



Five & Six-Year Visits

Starting school is a significant milestone. Experiences this year may have a lasting influence on your child's life. Help him get off to a great start!

General Advice

- Before starting kindergarten (or first grade), plan a special trip to visit your child's new school and meet the teachers.
- Discuss with your child how to be safe on the school bus, crossing streets, on the playground and near strangers. Teach your child phone numbers in case of an emergency.
- Children do best when they know what to expect. Stick to daily routines for before and after school and bedtime. Schedule specific time for TV, video games and computer and limit to less than 1-2 hours a day. Try to have your child go to bed at the same time on the weekends.
- Take time to talk and listen. This makes your child feel important and gain self-esteem. Ask your child to tell you about the best and worst parts of her day. Teach her that everyone has ups and downs and that it is ok to have sad or negative feelings.
- Assign your child chores around the home. Have her help set the table, clean up her toys, feed pets, etc. This helps your child learn to help out and also builds self-esteem.

Reading Tips

- Take your child to the library on a regular basis and let him choose the books he wants to read and take home. Leave books in your child's room for him to enjoy on his own.
- Read together every day and ask your child questions about what is happening in the story. Use funny voices and animal noises.
- Run your finger under the words as you read to teach your child that the print tells the story. When you find your child has learned the words to his favorite books, let him complete the sentences or take turns saying the words.
- Don't drill your child on words, numbers, letters, etc. Instead make it a fun game and find ways to bring out your child's love of learning.



Oral Health Tips

Your child should brush twice a day with a soft child-sized brush and a small, pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. After she is done, teach her to spit out the paste. Don't have her rinse with water since this washes off the fluoride. Your child should see the dentist every six months.

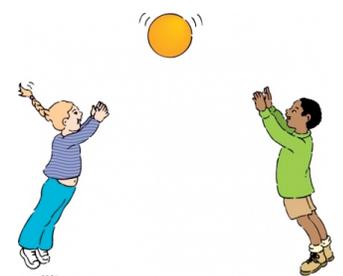
Safety with Adults

It is important to teach your child to respect and trust others but also how to be careful. Teach your child these simple rules:

- "Secrets are not OK. No one should ever tell you to keep a secret from me or any other adult."
- "Certain body parts are private. No adults (except parents and doctors) should ever touch you where you wear a bathing suit."
- "If you are not sure if something is OK, ask me. I will never get mad at you for asking."
- When you bring your child to a crowded place, look around and point out where to go for help if you get separated.

Discipline & Teaching Social Skills

- Praise your child when he is kind to others and behaving well. Always model the behavior that you expect.
- Set limits. When a rule is broken, a logical consequence needs to follow. Spanking or hitting is never advised and won't help. Be consistent. When your child does something wrong, explain that what she did was wrong and what will happen if it continues. Five-minute time-outs are appropriate at this age.
- Teach your child skills for solving social problems with friends:
 - When upset, teach her to stay calm and not to hit, grab or push.
 - Help her understand the other child's point of view (ex. "Tony is upset - he must want a turn too.")
 - Teach her to use her words (ex. "I'm mad that you took the crayon from me") and to say "I'm sorry" after hurting someone's feelings.



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Eating Healthy and Being Active!

- School-aged children can be very opinionated about what they eat. Most would be happy with a bland, white, starchy diet (pasta, rice, chicken nuggets and fries). Continue to talk more with your child about healthy eating and include her in food shopping and cooking. Encourage fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans. These high fiber foods also help digestion and prevent constipation.
- **Mealtime Habits:** Healthy eating should be something the whole family works on together. Your child is more likely to eat healthy foods if she watches you eating them. Whenever possible, eat meals as a family with the TV off! Limit fatty and fried foods and don't keep junk food and sugary drinks in the home (save them for special events only).
- **Plate Planner:** Your child's lunch and dinner plate should be $\frac{1}{2}$ fruits and vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ protein (meat, fish or tofu) and $\frac{1}{4}$ grains (whole grains like brown rice or pasta are best). Offer at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day.
- **Drinks:** Offer your child 2 cups a day of fat-free (skim) milk. Juice should be limited (<4 ounces a day & 100% juice only). Don't offer sweetened drinks (Capri Sun, Gatorade, Hawaiian Punch, Sunny D, soda, iced-tea, lemonade) – these are full of sugar and sugar turns to fat. Instead, offer water in-between meals.
- Make sure your child is active for 1 hour or more everyday. Turn off the electronics and go play outside with your child! Help her to ride a bike, take her to the park or give her swimming lessons.



Vaccines

(*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

Today:

- The influenza vaccine is recommended during flu season.
- If you have a strong family history of high cholesterol, your doctor may want to do a blood test to check your child's cholesterol.



Important Numbers

- Poison Control
1-800-222-1222
- Parental Stress Line
1-800-632-8188
- HAVEN Domestic Violence Help Line
1-617-724-0054
- Smoking Quit Line (free):
1-800-TRY TO STOP
- Your doctor's office

Websites

- AAP Healthy Children | <http://www.healthychildren.org>
(Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
- Kids Eat Right | <http://www.eatright.org/kids>
(American Dietetic Association tips on smart shopping and healthy cooking)
- Let's Move | <http://www.letsmove.gov>
(Tips for healthy eating and activity created by First Lady Michelle Obama)
- Boston Navigator | <http://www.bostonnavigator.org>
(Search for youth programs in the Boston area by age and location)

Safety Tips

✓ CAR SAFETY

-Your child should always ride in the back seat of the car. Continue to use a belt-positioning booster seat. Keep your child in a booster until he reaches 4'9" and is 8-12 years old.

✓ HEAD SAFETY

-Protect your child from head injuries or even death. Teach your child to use a helmet and safety gear when biking, skating, scooting and skiing.

✓ STREET SAFETY

Don't let your child play in or near the street – he may go into traffic without thinking. Don't allow your child to cross the street without an adult. Begin to teach him to stop at the curb and look both ways before crossing.

✓ FIRE SAFETY

Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Test them monthly and change batteries yearly. Make an escape plan in case of fire in your home and teach your child what to do if the smoke alarm sounds.

✓ WATER SAFETY

Now is a good time to teach your child to swim. Even if he knows how to swim, never let him swim alone.

✓ GUN SAFETY

It is best to keep all guns out of the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with ammunition locked separately. Make sure this is the case wherever your child plays.