



# St. Vincent Physician Network

## The Five-Year Checkup "Leaving the Nest"

from [www.kidsgrowth.com](http://www.kidsgrowth.com)

Your 5-year-old is about to begin "real" school for the first time. Your child changes from a little one, protected by home, to a kindergartner, with the demands of a new school and new expectations. Children this age need approval, praise and encouragement. They want to please and are proud of their work.

### School Readiness

Here are some guidelines indicating your child is ready for kindergarten:

- He or she plays well with other children and takes turns.
- Is able to follow directions.
- Can follow simple directions.
- Conforms to simple rules regarding behavior.
- Feeds and dresses himself or herself (except, perhaps, for tying shoes)
- Is able to separate from the parents, after a short transition time, for at least half a day.

### Parenting and Behavioral

- Listen to and show respect for your child.
- This is an important time to continue reading to your child or read together. Get a library card and use it regularly. Ask the librarian to pick out age appropriate books.
- By the end of this year many 5-year-olds can recognize simple words and may even be reading. Praise your child's progress.
- Children this age show concern for each other so parents should encourage diversity, respect and tolerance.
- The 5-year-old enjoys crafts, coloring and painting. He or she may also begin enjoying simple board games (like "Candyland," etc.).
- It is not unusual to have occasional accidents at night and during play. Be understanding and do not make a big deal out of it. However, if it happens frequently, it would be a good idea to discuss the matter with the child's doctor.
- Enhance your 5-year-old's experience with trips to parks, libraries, zoos and other points of interest.
- Teach your child the difference between right and wrong.
- Begin age appropriate chores.
- Building self-esteem is very important at this age. Give your child encouragement and praise not only for completing a task but also while working on the task. Avoid physical punishment - it only promotes fear and guilt and teaches the child that violence is acceptable in certain situations.
- Always show affection.

### Development

- Skips, can walk on tiptoes and jumps forward.
- Throws a ball overhand.
- Washes and dries hands and brushes teeth unassisted.
- Can cut and paste.
- Can name four or five colors.

- Can state his or her age.
- Has a vocabulary of six to eight word sentences.
- Can tell a simple story.
- Can dress and undress without supervision.
- Knows his or her own phone number, address and several nursery rhymes.
- Can copy a triangle from a picture.
- Draws a person with a head, body, arms and legs.
- Understands right and wrong, fair and unfair.
- Understands games that have rules.
- Engages in make-believe and dress-up play, in which your child may assume a specific role ("mommy or daddy").

### **Oral Health**

- Encourage teeth brushing twice a day with small amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Continue to give fluoride supplements if not in the water supply.
- Continue seeing a dentist at least twice a year.
- Consider the use of dental sealants.

### **Feeding**

- Appetite is usually much better at 5 as the child begins the second of three growth spurts. Continue to offer your child a selection from the basic food groups.
- Make meal time pleasant, turn off the TV and encourage conversation.
- Limit carbohydrate snacks like soft drinks, chips, candy and cookies. Instead, encourage healthy snacks, such as fruit and vegetables.
- Ensure your child eats a balanced breakfast and a nutritious lunch at school.

### **Sleep**

- At this age expect an occasional nightmare or night terror. If the behavior become frequent, speak to your child's doctor about it.

### **Immunizations**

*Since immunization schedules vary from doctor to doctor, and new vaccines may have been introduced, it is always best to seek the advice of your child's health care provider concerning your child's vaccine schedule.*

The following immunizations are given at the five year checkup if not previously given:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Acellular Pertussis (DTaP) Vaccine #5
- Inactivated Polio virus (OPV) Vaccine #4
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) #2
- Other screening done at this age include vision, hearing, tuberculin test (if indicated) and blood pressure. If there is a family history of elevated cholesterol, some physicians will also obtain a screening blood test.

### **Safety**

- Continue to use a seat belt in the back seat of the car at all times.
- Teach your 5-year-old how to swim.
- Make sure all swimming pools in your area are secure.
- Always use sun screen when your child is outside playing or swimming.
- Keep your child's environment free of smoke.
- Conduct fire drills and make sure all smoke alarms are operating properly
- Make sure any guns in the home are locked up and the ammunition is stored separately. A trigger lock is an additional precaution. And make sure these same safety precautions are followed at friends' homes. Never allow your child to handle firearms.
- Teach bicycle safety and make sure your child always wears an approved helmet as well as shoes while riding a bicycle.

- If your home uses gas appliances, install and maintain carbon monoxide detectors.
- The purchase of a trampoline is not recommended because of the risk of serious injury.
- Begin to teach your child rules for interacting with strangers, either on the phone or at the door.
- Never let your child play unsupervised outside.

**Sexuality**

- Now is the time to begin to teach your child the names of all body parts including genitals. Give your youngster a vocabulary to avoid unwanted touching. If this is a difficult subject for you to discuss, ask the help of your doctor or the child's teacher.
- Recognize that a child's sexual curiosity and exploration are normal.