not listen to tattling. Remember that it all balances out.

Praise your children when they settle a problem nicely.

Try To Prevent Future Fighting

1. Let your children know it's okay to be angry towards a sibling but that there are alternatives to arguing, such as talking to you.
2. Let your children play with other friends and away from home rather than expecting them to play with each other all the time.
3. Set a good example by dealing with problems peacefully and quietly.
4. Plan special individualized activities for each child once or twice a week. Most children fight in order to get their parent's attention.

EATING HEALTHY

When planning your child's diet think about his future health. Adult eating habits are developed now so it is a good idea to think about those habits that might cause health problems later in life, if continued. Since cholesterol is responsible for much heart and blood vessel disease in adulthood, try to interest your child in foods low in saturated or animal fats. Lowering the amount of salt and fat in your child's diet will also prevent heart disease in later life.

Children with a family history of early heart attacks, strokes or high cholesterol levels are at higher risk and should have cholesterol screening. A blood test is the best way to check your child's cholesterol level. Let your doctor know if there is a history of heart disease or strokes in your family.

Some Cholesterol is needed in your child's diet for proper nutrition but a diet lower in cholesterol can help reduce the level in his blood.

Here are some ideas to help your child eat healthy:

Broil or bake instead of frying your food.

Cook lean cuts of beef, chicken or bone-free fish.

Remove visible fat or skin.

Use fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks and desserts.

When cooking, use herbs, spices and flavorings instead of salt.

Don't put salt on the table for meals.

Your child will grow up into a healthy adult if he develops healthy eating habits early in life.

Calcium is important to build strong bones and may help prevent heart disease. Encourage milk, yogurt and low-fat puddings. Check with your pediatrician regarding 1% or skim milk.

Limit salty foods in your diet such as processed cheeses, processed meats (bacon, ham, hot dogs), as well as salty snack foods such as potato chips.

Grain products such as pasta, bread and rice are low in salt and great energy foods.

In addition to good eating habits, help your child to become interested in regular exercise. Be active with them!

COMING ATTRACTIONS

All children develop at different rates and have different interests. Don't compare your child to other children her age. Try to treat your child as a special individual.

Encourage and help your child in the areas in which she is interested.

Continue to express your love for your child. Enjoy each day with her.

Many children this age enjoy group activities, such as scouting and team sports. Encourage extra activities outside of school and be supportive of these activities. Get involved—be a fan or a coach, help run a meeting...

POISON CONTROL CENTER

1-800-222-1222

We encourage you to visit our website at:
www.westside-pediatrics.com

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