

SCHOOL READINESS: Your child may be ready for school when he:

- Plays well with other children.
- Takes turns.
- Follows simple directions and simple rules regarding behavior
- Uses the bathroom alone including dressing himself afterwards.
- Able, or will be able after a short period of time to be away from home.

SEX EDUCATION: By this age or earlier, children will be curious about where babies come from and about the differences between boys and girls. Answer these questions in a way your child can understand. Stick to answering the question your child has asked. They may not be ready for extra information. Books from the library can help. Ask your librarian.

- Use correct terms for genitals.
- Understand that the child's sexual curiosity and explorations are normal.
- Instruct your child not to accept touching he or she does not like and teach them to say, "Stop, I don't like that".

PARENTING PRACTICES:

- Establish rules regarding bedtime and chores.
- Discourage watching television. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting TV, video and computer games to 1-2 hours per day total.
- Spend active time with your child everyday. Show interest in your child's daily school activities. Show affection.
- When you are not at home make sure there is an adult supervising.
- Praise and encouragement of your child's activities contributes to self-esteem. Find the things your child does well and praise her for them.
- Encourage age-appropriate self-responsibility. Have your child participate in setting the table, cleaning up afterwards and tidying his own room.
- Encourage reading and hobbies. Establish a routine of going to the library.
- When involved in group sports, emphasize learning and having fun rather than competition. Have your child play with other children.
- Provide your child with an opportunity to talk about his or her day.
- You are your child's most important role model. Teach them healthy habits by exercising, quitting smoking and planning healthy meals together.
- At this age your child needs more independence. However, you need to continue to set clear limits.

SAFETY:

- Wear car safety belts and promote and insist on the same for your children and all car passengers. Remember children under 12 should not ride in the front seat.
- Teach bicycle and skating safety. All family members should wear helmets. Do not allow your child to ride a tricycle or a bicycle in the streets.
- Provide an opportunity to learn how to swim. Make sure to teach water safety and never leave your child alone around water.
- Keep firearms and ammunition locked up separately. If you own guns make sure you teach gun safety. When your child spends time at a friend's house ask about guns in the home.
- Teach your child what to do in case of fire. When you are changing the batteries in your smoke detector (which you should be doing twice a year when changing your clocks for daylight savings,) have a practice fire drill.
- Help your child to memorize their name, address, and phone number.
- Warn your child not to go with or accept anything from strangers, and teach them how to say, "No".
- Instruct your child not to accept touching he or she does not like and teach them to say, "Stop, I don't like that".

SUGGESTED READING:

Caring For Your School Age Child, Ages 5-12, by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Your Five-Year-Old by Ames and Ilg.

How To Get Your Child To Eat...But Not Too Much by Eilyn Satter.

Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems by Richard Ferber.

The Magic Years by Selma Fraiberg.

Your Child's Health by Barton Schmitt

Touchpoints by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.

Without Spanking or Spoiling by Elizabeth Crary.

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Faber and Mazlish.

Taking Care of Your Child, A Parent's Guide To Medical Care by Pantell, Fries, and Vickery.