



## Development & Behavior

Your child is more interactive, involved with friends, and developing emotionally. 7- and 8-year-olds are moving toward mature independence and autonomy. At this age they have developed a conscience that allows for understanding of rules, relationships, and social norms. Experiences with school and social activities foster individualization. Their peer group grows in importance, and they will likely identify with children of the same gender who have similar interests and abilities. Your child will encounter beliefs and practices in peers that differ from those of your family. Trying to make sense of the differences may lead to conflict in beliefs and values.

At this age your child should have household responsibilities which help to foster a sense of personal competence. Responsibilities such as making the bed, picking up clothes, setting the table, and helping with meals are some examples that can not only help the family but also help your child become confident in attempting activities that require increased responsibility. School performance remains a good marker of a child's development and accomplishments. Success or difficulty in school may affect self-esteem in positive or negative ways.

Puberty entails dramatic changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of development. A discussion about the onset of puberty and education within the family is appropriate at this age and developmental stage. Answer questions simply and honestly at the level of your child's understanding. Puberty may begin at this age in some girls, usually starting with breast development.

## Media

Inappropriate or excessive media use has been associated with attention problems, impaired sleep, school difficulties, vision changes, and obesity. Any media exposure should be limited to 90 minutes per day and be of good quality. Check out [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org) for recommendations. Do not use a TV, phone or iPad as a substitute for interaction with your child. Turn off devices during meals since this is a great opportunity to have conversations with your child. Children at this age are naive when it comes to the digital world. Provide parental supervision and monitoring to prevent exposure to inappropriate material. Use internet safety tools with filtering to limit access. Start the discussion of the risks of sharing personal information.

Children at this age do not need their own phone; we embrace the "wait until 8th" campaign, which encourages parents not to get a phone for their children until 8<sup>th</sup> grade. More information can be found at <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>. Read to your child every day or have them read to you. Engage your child in board games and encourage them to play with favorite toys creatively and to release energy with active play. Current recommendations are for children this age to be physically active for 60 minutes or more per day.

## School

A child that arrives at school fed and rested is ready to learn and performs better. Provide a healthy breakfast and establish bedtime routines to get at least 10–11 hours of sleep. After-school activities, sports, social activities, and clubs can place a big demand on your child's time. Be cautious not to over-schedule them, allowing for some unstructured time. Stresses, changes in family, loss in families, or family violence can contribute to poor performance. If you are experiencing these kinds of stresses, please talk to your child's doctor.

## Diet

Continue healthy eating habits for your child. Give them a healthy breakfast every day. Help them learn to recognize and respond to hunger and fullness cues. Do not allow snacking in front of a TV or device. Have nutritious foods and drinks readily available and the expected options for meals and snacks in your house. Limit food and drinks high in calories, fats, sugars and refined grains which are low in nutrients. Make sure your child gets calcium & Vitamin D containing foods or beverages. 12–16 oz of low-fat or fat-free milk a day plus an additional serving of low-fat yogurt or cheese is recommended. If your child does not drink milk or other dairy products then aim for foods and beverages fortified with calcium and Vitamin D.

## Oral health

Use a soft toothbrush with a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste twice a day. Aim for 2 minutes per day and flossing once a day. Children at this age are still working on their dexterity, so you should still brush their teeth afterwards to clean them thoroughly. Your child should see a dentist regularly and have fluoride applied every 6 months. Limit your child's consumption of sweetened beverages and snacks with sugar. Discuss the importance of dental care. If your child is playing contact sports, make sure they wear a mouth guard.

## Safety

Keep firearms stored unloaded and locked in a safe, with ammunition stored separately. Do not show your child where you have stored the firearm, ammunition, or key. Children simply do not understand how dangerous firearms can be despite your warnings. Exposure to secondhand smoke greatly increases the risk of heart and lung diseases in your child. For your health, as well as your child's, please stop smoking. Vapor from e-cigarettes is also harmful, so avoid secondhand exposure by not vaping or smoking around your child or in the car.

Your child should be using a belt-positioning booster seat. The booster seat should be used, regardless of age, until they are 4'9" tall. This ensures correct positioning with the seatbelt crossing the chest rather than the neck and the lap belt across the hips rather than the abdomen. The correct position of the seat belt is important in prevention of serious injuries. Children should not ride in the front seat until 13 years of age. Your own safe driving behaviors are important as well. Do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and do not text or use mobile devices while driving. Children should use a properly fitted, approved helmet every time when riding a bike or scooter and when skating.

It is extremely important to supervise your child around any body of water. If you have a pool, it should be fully enclosed and equipped with self-closing gates. Even for better swimmers, one parent should be assigned as "water watcher," whose eyes and attention do not leave the swimmer. Never leave a child in charge of other children and have clear hand-offs between "water watchers." REMEMBER, IT ONLY TAKES SECONDS TO DROWN. When outside, protective clothing should be worn, and sunscreen should be applied. See the [sunscreen](#) page in the parent information section of our website for more information.

### What to expect at this visit

We ask parents to complete a screening for social determinants of health form to provide the best care for your child. No immunizations are scheduled for this visit but Flu and COVID vaccines may be given if in season. See the medication dosage calculator on our website for recommended dosing of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Influenza injection



Nasal Influenza



COVID

