

Caring for Your 5-Year-Old Child

Keep Your Child Safe

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

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.

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 toddler 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 yourself each week by letting someone else care for the 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.