



Children's Healthcare Medical Associates

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Well Child Care at 6 to 10 Years

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Growth and Development: Your child will grow at a slow but steady rate until he or she enters puberty. See your child's doctor if your child has a rapid gain in weight or has not gained weight for 4 consecutive months.

Activities:

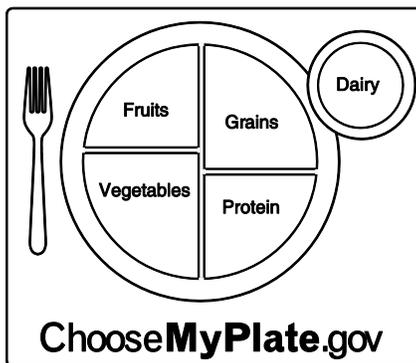
- Kids can start to develop life-long interests in sports, arts and crafts activities, reading, and music.
- Encourage participation in sports. Remember that the goal of competition is to have fun and develop oneself to the greatest capacity. Winning and losing should receive limited attention.
- Physical skills vary widely in this age group. Your child will excel in a sport depending on whether the activity requires endurance (e.g; distance running), power (e.g; swimming), or visual skills (e.g; baseball or softball).

Behavior:

- Kids at this age may take risks. Although they confidently think they will not get hurt, parents should watch them closely, especially when they are near roadways, open water, or near a fire or electricity.
- Most pre-teens have boundless energy. Look for opportunities for your child to work off this energy at the end of the school day and before they sit down to do their homework.
- Dawdling is common and demonstrates that a child is having a difficult time planning and thinking through the steps of accomplishing a task. Look for ways to teach your child to break down their homework into smaller pieces.
- It can be upsetting to a child when their parents go through difficult times or changes. Let us know if you need support or advice at these times

Nutrition: Having many or most meals together as a family is desirable. Mealtime is a great time to allow the child to tell you of her day, interests, concerns, and worries. Let your child have plenty of opportunity to participate in the discussion at the table. Be flexible if your child occasionally needs to eat on the run. Food preferences will vary from year to year. Balance good nutrition with what your child wants to eat. Major battles over what your child wants to eat are not worth the emotional cost. Bring only healthy foods home from the grocery store and choose snacks wisely. Good table manners take a long time to develop. Model your table manners for your child.

The USDA, the agency in charge of nutrition, has switched from the food pyramid to a new symbol: a food plate – called



MyPlate – with some of the same messages:

Eat a variety of foods.

Eat less of some foods and more of others.

Limit liquids to water and non-fat milk.

The plate is the size of a salad plate and features four sections (vegetable, fruits, grains, and protein) plus a side order of dairy. The big message is that fruits and vegetables take up half the plate, with the vegetable portion being a little bigger than the fruit section. In addition, the plate has been divided so that the grain section is bigger than the protein section. Why? Because nutrition experts recommend you eat more vegetables than fruit and more grains than protein foods.

What are Proteins, Grains and Dairy? You know what fruits and vegetables are, but here's a reminder about what's included in the three other food groups: proteins, grains, and dairy:

- **Protein:** Beef; poultry; fish; eggs; nuts and seeds; and beans and peas like black beans, split peas, lentils, and even tofu and veggie burgers. Protein builds up, maintains, and replaces the tissue in your body.
- **Grains:** Bread, cereal, rice, tortillas, and pasta. Whole-grain products such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, and brown rice are recommended because they have more fiber and help you feel full.

- **Dairy:** Milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy milk. With MyPlate, the dairy circle could be a cup of milk, but you also can get your dairy servings from yogurt or cheese. Choose low-fat yogurt and cheese and non-fat or 1% milk most of the time. Over a 24 hour period, your child should be taking in 8 to 12 ounces of dairy.

The plate should be used for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That may make you wonder: Do I really have to eat vegetables with breakfast? The answer is no, but aim to eat a variety of food groups at each meal. And if your breakfast doesn't include a veggie, consider a vegetable at snack time. Healthy, portion-controlled snacks are still OK. Eating more fruits and vegetables will help you eat fewer calories overall, which helps you keep a healthy weight. Eating fruits and veggies also gives you lots of vitamins and minerals.

Safety:

Fires

- Practice a home fire escape plan.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Tell your child about the dangers of playing with matches or lighters.
- Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (50°C)

Car Safety

- Everyone in a car must always wear seat belts or be in an appropriate booster seat.
- Don't buy motorized vehicles for your child.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- Supervise street crossing. Your child may start to look in both directions, but is not ready to cross a street alone.
- All family members should ride with a bicycle helmet.
- Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near busy roads.
- Children who ride bicycles that are too big for them are most likely to be in bicycle accidents. Make sure the size of the bicycle your child rides is appropriate. Your child's feet should both touch the ground when your child stands over the bicycle. The top tube of the bicycle should be at least 2 inches below your child's pelvis.

Firearm Hazards Children in homes where guns are present are in more danger of being shot by themselves, their friends, or family members than of being injured by an intruder.

- Hand guns are especially dangerous.
- If you choose to keep a gun in the house, keep it unloaded and in a locked place separate from the ammunition.
- Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.

Trampoline: Health professional groups advise avoiding the use of outdoor trampolines.

Height: Make sure all windows are closed or have safety locks that limit the ability to open the window wide enough for your child to fall through.

Strangers

- Discuss safety outside the home with your child.
- Be sure your child knows her home address, phone number and the name of her parents' place(s) of work.
- Remind your child never to go anywhere with a stranger.

Dental Care:

- Your child should brush his teeth at least twice a day and should have regular visits to the dentist.
- Parents need to check their child's teeth after he has brushed.
- Flossing the teeth before bedtime is recommended.
- Permanent teeth may soon come in or may have already started coming in.
- The grooves on the permanent teeth are prone to cavities. Your dentist may recommend sealants (plastic coatings that adhere to the chewing surface of the teeth), xylitol or fluoride varnish to help prevent tooth decay.

Schoolwork Responsibility: Taking responsibility for schoolwork helps children grow up to be responsible adults who keep their promises, meet deadlines, and succeed at their jobs. Responsible children finish schoolwork, homework, and long-term projects on time. They occasionally ask for help (for example, with a spelling list) but preferably they should think through their work by themselves. The following suggestions should help you cultivate the trait of responsibility in your child and avoid problems with schoolwork that may be difficult to correct later on.

1. **Show your child you are interested in his school performance.** Ask our child about his school day. Look at and comment positively on the graded papers your child brings home. Praise your child's strong points on his report card. Show interest in the books your child is reading. Help your child attend school regularly; don't keep him home for minor illnesses. Go to regular parent-teacher conferences and tell your child about them. If you feel discouraged, rather than conveying this to your child, schedule an extra conference with his teacher.
2. **Support the school staff's recommendations.** Show respect for both the school system and the teacher, at least in your child's presence. Verbal attacks on the school may pit your child against the school and give him an excuse for

not working. Even when you disagree with a school's policy, you should encourage your child to conform to school rules, just as they will need to conform to the broader rules of society.

3. **Make it clear that schoolwork is between your child and the teacher.** When your child begins school she should understand that homework, schoolwork, and grades are strictly between her and her teacher. The teacher should set the goals for better performance, not the parents. Your child must feel responsible for successes and failures in school. People take more pride in accomplishments if they feel fully responsible for them. Parents who feel responsible for their child's school performance open the door for the child to turn his responsibilities over to them. Occasionally, elementary-school teachers may ask you to review basic facts with your child or see that your child completes work that was put off at school. When your child's teacher makes such requests, it's fine for you to help, but only as a temporary measure.
4. **Stay out of homework.** Asking if your child has homework, helping nightly, checking the finished homework, or drilling your child in areas of concern all convey to your child that you don't trust him. If you do your child's homework, your child will have less confidence that he can do it himself. If your child asks for help with homework, help with the particular problem only. Your help should focus on explaining the question, not giving the answer. A good example of useful help is reading your child's spelling list to him while he writes the words, but then letting him check his own answers. A chief purpose of homework is to teach your child to work on his own.
5. **Avoid dictating a study time.** Assigning a set time for your child to do homework is unnecessary and looked upon as pressure. The main thing parents can do is provide a quiet setting with a desk, a comfortable chair, and good lighting. The only rule that you should consider imposing is; "No television until homework is done." Accept your child's word that the work is done without checking. For long-term assignments, help your child organize his work the first few times if he seems overwhelmed. Help him estimate how many hours he thinks the project will take. Then help him write up a list of the days at home he will work on the project.
6. **Provide home tutoring for special circumstances.** Occasionally, a teacher will ask for help from the parents when a child has lots of make-up work after a long absence or transfer to a new school. If your child's teacher makes such a request, ask the teacher to send home notes about what he or she wants you to help your child with (for instance, multiplication for 2 weeks). By using this approach you are still not taking primary responsibility for your child's schoolwork because the assignments and request for help come from the teacher. Provide this home instruction in a positive, helping way. As soon as your child has met the teacher's goal for improvement, remove yourself from the role of tutor. In this way you have provided temporary tutoring to help your child over an obstacle that the school staff does not have time or resources to deal with fully.
7. **Request special help for children with learning problems.** Some children have learning problems that interfere with acquiring some of the basic skills (for example, reading). If a child with a reading disability slips too far behind in class, the child may lose confidence in his ability to do schoolwork. If you have concerns about your child's ability to learn, set up a conference with your child's teacher and inquire about an evaluation by your school's special education team. With extra help, children with learning disabilities can preserve their self-esteem and sense of competency.

Homework Problems: Your child is having homework problems when he or she:

- Performs below his or her potential at school.
- Has average or better intelligence, with no learning disabilities.
- Doesn't finish schoolwork or homework.
- "Forgets to bring homework home.
- "Forgets," loses, or doesn't turn in finished homework.
- Gets poor report card.

What is the cause? Some children get into bad habits with their homework because they become preoccupied with TV programs, video games, their social life or sports. Most of these children will improve simply by cutting back other activities to reasonable amounts. When parents over respond to homework problems and exert pressure for better performance, they can start a power struggle around schoolwork. "Forgetfulness" becomes a game. The child sees the parents' pressure as a threat to his independence. More pressure brings more resistance. Poor grades become the child's best way of proving that he is independent of his parents and that he can't be pushed. Good evidence for this is if the child does worse in the areas where he receives the most help. If parental interference with a child's schoolwork continues for several years, the child can become a school "underachiever".

How can I help my child regain responsibility for schoolwork?

- **Get out of the middle regarding homework.** Clarify that completing and turning in homework is between your child and the teacher. Remember that the purpose of homework is to teach your child to work on his own. Don't ask your child if he has any homework. Don't help with homework except at your child's request. Allow the school to apply natural consequences for poor performance. Walk away from any power struggles. Our child can learn the lesson of schoolwork accountability only through personal experience. If possible, apologize to your youngster, saying, for example, "After thinking about it, we have decided you are old enough to manage your own affairs. Schoolwork is your business and we will try to stay out of it. We are confident you will do what's best for you." The result of this "sink or swim" approach is that arguments will stop, but your child's schoolwork may temporarily worsen. Your child may throw caution to the wind to see if you really mean what you have said. This period of doing nothing but waiting for your child to find her own reasons for doing well in school may be very agonizing. However, children need to learn

from their mistakes. If you can avoid “rescuing” your child, her grades will show a dramatic upsurge in anywhere from 2 to 9 months. This planned withdrawal of parental pressure is best done in the early grades, when marks are of minimal importance but the development of the child’s own personal reason for learning is critical.

- **Avoid reminders about schoolwork.** Repeatedly reminding your child about schoolwork promotes rebellion. So do criticizing, lecturing, and threatening your child. Pressure is different from parental interest and encouragement. If pressure works at all, it works only temporarily.
- **Coordinate your plan with our child’s teacher.** Schedule a parent-teacher conference. Discuss your views on schoolwork and homework responsibly. Tell your child’s teacher you want your child to be responsible to the teacher for homework. Request that the teacher send home a brief, weekly progress report. If the teacher thinks your youngster needs extra help, encourage her to suggest a tutoring program.
- **Limit TV until schoolwork improves.** While you can’t make your child study, you can increase the potential study time. Eliminate all TV and video game time on school nights. Explain to your child that these privileges will be reinstated after the teacher’s weekly report confirms that all homework was handed in and the overall quality of work (or grades) is improving. Explain that you are doing this to help him better structure his time.
- **Consider adding incentives for improved schoolwork.** Most children respond better to incentives than disincentives. Ask your youngster what he thinks would help. Some good incentives are taking your child to a favorite restaurant, amusement park, video-arcade, sports event, or the movies. Sometimes earning “spending money” by working hard on studies will interest your child. The payments can be made weekly based on the teacher’s progress reports. A’s, B’s and C’s can receive a different cash value. What your child buys with this money should for the most part be his business (for example, music and toys). Rewarding hard work is how the adult marketplace works.
- **Consider removing other privileges for falloff in schoolwork.** You have already eliminated school night TV viewing because it obviously interferes with studying. If the school reports continue to be poor, you may need to temporarily eliminate other privileges that may need to be temporarily limited other privileges such as telephone, bike, visiting friends or even grounding (that is, no peer contact) for 1 to 2 weeks may be required until they catch up. Avoid severe punishment, however, because it will leave your youngster angry and resentful. Canceling something important (like membership in the scouts or an athletic team) or taking away something they care about (like a pet) because of poor marks is unfair and ineffective. Being part of a team is also good for motivation.

When should I call my child’s teacher? Call your child’s teacher for a conference if:

- Your child’s schoolwork and grades do not improve within 2 months.
- Homework is still an issue between you and your child after 2 months.
- You think your child has a learning problem that makes school difficult.

When should I call my child’s health care provider? Call if:

- You think your child is preoccupied with some stresses in his life.
- You think your child is depressed.
- You have other concerns or questions.

NOTE: If these attempts to motivate your child fail, he may need an evaluation by a child psychologist or psychiatrist.

Sports and your Child: Sports help boys and girls in many ways. When a body is fit, it looks and feels better. But even more important is that people stay healthier longer. With the right guidance, sports activities can promote a sense of personal satisfaction in young people – and that can lead to increased social acceptance.

At what age should a child get started in sports? Two children the same age may grow and mature at different rates. A child’s build also determines his or her ability to perform certain tasks. A child should not be pushed into a sport that he or she is not physically or emotionally ready to handle. But if the child has a strong interest in a sport, then it may be proper to allow participation – so long as common sense prevails.

What are the risks of injuries in various sports? Despite safety measures, such as protective padding and helmets, the risk of injury is present in all sports. The chance of injury increases with the degree of contact in a sport. Football produces many times the number of injuries as the next group of sports with significant injuries: wrestling, gymnastics, soccer, basketball, and track/running. Knee injuries are the most common serious injury in major sports. Boxing involves a high risk of brain damage; therefore, no young person should participate in this sport.

What if a child wants to quit a sports program? A Child has the right to share in the decision to end his or her involvement in a sport. If a child confronts you with a desire to quit a sports program, gather as many facts as you can. Talk with the child. Ask why he or she wants to quit. There may be a blunt and simple reason, such as not getting along with a coach, or the frustration of being “benched” and never playing in any games. Observe your child. Are there any signs of stress related to sports participation, such as vomiting, loss of appetite, or headache? Does your child appear depressed – sleeping more than usual, acting lethargic or withdrawn? These symptoms may suggest that the degree of stress is great enough to warrant withdrawing from the sport. Base your decision on what your child says and what you observe. Remember, children must also learn not to “quit.” Your child might have won a place on the team, preventing another child from playing in that sport. Simply quitting may waste an opportunity for your child and other young athletes. However, “sticking it out” is not always in the child’s best interest when tough problems crop up. You may want to work with your child’s coach to solve the problem.

How can sports-related stress be prevented? The main source of stress in the young athlete is to win. Sadly, many coaches and parents place winning above the values of play and learning. Measure your child's performance by the yardstick of effort; a young athlete should set goals and then strive to reach them. He or she will strive to meet them. He or she will respond better to rewards for trying hard, or for gaining skills, than to punishment and criticism for losing. In sports, stress can be managed through a number of simple tests. Children should be placed in groups that maintain a narrow range of age levels and degrees of skill. Only players of similar height, weight, ability, and maturity should be matched as opponents in contact sports. The rules of a sport can be changed to make it fairer for all to play. For instance, a basketball net could be lowered or a race could be shortened. Learning to cope with stress is an important part of growing up. Children can develop stress-related from other sources besides sports, including family problems, peer conflicts school pressures, and changes in residence. The degree of stress caused by sports often is minor compared to these other sources.

Should bad grades keep a child from sports? There is no simple answer to this question. A child having trouble in the classroom still needs the benefits of exercise, competition, and a sense of accomplishment. Sports may be the only avenue of success in a child's life, and it could be harmful to take it away. Parents should look for other causes of poor classroom performance. Too much TV watching might be a cause. In some cases the family and school may decide that the child is not studying enough. In this situation it is reasonable to make sports involvement dependent upon achieving better grades. Ask your child what you can do to help him or her improve at school. Your pediatrician is the right assistant coach to have on your team when you have concerns about your child and sports. Questions about your child's health and fitness for playing a sport can best be answered by your doctor.

Television:

- 1. Encourage your child to watch shows that are educational or teach human values:** Encourage watching documentaries, or real-life dramas. If your child does see a program that includes love, sex, family disputes, drinking, or drugs, use it as a way to begin family discussions on these difficult topics.
- 2. Forbid violent TV shows:** This means you have to know what your child is watching and turn off the TV set when you don't approve of the program. This may even include news programs. Develop separate lists of programs that are OK for older children and for younger children to watch. Make your older children responsible for keeping the younger ones out of the TV room when they are watching programs not allowed for the younger children. If they don't keep them out, the show must be turned off. With the availability of cable television, videos, and DVD's children of any age have access to the uncut versions of R-rated films. Many children under the age of 13 years develop daytime fears and nightmares because they have been allowed to watch these movies.

Most television shows are now rated. The TV ratings are:

- Y (made for all children)
- Y-7 (made for children 7+)
- Y-7-FV (made for children 7+, includes fantasy violence)
- G (general audience, appropriate for all ages)
- PG (parental guidance suggested, may be inappropriate for young children)
- TV-14 (parents strongly cautioned, may be inappropriate for children under 14)
- TV-MA (mature audiences only, may be unsuitable for children under 17)

Most television sets now include a V-Chip so that you can block out TV shows with certain ratings. But remember, ratings are just guidelines. They cannot replace your good judgment. An educational animal show may have the same rating as a violent cartoon.

- 3. Discuss the consequences of violence if you allow your older children to watch violent shows:** Point out how violence hurts both the victim and the victim's family. Be sure to discuss any program that upsets your child.
- 4. Discuss commercials with your children:** Help your children identify high-pressure selling and exaggerated claims. If your child wants a toy that is a look-alike version of a TV character, ask how he or she would use the toy at home. The response will probably convince you that the toy will be added to a collection rather than become something used for active play.
- 5. Discuss the differences between reality and make-believe:** This type of clarification can help your child enjoy a show and yet realize that what is happening may not happen in real life.
- 6. Set a good example:** If you watch a lot of TV, you can be sure your child will also. In addition, the types of programs you watch send a message to your child.

The Internet and Your Family: Teaching your child the basic skills of working with computers will provide tools she will need in our changing world. However, it is critical that your child have your guidance when learning to use the Internet. Even if your child is an experienced computer user, he needs your involvement, your experience, and your judgment. Although children can use the Internet to tap into the Library of Congress or view pictures of the surface of Mars, not all material on the Internet is appropriate for children. As a parent, you can guide and teach your child in a way that no one else can. Regardless of your technological know-how, you can make sure your child's experience on the Internet is safe, educational, and fun.

Setting rules of the road: Just like you have rules for how your children should deal with strangers and which TV shows, movies, and videos they are allowed to watch, it is important to have a set of rules when they use the Internet. Be wary of people on the Net who can be mean, rude, or even criminal. To keep your child's time on the Internet safe, productive, and fun, follow these guidelines:

- Set limits on the amount of time your child can spend on-line each day or week. Consider using an alarm clock or timer in case you or your child loses track of time.
- Do not let surfing the Net take the place of homework, playing outside or with friends, and pursuing other interests.
- Make sure your child knows that people on-line are not always who they say they are and that on-line information is not necessarily private.
- Teach your child the following:
 - NEVER give out personal information** (including name, address, phone number, age, race, school name or location, or friends' names) without your permission.
 - NEVER use a credit card on-line** without your permission.
 - NEVER share passwords**, even with friends.
 - NEVER arrange a face-to-face meeting** with someone she meets on-line, unless you approve of the meeting and go with your child to a public place. Teenagers in particular need to be aware of the risks.
 - NEVER respond to messages that make her feel confused or uncomfortable.** Your child should ignore the sender, end the communication, and tell you or another trusted adult right away.
 - NEVER use bad language** or send mean messages on-line.

Caring about content: Even without trying, your child may come across material on the Internet that is obscene, violent, hate-filled, racist, or offensive in other ways. One type of material, child pornography, is even illegal. If you or your child encounters child pornography, you should report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE LOST (843-5678) or visit its Web site at <http://www.missingkids.org>.

Though other material is not illegal, you should take the following steps to keep it away from your child:

- Make sure your child understands what you consider appropriate for him and what areas are off limits. Set clear rules and enforce them.
- Look into software or services that can filter or block offensive Web sites and material. Also, many Internet service providers offer site blocking, restrictions on e-mail, and other controls for parents. Be aware, however, that many children are smart enough to find ways around these restrictions. Nothing can replace supervision.
- Make a point to participate in your child's on-line time. Put the computer in the living room or family room. Stay involved and monitor what your child is doing.
- Find out what the Internet use policies are at your child's school or at your local library.

Information: the good and the bad: Anyone can put information on the Internet and not all of it is reliable. Some people and organizations are very careful about the accuracy of the information they post, others are not. Some give false information on purpose. Remind your children not to copy on-line information and claim it is their own. As the Internet grows, so does the trend of on-line advertising. Steer your child to non-commercial sites and other places that do not sell products to children. Teach your child to recognize the advertising and marketing of products and services. Encourage your child to think about who created the ads and why they are there. Discuss questions like the following:

- What is the product being advertised?
- How are they trying to get you to buy the product?
- Is there something about the product they are not telling you?

Here is a small sampling of sites that we recommend for children:

- 50+ Great Sites for Kids and Parents <http://www.ala.org/parents/greatsites/50.html> Sponsored by the American Library Association. Directory of many sites for children of all ages.
- Exploratorium <http://www.exploratorium.edu> Puzzles, games, and experiments
- The Internet Public Library: Reference Center <http://www.ipl.org/ref> Includes an "Ask a Question" feature and a teen collection
- Jean Armour Polly's 100 Extraordinary Experiences for Internet Kids <http://www.well.com/user/polly/ikyp.exp.html> Fun, interesting, and educational adventures on the Internet
- The Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov> Includes historical collections, databases, and access to other government information systems
- My Virtual Reference Desk <http://www.refdesk.com> Dozens of links to dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference materials.

Next Visit: We recommend your child have an annual physical.