

Caring for your 5-year-old child

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Keep Your Child Safe

Use a Booster Seat in the back seat facing forward until your child weighs 60 pounds or his head is higher than the back of the seat. Then use the seat belt.

Use it properly

Prevent Drowning

- Teach your child how to swim.
- Never leave him alone while taking a bath.
- Learn child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Prevent Burns

- Protect your child from sunburn. Use sunscreen.
- Keep your child away from hot stoves, hot liquids and hot pots.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120°F.
- Teach your child what to do in case of fire in the home. Show him how to dial 911.

Prevent Poisoning

- Lock all poisons (medicines, bug sprays, paints) out of reach and sight of your child.

Prevent Other Injuries

- Teach your child to respect animals and other living things.
- Make sure an adult is always watching your child.
- Make your home child-safe (see our “[Child-Proofing Checklist](#)”).
- Make your child wears a helmet when using a tricycle, bike or in-line skates.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- Teach your child about how to be safe—getting to school, playing near a street, riding a bike (or skates or skateboard), and playing in the pool or on the playground. Teach him how to deal with strangers—on the street, at school and at the front door.
- **Never hit or kick your child.** Make sure other caregivers (like day care providers, aunts and uncles) don’t either.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Offer 3 meals and 2 nutritious snacks per day. Nutritious snacks are low in fat and sugar and high in fiber (like most fruits).
- Offer her nutritious foods and let her decide what and how much to eat. You choose the menu; do not let her dictate it. Avoid soft drinks and switch to low-fat milk.
- Eat healthy foods yourself. Show that mealtime is enjoyable and not rushed. Try to eat together as a family.

Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Care for Yourself

Make some time for your self each week by letting someone else care for your child.

Remember the Family

- Try to set aside special time for other important people in your life.
- Talk with your sex partner about birth control. Ask yourselves, “How many children can we care for?”

Encourage Healthy Development

- Encourage your child socially. Sing together. Enroll him in pre-school. Limit television and videos to one hour per day. Watch programs together and discuss them.
- Excite her mind. Help her use words to express feelings. Go to a museum and get her a library card.
- Help her be stronger and more coordinated. Take her to a park or play ground regularly. Be physically active yourself!
- Encourage his self-confidence and self-respect. Give her responsibility (like a household chore). Never yell at him. Listen to him and answer his questions honestly. Spend individual time with him doing something you both enjoy.
- Teach about sex and private parts. Answer questions about “where babies come from.” Use correct words for genitalia (like “penis” and “labia”).
- Teach the difference between right and wrong; encourage respect for authority.

Encourage Healthy Behaviors

- Praise your child for healthy behavior and accomplishments.
- Encourage self-control. Teach your child how to manage anger and resolve conflict without violence.
- Your child needs structure and limits. Maintain a daily routine and establish consequences for behaviors.
- Help the family create a few rules that apply to everyone in the family. Enforce them consistently.
- Teach your child that violence (like hitting, biting and kicking others, or breaking things) is not okay. Help your 5-year-old cooperate with others. See our “Encouraging Good Behavior” handout.

Encourage Self Care

- Your child needs a regular bedtime, usually 7-8 p.m. Help him sleep through the night in his own bed.
- Help your child brush his teeth at least twice daily. Use toothpaste with fluoride. Take her to see a dentist at least once a year. Ask the dentist about dental sealants.
- Discourage him from regularly sucking his thumb or fingers.
- Teach your child that her private parts can only be touched with her permission. Tell her to report unwanted touching right away.

Prevent Sickness— Identify and Treat It Early

- Keep your child away from cigarette smoke. Do not smoke in the car or your home.
- Treat the pain of minor injuries with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Call the clinic right away if your child is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. A dehydrated child is much less active than usual, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Your child’s next visit is when she is about 6-years-old. Please bring her immunization record with you.