

Slowing Down The Race Of A Fast-Track Life

Many people today feel they're never completely caught up. Life seems to be a frantic rush. The routine may include a job, homemaking, volunteer work, errands and other chores – in addition to being a parent. And that's where the guilt often comes in. You may worry that you're not spending enough time being relaxed, open and supportive with your child. If the pace of your family life seems to be hurtling out of control, put some reins on it. Being in control is important to your physical and emotional health. And it's helpful for your child to see that you set priorities to keep life pleasant.

Schedule family free time. Think of it as "our time for us." Make it a time to be together with no agenda beyond talking, laughing and nurturing each other.

Take advantage of moments together. Chat with your child while riding to a team practice. Prepare meals together making sure that all tasks are age-appropriate. Make meal time an occasion for easygoing conversation. Even watching a favorite TV show together, sharing popcorn, can provide a chance to relax and "hang out" as a family.

Say, "Let me think about it." When you get a phone call asking you to commit time to church, school or community work, don't be put on the spot. Ask to think about it overnight, it'll give you time to set priorities and either say "yes" without regrets or "no" without guilt.

Share the family chores. No one member should have many more responsibilities than the others. But it can happen, especially to moms. If you're feeling tired, overworked and put upon, divide up the chores so you're not so pressured.

Most of all, remember that the best gift you can give your child is you – a calm, relaxed and loving parent. That is a gift worth whatever lifestyle changes you must make to achieve it.



Check These Out!

Public libraries have many books, tapes and videos about parenting and child development. Use your library card to check out these and other excellent resources. Invite your young student along to check out books or tapes, too.

For special resources related to parent education and support in your community, contact local social services, schools, hospitals, libraries or United Way.

As a Pre-adolescent, your child needs some relaxed and informative talks with you about his or her changing body. Here are some books that may help.

Talking with your child about sex : questions and answers for children from birth to puberty
/ Mary S. Calderone, James W. Ramey. (B)

How to say it to your kids ; the right words to solve problems, soothe feelings & teach values / Dr. Paul Coleman. (B)

Helping your child through early adolescence : for parents of children from 10 through 14. (B)

Safekids 101— preparing kids to stay safe at home and in the community. (V)

Common sense parenting, volume 2 teaching responsible behavior (V)

(B) book, (V) video

Ask your librarian to suggest other excellent manuals that can help you and your fifth grader keep communication lines open as he or she moves toward adolescence.

Healthy Stages is a program of Hampton's Healthy Families Partnership.
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Healthy Stages

5TH GRADE

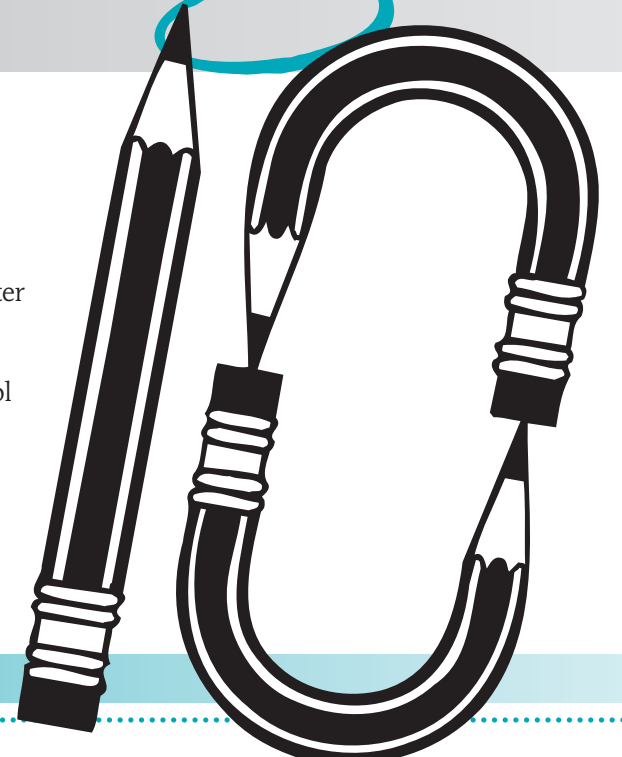
Fifth Grade: Making The Journey from Childhood to Adolescence. *Healthy Stages* is a free, once-a-year newsletter. It is designed to reach you during your child's current grade in school. Every effort has been made to pack its short articles with helpful facts. We suggest you keep *Healthy Stages* around for the entire school year. Put it in a folder with other important information about your child. Refer to it from time to time. Its articles may help you deal with a problem or try a new approach in parenting.

You may look back on your child's year in fifth grade as a special one. Development experts say it is a time when the challenges of childhood have been mastered, and the storms of adolescence haven't yet

begun. (Adolescence is usually counted from age 11 through age 18.)

In terms of schoolwork this is a time when parents can help a student prepare for the major lifestyle and academic changes of middle school. Help your youngster make the most of this last year of elementary school. How? By encouraging the good study habits and eagerness to learn that will be assets throughout school and later in life.

We hope you look forward to all that this year brings. And we hope you'll turn to *Healthy Stages* often. We want to help you make this school year one that both you and your child will remember with joy.



I Am Ten

The typical fifth grade child is ten years old. These traits probably hold true for your fifth grader, even if he or she is slightly older or younger.

Girls and boys at 10 can seem very different. Girls are typically more poised, and are clearly on their way to adolescence. Girls show earlier interest in their appearance and clothing styles. But rest assured, boys will soon show greater maturity, too.

Maturing minds need facts. Your 10-year-old is changing not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. Where children once asked frankly about their bodies and sexual issues, they may now become less open. It's up to you to keep the communication and the age-appropriate sex education coming. Knowing the right answers can help build a maturing youngster's confidence, self esteem and personal values.

Social issues are of interest now. The 10-year-old begins to have and express ideas about social problems, prejudice, crime and other topics.

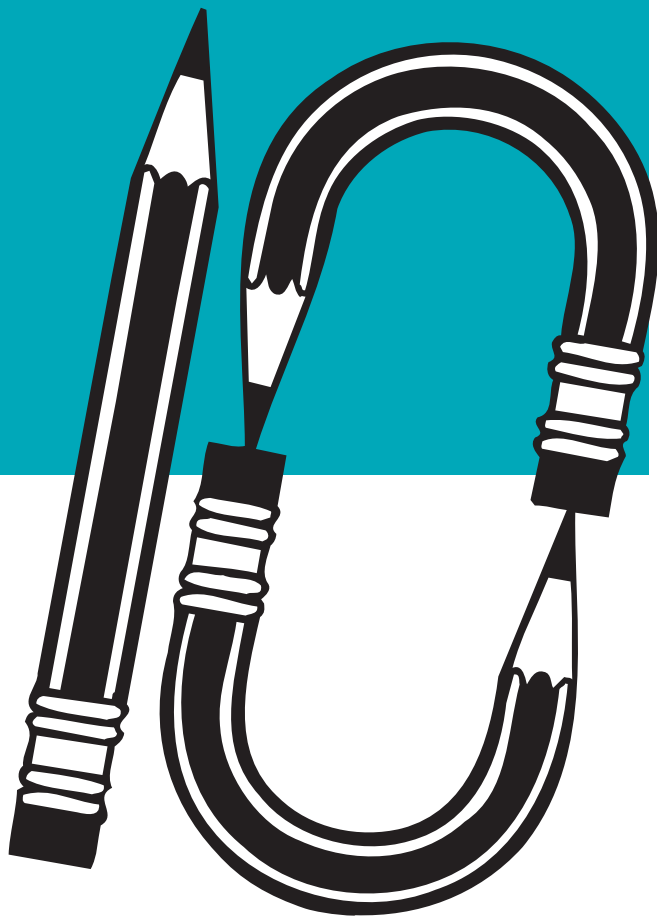
What families do is important. A 10-year-old may take great pride in talking about his mother's and father's work, about family vacations and traditions.

Talents blossom. At 10, a youngster may show strongly developing skills in music, art, or a sport.

TV versus real life. In positive but firm ways, parents should continue to monitor what a child sees on TV and how many hours are spent in front of the tube, video games and computer. Encourage books, sports and school activities as healthy alternatives.

Keeping secrets in the group can be very important to both boys and girls. Both sexes show strong loyalty to their group. Best friends become more important. Parents may begin to feel they are less influential in the child's life. Remember, you need to continue clearly communicating your values and expectations.

Ten is a great time to learn. Many teachers report that fifth grade can be a rewarding school year, due to youngsters' more mature ability to memorize, solve problems and seek resources that help them learn.



Nurturing Your Child

The ABCs Of Grades: Keep Them In Perspective

For many parents, the grades a child gets on tests and report cards are the single most important indicator of how their student is doing in school. But educators caution that grades need to be looked at as a part of the learning picture, not all of it.



Keep in mind that grades can fluctuate for numerous reasons. Moving to a new school, a family problem, illness, and other life situations can bring a child's good grades down temporarily. By the same token, supportive parenting, remedial classes, encouraging teachers and a child's own will to succeed can help grades improve.

Children also vary in their abilities, a fact which can show up in grades. One child is a whiz at memorizing facts. Another shines at creative work. Each will get higher grades in his or her stronger skills.

- ♥ Assist him in developing good study habits.
- ♥ Encourage her traits of self-discipline and independent problem-solving.
- ♥ Communicate your pride in work well done.
- ♥ Be reasonable. Does the teacher tell you your child is doing her best? Praise the effort rather than dwelling on a grade.
- ♥ Pay attention to written notes on a child's report card. Teachers often use them to suggest what a student can do to improve.
- ♥ Do be concerned about a continuing pattern of falling grades. Talk to the teacher or a counselor about finding and solving the problem.

Abridged from an article in Parenting Insights, entitled, 'Grades - What do they mean and what can we do?'

The Parent-Teacher Partnership

Textbook Skills To Take To Middle School

In most school systems, next year your child will be in a new school environment, and one which will put greater demands on his or her study skills. Here are ways you can help your student make better use of textbooks and library resources.

Familiarize yourself with one or more of your child's textbooks. Then help him or her get to know it better and use it more productively.

Tour the table of contents. Using a textbook or a resource book, show your child how to quickly scan a book's table of contents to find topic material.

Glance over the glossary. Many textbooks have a sort of "miniature dictionary" in the back which explains the meaning of key words and phrases as they are used in the book.

Point out print cues in the text. Textbooks and resource books often have headlines, sub-heads, words underlined, or words in bold type. Show your child. Explain that this means they are important, and should get extra attention.



Health And Safety

Home Alone: Making it a Safe Experience



There is no "one right age" at which a working parent can be assured a child is ready to be at home without supervision after school. At ten, is your child ready? You're the expert on whether your ten year old is responsible, unafraid, and mature enough. Whether your boy or girl is at home alone while you work or just for the hour or two it takes you to run errands, these tips can make things safer and healthier:

- ♥ Install smoke detectors.
- ♥ Without dialing, rehearse a 911 emergency phone call with your children, teaching them to give full names and directions to your home.
- ♥ Have clear ground rules about what your child can and cannot do, where he or she can or cannot go.
- ♥ Be specific about whether a child can or cannot use an oven, stove, or other appliance. Teach safe use of appliances.
- ♥ Tell children not to inform telephone callers that they are home alone. Have them say their parent cannot come to the phone and that they will take a message.
- ♥ Warn children not to admit strangers to the house.
- ♥ Children using keys to enter home should keep their keys out of sight until they are at the front door.
- ♥ Have juice and nutritious snacks on hand.
- ♥ Keep a supply of interesting projects or safe crafts around.
- ♥ Give hugs and kisses when you get home. Praise your child for being a responsible family member.

Adapted from Children: Virginia's Greatest Resource, published by the Virginia Chapter, National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, Parents Anonymous of Virginia Inc and the Virginia Department of Social Services.

All In The Family

Practicing Moderation and Self-Discipline

As your fifth grader grows, he or she will be exposed to many temptations and excesses. Of course, it's important to tell your child about the dangers of smoking, alcohol abuse, drug use, and uncontrolled sexual behavior. But there's another way to help avoid these and other hazards to a healthy, productive life. Do it by developing the family values of self-discipline and moderation. Self-discipline is training yourself not to be lazy, and do too little. Moderation is training you to avoid the excesses of having too much. Here are some guidelines.

Be a good role model. Practice self-discipline by saving part of your income, and letting your child know you do it. Resolve to eat in moderation and snack on healthy items such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Control excesses of temper. And be aware that the best example a child can have is that of a parent who doesn't smoke, avoids drinking to excess, and doesn't abuse drugs.

Avoid "instant gratification." If your child really wants a new toy or piece of sports equipment, help him or her save for it. Talk about how much more something is valued when we work toward getting it. Your child will learn that planning ahead and saving are far more rewarding than impulse buying and splurging.

Have clearly stated family rules. Have you ever considered having "family by-laws?" They might include such items as, "In this family, we do not

- ♥ Curse
- ♥ Yell
- ♥ Use each other's property without asking
- ♥ Hurt or hit each other," etc.

Family rules that reinforce moderation and self-discipline can go a long way toward creating an attitude that will help protect your child against temptations that could be harmful.