

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD HEALTH & WELL BEING

9-12
YEARS

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Every child develops at their own pace—ask questions at their medical visit if concerned.
- **Girls:** May start developing breasts and having periods.
- **Boys:** May experience voice changes and hair growth, sometimes after age 12.
- Increased independence:
 - Children may communicate less with parents.
 - Friends may become more important than family.



WEIGHT AND NUTRITION

- Weight may fluctuate — schedule a visit if concerned.
- This is a key time when lifelong eating and healthy habits develop.
- Help by:
 - Keeping the kitchen free of junk food and sugary drinks.
 - Providing healthy snack options.
- Ask for professional guidance if needed.



FACTS ABOUT THE MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS

- Many report experiencing bullying.
- Some may experiment with alcohol or smoking.
- Some may have boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Some may question their sexual identity.
- Interests may shift quickly.
- Schoolwork often becomes more challenging.
- Physical changes vary greatly.
- They may need help finding physical activities they enjoy.



EXERCISE AND ACTIVITY

- Many prefer screens (phones, TVs, computers) over physical activity, but that doesn't mean it's good for them.
- Encourage organized activities or help them find something they enjoy.
- Count chores as activity.
- Start family habits (e.g., family walks, parking farther away, weekend hikes).



RULES & SETTING LIMITS

- Set clear expectations together—write down rules and consequences to reduce conflicts.
- Ideas for limits:
 - Chores – Assign tasks and deadlines.
 - Cell phone – No texting before homework, charge outside the bedroom at night, no rude or inappropriate messages.
 - TV/Screen time – Limit to two hours after homework.
 - Staying home alone – No cooking, no friends over, check in regularly.



BE AVAILABLE

- Listen actively.
- Encourage self-expression.
- Show warmth and understanding.
- Set clear, consistent boundaries.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD HEALTH & WELL BEING

9-12
YEARS

HEALTHY EATING HABITS

- Many often eat too much junk food.
- Avoid fights over food—instead, provide mostly healthy options at home.
- Family meals matter (doesn't have to be dinner—consider weekend breakfasts or a Friday movie night meal together).



HOW TO START CONVERSATIONS

- Find one-on-one time to listen.
- Conversation starters:
 - What do you worry about the most?
 - What's your earliest memory?
 - What's one thing you were grateful for today?
 - What makes someone a good friend?



POSITIVE PARENTING IDEAS

- Stay connected: It's easy to take their withdrawal personally, but they still need to feel loved and supported.
- Key phrases to use often:
 - "I love you."
 - "I'm proud of you."
 - "Try new things."
 - "Use me as an excuse."
 - "It will be okay."



OneWorld
Community Health Centers

Contact us: (402) 734-4110
Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-784-8669

NE DHHS: (402) 471-3121
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988