



Developmental Notes - Five Years

Milestones:

At five years of age, children should be able to skip, swing, hop over low obstacles, and balance on each foot for at least five seconds. They should copy triangles, print some letters, have a mature pencil grasp, and draw a person with at least six body parts. They can tell a simple story in full sentences and can use future tense and pronouns properly. They should also be able to name basic colors, recognize all the letters of the alphabet, and count to at least twenty.

Nutrition:

Refer to www.mypyramid.gov for suggestions on healthy eating and proper food portions.

Encourage your child to eat a well-balanced diet and avoid excessive amounts of “junk food”. Also, discourage eating while watching television as this can lead to frequent unhealthy snacking and obesity. Television advertising, incidentally, can also be a serious obstacle to your child’s good nutrition as children at this age are extremely receptive to ads for sugary snacks. To combat this outside influence, keep your kitchen stocked with low sodium, low sugar and low fat foods and reserve sweets for special occasions. Some examples of healthy snacks include fruit, carrot or celery sticks, yogurt, crackers, oatmeal cookies, bran muffins and cheese.

Vitamins:

If your child is an extremely finicky eater or drinks less than six ounces of fluoridated water each day, please ask our physicians regarding supplementary vitamins. Continue fluoride supplementation when indicated, and make sure your child brushes his teeth at least twice a day and sees a dentist once to twice a year.

Elimination:

After toilet training is completed, it is common for some children this age to occasionally wet the bed at night. In most cases, the best way to deal with wetting is to treat it as something natural and unimportant. Try not to scold or punish when accidents happen. Bedwetting usually occurs because a child’s bladder is not yet large enough to hold a full night’s output of urine, or because the child has not yet developed the ability to awaken in response to a full bladder. No specific interventions are necessary at this time other than encouraging voiding right before bedtime.

Sleep:

By age five, most children have outgrown napping. Children at this age sleep between ten to twelve hours per night. Always reinforce a regular bedtime and create a calm and relaxing bedtime atmosphere to help your child settle down.

Developmental Activities:

Set the stage for future independent reading by reading together on a daily basis. Limit television to no more than one hour per day of supervised, quality viewing. Encourage active outdoor play or games such as puzzles, building toys, and board games. Show interest in your child’s activities and achievements, and show pride in his special strengths by using praise liberally. Encourage your child to interact with other children and grown-ups, and help him build independence and self-confidence.