

Your Child at Five Years Old

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW THE WORLD WORKS and are usually excited about going to school. They ask more complex questions and offer creative ideas for how to solve problems. They are also more social and prefer active games that involve other children.

Sleep Five-year-olds still need lots of sleep and many will still take a nap. A good bedtime for your five-year-old is 8:00 p.m. during the school year.

Nutrition The best nutrition advice is to set a good example! Keeping your children healthy includes encouraging them to:

- › Eat a variety of foods
- › Balance the food you eat with physical activity
- › Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables and fruits; moderate amounts of sugar and salt and little fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
- › Choose a diet that provides enough calcium and iron to meet their growing body's requirements

Physical Development

- › Assists in making own bed
- › Colors within the lines
- › Ties own shoes
- › Jumps rope

Social and Emotional Development

- › Is aware of gender
- › Separates fantasy from reality
- › Is sometimes demanding, sometimes eagerly cooperative
- › Comforts friends and others when they are sad
- › Understands there are rules when playing games
- › Expresses feelings
- › Wants to please friends

- › Wants to be like friends
- › Agrees to rules
- › Likes to sing, dance and act
- › Shows more independence

Cognitive Development

- › Uses past, present and future tenses correctly
- › Groups similar objects together
- › Understands the idea of today, tomorrow and yesterday
- › Identifies most letters and numbers
- › Retells a story from a picture book

HERE'S HELP



Use the **Family Resources on pages 72–78** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR FIVE YEAR OLD

A Home Safety Checklist should be completed at each stage of your child's development. A sample checklist is provided for you on page 70.

- ▶ Practice water safety by teaching your child to swim. Do not let your child play around any water (lake, pool, ocean, etc.) without adult supervision (even if he is a good swimmer). Always wear a life preserver or safety vest when on a boat and childproof the pool by enclosing it in a fence with a self-closing, self-latching door.
- ▶ Teach your child how to dial 9-1-1
- ▶ Set a good example for your child by always using a seat belt, helmet, etc.

Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment

Expressing appreciation for kind and thoughtful behavior is another way to set a good example for children. By reinforcing children's kind behavior, you are helping them to understand that their kindness makes a positive difference. For example, "Emily, I'm really glad that you shared your toy with Ryan. See how much he likes playing with it?" Children need to know that the adults in their lives care about them and about others. Children who experience respect and appreciation from adults are more likely to demonstrate caring toward others.

Research says that harsh physical punishment can weaken children's trust in adults. Physical punishment does not help children learn self-control. When adults use physical discipline, children feel angry at adults and ashamed of themselves. When young children experience consistent and positive guidance, they are more likely to act kindly toward others.



When to be Concerned

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, you should let your doctor know if at five years old your child:

- ▶ Has trouble eating, sleeping, dressing or using the toilet
- ▶ Is extremely fearful or timid
- ▶ Is extremely aggressive
- ▶ Is unable to separate from parents without major protest
- ▶ Is easily distracted and unable to concentrate on any single activity for more than five minutes
- ▶ Shows little interest in playing with other children
- ▶ Refuses to respond to people in general, or responds only superficially
- ▶ Rarely uses fantasy or imitation in play
- ▶ Seems unhappy or sad much of the time
- ▶ Doesn't engage in a variety of activities
- ▶ Avoids or seems distant with other children and adults
- ▶ Doesn't express a wide range of emotions
- ▶ Cannot build a tower of six to eight blocks