

Woburn & North Andover Pediatric Associates

7 Alfred Street, Baldwin Park II, Woburn, MA 01801 - Phone 781-933-6236, Fax 781-938-8050
800 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 - Phone 978-557-5712, Fax 978-557-5406



Routine Physical Exam: 6-8 years

Development

- He/she should:

Write numbers and words more accurately (might still confuse some letters like B and D or P and G); have better reading than spelling skills

Have a good understanding of numbers and be able to do simple adding/subtracting; begin to understand the value of money and enjoy counting/saving

Group objects by size, shape, color

Take more interest in appearance

Show more independence, be better at telling the difference between fantasy and reality, start to think about the future

Pay more attention to friendships and teamwork, and want to be like and accepted by friends

Learn better ways to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings

- This is a critical time for children to develop confidence in many areas of their life. With starting school, this age group is coming into regular contact with the larger world.

- Your child is beginning to demonstrate increasing responsibility and independence. He/she wants more say in what she can and cannot do.

- Your child's morals and values are developing. He/she might share strong opinions about whether things are right or wrong and be more aware of what others are doing, this might lead to comparisons like "he's better at running than me" or complaints about siblings getting "more".

- Your child wants to please the important adults in their life so doing things the "right way" becomes very important. On the other hand, he/she might sometimes seem over confident.

- Your child is more easily embarrassed and sensitive to other people's views and beliefs. In fact, your child has lots of empathy for family and friends when they are distressed, but at times may be very self-critical and will need your help to focus on things he/she does well.

- Your child is more aware of events seen/heard on the news, like natural disasters. This growing awareness about the world can cause anxiety and fear. It is important to talk with your child about distressing events in a way she can understand, but without too much detail. It is important to limit exposure to news and media at this age.

- Play is becoming more complex. This age group often plays out ideas that they have come across at school or in the media.

- Your child is better at controlling behavior and emotions, and is better able to cope with games that involved rules, winning, and losing.

- Friendships give your child a sense of belonging and help him/her learn and practice basic social skills like sharing and negotiating. He/she will have a better understanding of the relationship between cause and effect, and begin to see how his/her actions affect others. This age group can still be self-centered, and relationships may also be challenging because friends can sometimes be bossy and may sometimes leave one child out of an activity. Most of your child's relationships will be positive but keep an eye out for signs of bullying. Your child might also start to play more with children of the same gender.

- Be prepared for lots of questions as your child explores the world around him/her. You might find him/her do small experiments to see how things work.

- Visit: www.HealthyChildren.org, search topics like "Problems With Peers"

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Safety

- Your child's increasing physical ability and independence can put him/her at risk for injuries from falls and other accidents. He/she will attempt things that are more dangerous and may try to prove that he or she is grown up, but this age group is still not good at judging sound, distance, or the speed of a moving car. He/she can learn a few simple things to do for protection, but you must still be in charge of your child's safety.
- Your child must be in a booster seat until the adult safety belts fit correctly (approximately age 8-12 or when height reaches 4'9"). The safest place for children, even through school age, is in the back seat.
- Your child should be able to swim independently by this age. Do not rely on floatation devices to protect non-swimmers and do not allow your child to swim alone. No diving in shallow water or waters where the conditions below the surface are unknown. Always wear life vests when boating/fishing.
- Use sunscreen SPF 50+. Don't forget to reapply!
- Use insect repellants containing DEET or Picaridin.
- Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working appropriately. Make and practice (1-2 time per year) a plan for escape in case of fire.
- Limit total screen time (TV, mobile devices, computer, iPad, videogames, etc.) to less than 1 hour per day.
- Children are constantly exposed to smoking, drinking, and drug use behaviors through TV and social media. Counsel your child to avoid use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or inhalants and be clear about the dangers these behaviors present. Set a good example by maintaining a smoke free environment at home, and counsel them on the difficulties that addiction can present.
- Monitor computer games, mobile device use, TV, and internet for use and content. Do not allow TV or internet devices in the bedroom.
- Always wear protective equipment for activities (bikes, scooters): appropriate sized helmet, wrist/elbow/knee pads. Teach the rules of the road and do not allow children to ride in the open road. Be sure your child is comfortable with starting, stopping, and turning.
- Discuss "stranger danger" – teach your child that it is never okay for an adult to tell a child to keep secrets, or to express interest in private parts. Teach your child to trust their instincts and to come to you if they feel upset.
- Gun safety can be a tough topic to address but it is important. If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, be sure it is stored unloaded and securely locked. Ammunition should be stored separately and also locked. Discuss firearm safety with your child.
- Visit: www.HealthyChildren.org, search topics like "Safety for Your Child", "Booster Seats for School-Aged Children", "Fire Safety"; www.SafeKids.org

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Nutrition

- Help your child learn to choose appropriate foods, including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Limit high fat or low nutrient foods & beverages. The majority of calories should come from nutrient-dense foods like lean proteins, dairy, whole grains, fruits, and veggies.
- Share family meal time to make meal time pleasant, encourage conversation, and avoid distractions at the dinner table (no TV or mobile devices).
- Practice healthy eating habits and physical activity early. Encourage active play and be a role model by eating healthy at family mealtimes and having an active lifestyle.
- Visit: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov; www.EatRight.org

Family/Social and Behavior

- Build your child's self-esteem and self-confidence by recognizing his strengths and positive qualities. Show affection for your child and recognize their accomplishments. Help your child set achievable goals so that she will learn to take pride in herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- Teach your child that it's okay to make mistakes. Let your child see you try new things and make mistakes – this helps him/her understand that learning and improving are all about making and learning from mistakes, but it's important not to give up.
- Reading is still very important for your child's literacy development. As your child learns to read, try having him/her read to you or try other literacy activities like telling stories or writing a short story.
- Share ideas and discuss important issues with your child. This helps you connect with your child and shows that you are interested in him. As your child gets older, allow him/her to join in family decision making where appropriate.
- Help your child develop a sense of responsibility. Ask him/her to help with household chores like setting the table or cleaning their rooms.
- Talk with your child about school, friends, the things he/she looks forward to, and respecting others.
- Help your child learn patience by letting others go first or by finishing a task before going out to play.
- Make clear rules and stick to them. Be clear about what behavior is okay and what is not. Use discipline to guide and protect your child, rather than punishment to make them feel bad about themselves. Follow up with discussions about what and what not to do.
- Praise your child for good behavior. It's best to focus praise more on what your child does ("You worked hard to figure this out" than on traits he/she cannot change ("You are smart").
- Support your child in taking on new challenges. Encourage them to solve problems, such as a disagreement with another child, on their own.
- Encourage your child to join school and community groups, such as team sports, or take advantage of volunteer opportunities.
- Visit: www.HealthyChildren.org, search topics like "Signs of Low Self-Esteem", "Bullying: It's Not OK"