



Development & Behavior

Your child is more interactive, involved with friends, and developing emotionally. 9- and 10-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. They are in the process of developing more mature coping skills. Experiences with school and social activities foster individualization. Their peer group continues to grow in importance, and they will likely identify with children of the same gender who have similar interests and abilities. Having a best friend at this age is a milestone in interpersonal development. 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. Teach your child non-violent conflict resolution techniques.

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 by gaining responsibility. School performance remains a good marker for a child's development. 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 of changes with puberty and education within the family is appropriate at this age. Answer questions simply and honestly at the level of your child's understanding. Puberty may have begun in some children with breast development and pubic hair in girls and enlargement of the testes in boys.

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 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 8th grade. More information can be found at <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>. 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 perform better. Provide a healthy breakfast and establish bedtime routines to get at least 10–11 hours of sleep. Talk about their school day, which may include asking both specific and open-ended questions. 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. If your child has special needs, keep an active role in the IEP process. 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 recognize and respond to hunger and fullness cues appropriately. 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. Examples of nutritious foods include vegetables; fruits; whole grains; lean protein (lower fat meat, fish, poultry, eggs, legumes, nuts & seeds); and low-fat or non-fat dairy products. Limit food and drinks high in calories, fats, sugars and refined grains which are low in nutrients. Examples of low nutrient foods include ice cream, baked goods, salty snacks, fast food, pizza, soda, Gatorade/Power-aide, and other sweetened beverages. 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. 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 may also be 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, regardless of age, until they are 4'9" tall. This ensures correct position 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. Use a seat belt. Do not put the car in drive until everyone is buckled in. 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. Children at this age are not old enough to ride a bike at or after dusk; instruct your child to come back home when the sun begins to set.

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. HPV vaccination may be initiated and Flu and COVID vaccines may be given if in season. 9-year-olds will have vision checked. 10-year-olds will have hearing checked and be screened for high cholesterol. See the medication dosage calculator on our website for recommended dosing of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Influenza injection



Nasal Influenza



COVID



HPV



