

# your child @<sup>TM</sup>

## 5 years

highlights of what's happening  
at this stage of your child's development...

This is a big year for your child! It brings with it the start of kindergarten as well as a new sense of independence (that may test your patience), developmental achievements and social relationships. At this time, what your child needs most is your attention, respect and patience.

### your child's health

#### The Well Visit

Your child might have her hearing and eyesight checked at this year's check-up. Her vision should be 20/30 or better. Check with your child's doctor and school to ensure she has had the required vaccinations.

#### Nutrition

*A taste of independence.* The start of kindergarten may mean that your child will eat at least one meal per day outside of your home. Make sure she's prepared. Talk to her about healthy eating habits and the importance of a balanced diet. Also, make sure she knows about any food allergies or other dietary restrictions that she has.

#### Sleep

*Fighting sleep?* Sleep defiance issues are typical. To find a solution:

- Determine the cause of the behavior (attention-seeking, fear of something, exerting independence) and make proper adjustments. (Change the bedtime, put in a night light.)
- Set aside time each day to talk to your child about school and other things going on in her world.
- Stick to your usual bedtime routine, but include choices which will help your child feel in control.
- Stay consistent and firm. Every night, adhere to the same bedtime rules. And, no matter how tired you are, don't give in to her requests or demands.

### your child's growth and development

Your child should be able to do most or all of the following by the time he turns six years old:

#### Physically

- Assist in making his bed.
- Color within lines.
- Tie his shoes.
- Jump rope independently.

#### Intellectually

- Use past, present and future tenses accurately.
- Group similar objects together.
- Understand the idea of today, tomorrow and yesterday.
- Identify most letters and numbers.
- Retell a story from a picture book with reasonable accuracy.

#### Socially and Emotionally

- Comfort friends who are sad or hurt.
- Understand that there are rules when playing games.
- Express feelings.

Because each child develops differently, you should use these developmental milestones as only a general guideline of what to expect from your child.



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### nurturing your child

#### Handling Defiance, Back Talk and Lies

*Keeping authority.* Here are some strategies to help you manage your child's new independence.

- Praise good behavior. This is the best way to encourage more of the same.
- Be respectful. Don't yell. And, before you ask him to do something, make sure he knows how to do it.
- Pick your battles. Respect his needs to feel independent and explore. Also, where you can, avoid situations that trigger your child's defiant streak.

*Stopping the sass.* Talking back is often a sign of anger, frustration, fear or disappointment. When you respond:

- Stay cool. Be a good role model for your child. Speak quietly and calmly.
- Offer support. Let your child know that you understand that something is bothering him, but that he cannot behave badly.
- Make rules. Teach him that when he yells, you will either ignore him or leave the room. Tell him that if he speaks nicely, you will listen.



*Uncovering the truth.* A kindergartner may make up stories for lots of reasons. Before you confront your child, try to understand why he lied. Was it to protect himself from punishment, act out a fantasy or simply to get your attention? You also may want to read books with your child about telling the truth, to help him understand the importance of honesty.

#### Preparing for Kindergarten

*Great beginnings...* The start of kindergarten is a time of excitement, anxiety and change for a child. To get your child off on the best foot, you should help him understand what to expect before classes begin.

- Talk about school. Discuss what he will do during the day, how many kids will be in his class, his teacher's name, what he will carry in his backpack.
- Take your child through his new routine. Drive or walk to school and back. Take a tour of the school. Show him his classroom.
- Be supportive. Appreciate that going to kindergarten is a big deal for your child. Listen to his concerns, answer questions and read books about starting school. Be patient if his transition is rough.
- Keep it calm at home. With all the adjustments to school, it is important that home remain a safe haven. Try to stick to the same routines. Don't schedule your child for many other activities. Provide for plenty of down time. Make yourself available to play with and talk to your child.

### your child's safety

#### take note...

Simply telling your child to not talk to strangers is not good advice. Sometimes, such as when you introduce her to a friend of yours, it's okay to talk to a stranger. Or, if your child is lost, she should know to ask someone for help.

#### Dealing with Strangers

Tell your child that she should walk away and find an adult she knows if approached by anyone who:

- Asks her for help.
- Shows her a picture of a pet.
- Asks to take her picture.
- Tells her that there is a family emergency.
- Calls her by name even though she doesn't know him.

#### On the Playground

Check places your child plays for:

- Sharp points, corners or edges, splintered wood or hot metal (such as slides).
- Openings that might trap a child's hands or feet, and loose cables, wires and ropes that may trip a child.
- Equipment that is not securely anchored to the ground, including handrails, ladders and steps.

*Born Learning<sup>SM</sup>* is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

