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8-9 YEAR EXAMINATION

1. Development: A typical 8-9 year old:
 - reads for enjoyment
 - tells a joke coherently
 - is very concerned about rules and fairness, and is outspoken and sassy when unfairness in parents is perceived.
 - is able to take care of his/her room and assume responsibility with less reminding than at 6 years
 - is learning to tell time (this sometimes takes until 9-10 years)
2. Injury Prevention: Injuries account for almost two-thirds of the deaths at this otherwise healthy age.
 - a. Automobiles: A belt positioning booster car seat is required until 8 years old and 4'9". Booster seat use and crossing safety need constant reminders. Children must ride in the back seat if there are air bags.
 - b. Fire: Use of smoke detectors, care with matches and smoking materials, a kitchen fire extinguisher, and a family escape plan can prevent tragedies.
 - c. Water: Swimming lessons and reminders about water safety are important. Never leave a child alone near water even if they are good swimmers.
 - d. Personal: Teach your child about strangers and "off limits" behavior.
 - e. Guns: If you have no guns in your home, do not buy any. If you do have
 - f. Bikes, Rollerblades and Scooters: Always use appropriate protective gear such as helmets, knee pads and wrist guards. Children should not be allowed to ride in the street without close adult supervision.
3. Individual Differences: In this age range, differing abilities in physical coordination, memory, reading and personality become apparent. It is particularly important for parents to learn the individual strengths of each child, and to praise and encourage those. Encouragement can also take the form of outside activities like trips, library cards, organized group activities. Academic achievement is the easiest to recognize both for parent and school. A child may need special support and praise to continue to develop artistic, mechanical, social, athletic, or verbal skills.
4. Chores/Allowances: Children at this age will handle chores with encouragement but are very sensitive to fairness. Chores should be evenly divided among siblings or rotated. A child who is excused because of special activities, even if they are highly valued by the family (i.e., music lessons in a musical family), will breed resentment in the sibling who picks up the slack.

An allowance can provide a valuable tool for learning about your child's values and personality, as well as providing a lever for discipline. Make certain that the amount is not so large that the child does not have to make choices in how it is spent.

5. Social: Provide family time with Mom, Dad and siblings. Encourage supervised activities and play with peers.

6. Nutrition: Evidence suggests that at least some children perform better at school with an adequate breakfast. Television and convenience foods tend to promote a diet high in salt and sweets. Having a variety of alternative snack foods can promote better nutrition. Precut vegetables, dried fruits, fruits, cheese, and unsalted nuts are examples of good snack foods. Variety is always helpful.

7. Healthy Habits:

- Eat a well balanced diet
- Engage regularly in physical activity. Parents can encourage youth sports if the child is interested.
- Get adequate sleep
- Limit TV/video game/ computer viewing to 2 hours or less per day
- Encourage reading and hobbies
- Brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste

NEXT VISIT: 1-2 Years