

Healthy Child Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most children will reach by 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

- Show affection for your child and recognize your child's accomplishments and good behavior. Focus on praising what your child does ("I love how hard you've practiced") rather than on traits your child cannot change ("You are smart").
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility by teaching your child to complete simple household chores, such as taking out the garbage or setting the table.
- Encourage your child to help others in need. Teach your child to respect others.
- Make time for fun activities as a family, such as attending events, playing games and reading.

Behavior

- Make clear rules and discuss consequences with your child. Use discipline to teach your child, not to punish or make your child feel bad about themselves. Discuss your child's behavior and teach your child how to make a better choice next time.
- Help your child develop patience by letting others go first or by completing a chore before playing.

Encourage your child to think about possible consequences before choosing to act.

- Talk with your child about feelings, including things that cause your child to worry.

School

- 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.
- Find ways to get involved with your child's school, like attending school events and meeting your child's teachers. Encourage your child to join school clubs, sports teams or volunteer opportunities.
- If your child is struggling in school, talk with your child's teacher about resources they recommend.
- Talk with your child about bullying. If your child is being bullied, talking with your child's school can help stop it. Learn helpful tips from a Cincinnati Children's expert. *Scan the QR code on side 2*

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, salty and low-nutrient foods.
- Have your child brush teeth twice each day (after breakfast and before bed) and floss 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 2 hours per day (not including schoolwork). 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

- Have your child ride in the back seat (until at least 13 years of age) and use a booster seat until your child reaches 4 feet 9 inches tall. Get more information about the 5-step test that helps determine if your child is ready to ride without a booster seat. *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*

Digital Safety

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

Helmet Safety

- Have your child wear a fitted helmet and other protective gear like elbow and knee pads when riding bikes, scooters, skates and skateboards.

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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