

Healthy Child Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most children will reach between 6 and 8 years of age. Talk with your doctor at your child's next well-visit if you have any questions or concerns about your child's development or behavior.

Social and Emotional Milestones

- Shows more independence from parents and family
- Pays more attention to friendships and teamwork
- Wants to be liked and accepted by friends

Thinking and Learning Milestones

- Learns better ways to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings
- Has less focus on oneself and more concern for others

Healthy Ways to Help Your Child Learn and Grow

Development

- Use words to help your child understand time, such as “today,” “tomorrow” and “yesterday.” Sing songs about the days of the week and talk about what day it is.
- Read books together every day to help your child develop language and reading skills.
- Play rhyming games, such as “What rhymes with hat?”
- Provide toys such as puzzles and blocks that will encourage your child to fit items together.
- Play games that help with memory and attention, such as card games, I Spy and tic-tac-toe.
- Ask your child what they're playing and help expand on answers by asking “Why?” and “How?”
- Talk with your child about feelings. Read books and talk about the feelings of characters and why the characters may be feeling that way.
- Teach your child to complete simple household chores.

Behavior

- Your child may start to “talk back” to feel more independent and to test your reaction. Give your child

positive attention and praise for good behavior, and limit attention for unwanted behavior.

- To satisfy your child's desire to feel independent, let your child do things for themselves like pouring a drink, picking out clothes for the day or making the bed. Praise your child for completing the task and avoid “fixing” anything you don't have to.
- Choose a spot in the home where your child can go to calm down when they are feeling upset. Remain nearby so your child feels safe and can come to you for help calming down if needed. Wait for your child to calm down before teaching them how to improve their behavior. An upset child isn't able to listen or understand until they are calm.

Ready for School

- Talk to your child about starting school. Read books with characters who go to school.
- Take your child to school and meet the teacher.
- Follow healthy habits, such as giving your child a regular bedtime with 10–11 hours of sleep each night and a healthy breakfast each morning.

Healthy Habits

- Together as a family, eat healthy meals that include foods from the basic food groups. Include at least 3 servings of calcium (low-fat or fat-free dairy) and 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Limit sugary foods, candy, soft drinks and juice.
- Help your child brush their teeth twice each day (after breakfast and before bed) and floss their teeth once per day. Take your child to the dentist twice each year.
- Encourage at least 1 hour of physical activity each day.

Digital Media Use

- Limit screen time to 1–2 hours per day. Avoid putting a TV in your child’s bedroom.
- Consider making a family media plan to put rules in place for media use and balance screen time with other family activities, including physical exercise. Learn how to achieve a healthy balance. *Scan the QR code*
- Be sure the types of media your child watches and the music your child listens to are age-appropriate.

Vehicle Safety

- Your child should always ride in the back seat and use a forward-facing car seat or booster seat. Learn more about car seat safety and installation. *Scan the QR code*

Water Safety

- Help your child learn to swim. Never let your child swim alone.

Body Safety

- Teach your child about safe and unsafe touches. Tell your child what to do if someone gives an unsafe touch using “No, Go, Tell.”
 - **No**—Say “no” or “stop” loudly so the person can hear you.
 - **Go**—Run away from the person and find a nearby safe adult.
 - **Tell**—Tell that adult and me what happened so we can help keep you safe.
- No adult or big kid should:
 - Ask a child to keep secrets from parents.
 - Ask to see a child’s private parts.
 - Ask a child for help with the adult’s own private parts.

Learn more tips for teaching your child about body safety. *Scan the QR code*

Stranger Safety

- Teach your child how to spell their full name and to say their address and parent’s phone number. Teach your child the first and last names of family members. Tell your child never to go anywhere with or accept food from someone they don’t know.

Digital Safety

- Keeping children safe online requires a mix of monitoring and teaching. Learn how to protect your child online. *Scan the QR code*

Firearm Safety

- Store guns unloaded and locked in a safe. Keep the ammunition locked separately.

Find more useful, healthy tips for your family:

Cincinnati Children’s Blog

Visit: blog.cincinnatichildrens.org

Young & Healthy Podcast

Listen on:



This information is meant to support your visit with your child’s doctor. It should not take the place of the advice of your pediatrician.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, 4th Edition* | American Academy of Pediatrics

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