

Well Child Care at 6 Years

Growth and Development

Your child will grow at a slow but steady rate over the next 2 years. See your child's doctor if your child has a rapid gain in weight or has not gained weight for more than 4 months.

Activities

-) Kids can start to develop life long interests in sports arts and crafts activities, reading, and music.
-) Encourage participation in activities. Remember that the goal of competition is to have fun and develop oneself to the greatest capacity. Winning and losing should receive limited attention.
-) Physical skills vary widely in this age group. The sports that kids will excel in will vary depending on whether the activity requires endurance (such as distance running), power (such as swimming) or excellent visual skills (such as baseball or softball).
-) Encourage at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

Behavior

-) Kids at this age like to take risks. They act confident and think they will not get hurt. Watch them closely, especially when they are near busy roadways, open water, or near a fire or electricity.
-) Kids seem to have boundless energy. Prepare in advance for ways to let your child enjoy physical activity.
-) Dawdling is a normal response at this age and demonstrates that a child is having a difficult time planning and thinking through the steps of accomplishing a task.
-) Adults play important roles in the life of children at age 6. Children will develop close relationships with teachers. It can be upsetting to a child when adults they love (including teachers) go through difficult times or changes.
-) Wetting the bed at night is a problem for a few children. If your child still wets the bed regularly, ask the doctor about ways to help decrease this behavior.

Nutrition

Having many or most meals together as a family is desirable. Mealtime is a great time to allow the child to tell you of her day, interests, concerns, and worries. Let your child have plenty of opportunity to participate in the discussion at the table. Be flexible if your child occasionally needs to eat on the run.

Food preferences will vary. You need to balance good nutrition with what your child wants to eat. Major battles over what your child wants to eat are not worth the emotional cost. Good table manners take a long time to develop. Model good table manners for your child.

Make sure your child is eating a good breakfast each day. This will help them learn, feel better, and behave better at school.

Safety Tips

Fires

-) Practice a home fire escape plan
-) Check every month to make sure that smoke detectors are working properly.
-) Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
-) Tell your child about the dangers of playing with matches or lighters.
-) Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out.
-) Turn your water heater to 120°F (50°C).

Cars

-) Make sure your child is always in a booster seat.
-) Don't buy motorized vehicles for your child.

Pedestrian and Bicycle

-) Supervise street crossing. Your child may start to look in both directions, but don't depend on his ability to cross a street alone yet.
-) Buy and use a bicycle helmet both for all bicycle-riding, in-line skating, and skateboarding members of the family.
-) Do not allow your child to ride a bicycle near busy roads.
-) Children who ride bicycles that are too big for them are more likely to be in bicycle accidents. Make sure the size of the bicycle your child rides is appropriate. Your child's feet should both touch the ground when your child stands over the bicycle. The top tube of the bicycle should be at least 2 inches below your child's pelvis.

Trampoline

-) Health professional groups advise avoiding the use of outdoor trampolines.

Heights

-) Make sure windows are closed or have screens that cannot be pushed out.

Strangers

-) Remind your child never to go anywhere with a stranger.
-) Be sure your child knows her home address, phone number and the name of her parents' place(s) of work.
-) Discuss safety outside the home with your child.

Discourage Interest in Tobacco Products

The unhealthy effects of tobacco are well recognized. Parents are influential in teaching children to avoid tobacco.

-) If a parent smokes, the parent should set a quit date and stop smoking. Modeling nonsmoking is a powerful example with important health consequences.
-) Teach your child to be civil and polite when he is around people who smoke. Also teach your child to avoid breathing in other people's smoke.
-) Talk to your child about smoking. Ask him what he knows about smoking and if he knows anyone harmed by tobacco.
-) Tell your child that smoking is related to the cause of death for 1 in every 5 people in the United States.

Dental Care

-) Your child should brush his teeth regularly and should have regular visits to the dentist.
-) Parents need to check their child's teeth after he has brushed.
-) Flossing the teeth before bedtime is recommended.
-) Permanent teeth may soon come in or may have already started coming in.
-) The pits of the permanent teeth are prone to cavities; parents and dentists need to watch the teeth carefully and consider whether sealants (plastic coatings that adhere to the chewing surface of the molar teeth) may help prevent tooth decay.

Immunizations

Your child may already be current on all routinely recommended vaccinations. Sometimes influenza shots are recommended at this age depending on your child's health. Be sure to bring your shot record to all visits with your doctor.

Next Visit

A once- a- year check-up is recommended.

Normal Development: 6 Years Old

Here's what you might see your child doing at the age of 6 years

Physical Development

-) loves active play but may tire easily
-) can be reckless (does not understand dangers completely)
-) is still improving basic motor skills
-) is still not well coordinated
-) begins to learn some specific sports skills like batting a ball
-) dawdles much of the time
-) is fascinated with the subject of teeth
-) may become a more finicky eater
-) uses crayons and paints with some skill, but has difficulty writing and cutting
-) may resist baths
-) permanent teeth erupting, both front teeth or molars

Emotional Development

-) may have unpredictable mood swings
-) is quite sensitive to criticism
-) has a problem admitting a mistake
-) feels quite guilty about mistakes

Social Development

-) evaluates self and friends
-) begins to impose rules on play activities
-) cooperates with other children with some difficulty
-) has difficulty considering the feelings of others
-) values independence

Mental Development

-) likes taking responsibility for simple household chores
-) likes to make simple decisions
-) counts to 100
-) asks endless "how-what-when-where-why" questions
-) continues to refine concepts of shape, space, time, color, and numbers
-) begins to understand the difference between intentional and accidental
-) begins to understand differences of opinion
-) still has a short attention span (about 15 minutes maximum)
-) enjoys dramatic play