



Success in school is an important milestone at this age. Beyond the school work, learning to follow rules, play successfully with others and controlling disruptive behavior are all skills your child should be mastering by this age. If your eight year old is having difficulty with school, we should discuss this today.

Vaccines:

-Flu vaccine is recommended for *all* children October to February. Ask about a shot-free option!

Otherwise, your child should be up to date on all recommended vaccines. We will discuss if any are missing today!



Ask us About:



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EIGHT YEARS

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Development

Your eight year old is learning to use her increasing social and communication skills to develop friendships and experiences outside the family unit. Because of this, her peer group becomes increasingly important, and she will often begin referring to a "best friend".

Some eight year olds are ready for sleep-overs with friends. Modeling responsibility is an important role for parents of eight year olds. Keeping promises, showing up on time and completing tasks on

time model how to be a responsible adult. Providing encouragement through praise and actions help children stay motivated.

Your child should now be helping with simple household chores and responsibilities, like making his bed, picking up his clothes and helping with dinner. She may be interested in participating in team sports, dance, gymnastics, or other physical activities. Not only are they great ways to keep your child active, these activities help to reinforce self esteem and interactions with peers and adults. She should be adjusting well to school and have the attention and co-operation required to succeed.



Healthy Habits

Eight year olds are more likely to be faced with making their own choices about what to eat as they begin to embrace independence. Teaching her what an appropriate well-balanced diet is will reinforce her choices when she is away from you, and help to ensure that she is maintaining a healthy weight. Focus on eating more fruits, vegetables and whole-grains, while limiting candy, salty snacks, fast foods and sodas. Children learn by example, so having good food habits as a family is essential. Have dinner together as a family at least three times a week. Make sure he is getting enough calcium on a daily basis and a multivitamin may be given if necessary. Healthy children

should be physically active at least 60 minutes of every day. Find activities your family enjoys doing together and incorporate this into your daily lives.

Limit TV and computer time/games to no more than 2 hours *total* each day. *Children should not have televisions in their bedrooms!* Be aware of the content of the music, video games and TV your child is exposed to at home and at friends' homes, being alert for violence or age-inappropriate material.



Your child should be seeing a dentist for routine semi-annual check-ups! Don't forget about fluoride!

Safety

Always keep in mind that **accidents** are the leading cause of death in children of all ages. The back seat is always the safest place for children to ride until age 13. A *belt-positioning booster* should be used until he is at least 4'8" tall and the car safety belt fits correctly. Always use a helmet when biking, skateboarding, etc. Eight year olds lack the neurological development to see cars in their peripheral vision and judge an object's speed. They should *never* be allowed to cross the street alone, play around a street alone, or operate motorized vehicles alone. Now is the time to teach your child how to swim, but never let him swim alone or in fast-moving water. Always place your child in a life jacket when on any boat, whether he knows how to swim or not. Teach children the importance of staying away from matches or lighters and the danger of guns. If you own a gun, keep it locked separately from the ammunition and teach your child to respect its deadly potential. Stress the importance of following these safety rules even when at someone else's home.

As your child begins to spend more time with other adults, now is the time to discuss the importance of privacy and personal possession regarding his body. Explain to him that it is never okay for an older child or adult to tell him to keep secrets from his parents, express an interest in his private parts or show him their private parts. Let her know that it is always OK to call you or ask to come home if she feels uncomfortable at someone else's house. Get to know the parents of her friends and their parenting philosophy before she spends the night.