

# KEEP YOUR KIDS

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## HEALTHY & SAFE ALL YEAR

CO-DEVELOPED AND SPONSORED BY MERCK

**Help your children** develop these healthy habits and behaviors that can affect their lifelong well-being.

**EAT HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACKS.** Eating a well-balanced and nutritious diet helps your child do his or her best. Poor eating habits can make your child tired, cranky, and even sick! Meals and snacks should be low in sugar and fat and include sensible servings of fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. For more information, and to calculate your child's daily requirements, visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

**WASH HANDS.** Kids (and the rest of us) should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to remove germs.

**EXERCISE REGULARLY.** Children and adolescents need 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day, including aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities.

**ROUTINE DOCTOR VISITS.** During your child's next doctor's visit, be sure to ask about diseases that can affect your preteen.

**SLEEP.** Kids ages 6 to 12 need 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night.



**LIMIT SCREEN TIME.** Encourage reading and storytelling instead of viewing television and playing video and computer games.

**DRINK PLENTY OF WATER.** Water is important for all parts of the body to function properly. While there is no specific amount recommended for children, it is a good idea for them to have water throughout the day.

**BRUSH TEETH.** Use a fluoride toothpaste twice a day and have your child visit a dentist regularly.

**WEAR SUNSCREEN.** Kids don't have to be at the beach to get too much sun. Just a few serious sunburns can increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life. Make sure they put on sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 30 or higher to protect their skin from the sun's harmful UV rays whenever they're outdoors.

**BUCKLE UP.** Motor vehicle-related injuries kill more children and young adults than any other single cause in the United States. Protect yourself and your children by always buckling up.

**WEAR A HELMET.** Protective headgear for your child's active life will help prevent serious injuries while cycling, skiing, skating, snowboarding, skateboarding, and horseback riding.

**BE SMOKE FREE.** Declare your home a smoke-free environment. Smoke from other people's cigarettes (secondhand smoke) can cause lung cancer. Children who are exposed to parents that smoke may also have more problems with allergies, asthma, and ear and upper respiratory tract infections. Help your child avoid picking up the unhealthy habit of smoking, which is the major cause of lung cancer in the United States.



### GET READY FOR YOUR CHILD'S CHECKUP

The checkup is also the perfect time to ask about these diseases that could affect your child:

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal Disease (Meningitis)
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Varicella (Chickenpox)



YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT  
visit [www.scholastic.com/wellness](http://www.scholastic.com/wellness) to give your feedback on these materials

# SCHOOL & FRIENDS

## HELPING YOUR ADOLESCENT WITH SCHOOL & ACADEMIC SUCCESS

**As children enter** the preteen and teen years, it is natural for them to become more independent from the family. Friends will play a larger role in their lives, so it is important to help them foster healthy friendships and strong peer relationships. At the same time, peer pressure may increase, causing complex emotional feelings that we sometimes describe as teenage angst. Children who are confident and feel good about themselves are more able to resist negative peer pressure and make better choices for themselves. You can help bolster self-esteem and encourage your adolescent to take on the added social and academic responsibility that goes along with growing independence.

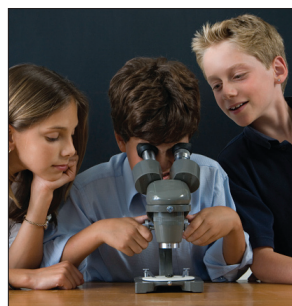
**BE AN INVOLVED PARENT.** Decades of research indicate that when parents are involved, students have higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates; better school attendance; increased motivation and better self-esteem; and more positive attitudes and behaviors. In fact, the more intensely parents are involved, the more beneficial the achievement effects.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO TRY NEW THINGS.** School is full of “firsts,” but some kids can be wary of trying something new if they don’t think they will do well. Remind your child of his or her strengths and of the times when she thought she couldn’t do something but finally did.

**PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR EXPRESSING OPINIONS.** Knowing how to communicate effectively takes practice. Be sure to include your child in family discussions at the dinner table, in the car, while watching the news. Talk about what’s happening in the world and solicit his opinion: If your child feels comfortable articulating ideas with you, chances are he’ll feel confident participating in classroom discussions and connecting on a social level with friends.



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**BE A GOOD LISTENER.** If your kids know that you are genuinely interested in and respect what they are doing in school or with friends, they’ll be more confident and motivated to succeed.

**PRAISE THE EFFORT, NOT THE GRADE.** Self-confidence rises out of a sense of competence. In other words, kids develop confidence not because parents tell them they’re great, but because of their achievements, big and small. Sure, it’s good to hear encouraging words from mom and dad. But words of praise mean more when they refer to a child’s specific efforts or new abilities.

**STAY ON THE SIDELINES.** Remind your child that you are proud of her and have confidence in her, and then step aside and give her the opportunity to try something new, make mistakes, and learn from them. The more opportunities your child has to practice solving problems outside of school, the better equipped she’ll be to handle them in the classroom, on the playground, and beyond.

**GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FRIENDS AND THEIR PARENTS.** Have your child’s friends over or invite them along on a family activity. Taking friends hiking, fishing, on a picnic, or to a show can help strengthen relationships and help you feel comfortable with them. Also take the time to chat with their parents whenever possible to learn more about their parenting style and home environment.

**POSITIVE PARENTING.** Be aware of how your adolescent reacts to his or her friends while helping him develop his own sense of right and wrong. Talk with him about risky things friends may pressure him to do, like smoking or dangerous physical dares.

Your ongoing involvement in your adolescent’s life can help him become independent, while building his sense of responsibility and self-confidence at the same time. As his positive self-image grows, so will his academic and social successes.

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