

EARLY CHILDHOOD / 2 YEARS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury prevention

All children who are 2 or older should use a forward facing car safety seat properly secured at all times in the back seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat manufacturer.

Ensure that your child wears a life vest if boating. Inflatable flotation devices or "knowing how to swim" do not make a child safe in the water.

Ensure that swimming pools in the child's community, in his apartment complex, or at his home have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Children should be supervised by an adult whenever they are in or near water.

Put sunscreen on your child before going outside to play or swim.

Keep your child's environment free of smoke. Keep the home and car nonsmoking zones.

Test smoke detectors to ensure that they work properly. Change batteries yearly.

Keep cooking utensils, hot liquids, knives, and hot pots on the stove out of reach.

Ensure that electric wires, outlets, and appliances are inaccessible or protected.

Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, alcohol, and electrical tools locked up and/or out of the child's sight and reach.

Exclude poisons, medications, and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications.

Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Guard against falls. Use locked doors or gates at the top and bottom of stairs and safety devices on windows. Supervise the child when he is on stairs.

Ensure that guns, if in the home, are locked up and that ammunition is stored separately. A trigger lock is an additional important precaution.

Teach your child to use caution when approaching dogs, especially if the dogs are unknown or eating.

Never leave your child alone in the car or the house or while taking a bath.

Do not expect young children to supervise the two year old.

Supervise all play near streets or driveways.

Ensure that a child riding in a seat on a parent's bicycle is wearing a helmet.

Ensure that playgrounds are safe. Check for impact- or energy-absorbing surfaces under playground equipment. Make sure that playground equipment is not over three feet tall and not made of pressure-treated wood.

Choose caregivers carefully. Discuss with them their attitudes about and behavior in relation to discipline. Prohibit corporal punishment.

Nutrition

Serve your child meals with the family and give two to three nutritious snacks per day.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Encourage conversation.

Provide nutritious snacks rich in complex carbohydrates, and limit sweets and high-fat snacks.

Offer nutritious foods and let your child decide what and how much to eat. Children may eat a lot one time, and not much the next.

Choose the menu. Do not let your child dictate it. Most children will eat a considerable number of foods.

Serve a variety of foods, particularly those containing iron.

Enforce reasonable mealtime behavior, but do not force eating.

Let your child experiment with food.

Avoid engaging in struggles about eating.

Ensure that your child's caregiver feeds nutritious foods.

Oral health

Continue to brush your child's teeth with a tiny, pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

Give your child fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the child's drinking water.

Schedule a dental appointment for your child every six months unless the dentist determines otherwise based on individual needs/susceptibility to disease.

Sexuality education

Anticipate your child's normal curiosity about body parts, including genitalia.

Use correct terms for genitalia.

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Promotion of social competence

Praise your child for good behavior and accomplishments.

Model appropriate language. Encourage language development by reading books, singing songs, and talking about what you and your child are seeing and doing together.

Spend individual time with your child, playing, hugging or holding, taking walks, painting, and doing puzzles together.

Appreciate your child's investigative nature, and do not excessively limit explorations. Guide your child through fun learning experiences.

Promote physical activity in a safe environment.

Encourage parallel play with other children, but do not expect shared play yet. Give your child opportunities to assert themselves.

Reinforce self-care and self-expression.

To promote a sense of competence and control, invite your child to make choices whenever possible. (The choices should be ones you can live with, e.g., "Red pants or blue ones?")

Reinforce limits and appropriate behavior. Try to be consistent in expectations and discipline.

Use time out or remove source of conflict for unacceptable behavior.

Learn how to respond to your child's needs without giving in to every wish or becoming upset and reacting negatively to constant questions and physical activity.

Prepare strategies to deal with night awakening, night fears, nightmares, and night terrors.

Encourage self-quieting behaviors, such as quiet play or the use of a transitional object.

Recognize that toilet training is part of developmentally appropriate learning.

Promote toilet training when your child is dry for periods of about two hours, knows the difference between wet and dry, can pull their pants up and down, wants to learn, and can give a signal when they are about to have a bowel movement.

Limit television watching to no more than 1-2 hours per day of appropriate programs. Watch programs with your child.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

If another baby is expected, discuss with the health care professional how to prepare the two-year-old child for the new baby.

Spend some time playing with the toddler each day. Focus on activities that express your child's interest.

Listen to and show respect for your child.

Show interest in your child care activities. Show affection in the family.

Spend some individual time with each child.

Help your child express such feelings as joy, anger, sadness, fear, and frustration.

Create opportunities for each family member to interact with and play with your child every day.

Keep family outings relatively short and simple. Lengthy activities may tire your child and may lead to irritability or a temper tantrum.

Do not expect your child to share his toys.

Acknowledge conflicts between siblings. Whenever possible, attempt to resolve conflicts without taking sides. For example, if a conflict arises about a toy, the toy can be in time out. Do not allow hitting, biting, or other violent behavior.

Allow older children to have objects that they do not have to share. Give them a storage space that your 2 year old child cannot get into.

Share meals as a family whenever possible. Spend time talking to each other.

Reach agreement with all family members on how to support your child's emerging independence while maintaining consistent limits.

Discuss with the health care professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g., using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g., WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider attending parent-child play groups. Discuss with the health care professional possible programs for your child: preschools, early intervention programs, or other community programs.

Learn about and consider attending parent education classes or parent support groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations.

Discuss with the health care professional choosing and evaluating child care programs. Discuss the child care arrangements you have made.

Find out what you can do to make your community safer. Advocate for and participate in a neighborhood watch program.