

In this letter you'll find helpful resources and learn about:

- Checkups for your child, including vaccines.
- Taking care of your child's teeth.
- Helping your child try new things and learn by playing.
- Proper hand washing.
- Helping your child learn about emotions.
- Naps and how much sleep your child needs at night.
- How to get involved in your child's child care.
- Water safety.
- The dangers of swallowing button batteries and magnets.
- Child proofing tips.
- How to prevent sunburns.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Schedule checkups in the coming year!

There are fewer well-child visits after your child turns 1. Call your child's doctor or clinic to schedule checkups.

Since these visits happen less often, it's important to review your child's vaccine schedule and ask about their development. You can check your child's development using an online tool at bit.ly/parenthelp123-child-development-screening.

Vaccines

Vaccines are the best protection.

Vaccines safely protect children from many serious diseases. It's important for your child to get vaccinated on time. Diseases that can be prevented by vaccines, and their long-term effects, can be more dangerous for young children. Diseases are often spread to children by parents or other family members who may only have mild symptoms of illness. Some diseases can spread even before symptoms appear. Make sure your child is up to date on their vaccines to help protect them from diseases they may be exposed to at home, child care, or in public.

For a current recommended vaccine schedule visit bit.ly/CDC-vax-schedule.

To see and download your family's vaccine records online visit myirmobile.com.

Oral Health

Take care of your child's teeth.

Cavities can be painful and make it hard for your child to eat, sleep, talk, and learn. Here are some tips to take care of your child's teeth:

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day and always after their last meal or snack. Use a toothbrush with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Offer your child water when they are thirsty. Drinking tap water with fluoride is best. Limit juice to 6 ounces or less per day. Have your child drink juice while eating a meal or snack since it has cavity-causing sugar.
- Schedule a checkup with a dentist. Ask about fluoride varnish. It strengthens teeth and helps prevent cavities.
- Offer tooth-healthy foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, to your child for snacks. Starchy and sticky foods, like crackers, cookies, and fruit gummies, can cause cavities if left on the teeth for too long.

Growth and Development

You can help your child's development.

Children learn by trying new things and doing them over and over again. Help your child learn by playing together. They will begin to do new things, such as:

- Say simple words.
- Scribble.
- Walk without help.

Talk about the things you are doing and what you see as you walk or drive. This will help your child learn new words. It's important to use real words, not "baby talk." Your child can understand more than they can say. Saying "no" is normal for your child. When your child says "no" it's important not to get angry.

Stay calm and be firm about what you want your child to do. Give them choices when you can. For example, ask your child, "Do you want to wear your blue or yellow shirt?"

Teach hand washing!

It is important that your child learns to wash their hands. Make sure their hands are washed often at child care. Germs that cause many illnesses can pass from hands to mouth even if hands don't look dirty. Use plain soap and warm water. Make washing your hands fun with your child! Sing a 15 to 20 second song together (the time needed for proper hand washing). Rinse hands well and dry them. Use alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes only when there is no soap and water available.



Let's sing a song together while we wash our hands.

Help your child learn about emotions.

Your child is starting to express feelings. Help your child learn how to handle them. Here are some tips:

- Let your child know you understand their feelings. Tell your child when you notice they are happy, sad, angry, disappointed, excited, etc.
- Play with your child. You may be able to learn why they are anxious, scared, happy, or proud.
- Read or look at books about feelings together. Ask your librarian for ideas.
- Be aware of your own emotions. The better you understand your own feelings, the better you will understand your child's. Your child learns about handling feelings by watching how all adults who care for them handle theirs.

Help your child get to sleep.

Most children need a nap during the day and should sleep about 11 to 12 hours at night. A bedtime routine can help your child get used to going to sleep on their own. Put your child to bed at the same time every night. Brush teeth and wash their face and hands. Look at a picture book together in a quiet room. Then put your child in bed, give them a hug and a kiss, and leave the room.

When there are changes in your child's life, like being sick, going on a trip, moving, or getting a new sibling, their sleep habits may change. To help, follow a bedtime routine every night. Let your child choose a special blanket to take to bed. At 15 months, the greatest risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) has passed. If you have concerns about sleep, talk with your child's doctor or nurse.

Child Care and School Readiness

Stay involved in child care.

Your child care provider is your partner in caring for your child. They can help your child feel safe and cared for when away from you or another family member. Staying involved will help you know how your child is being cared for. Here are some tips to stay involved:

- Ask often about how your child is doing at child care.
- Volunteer for cleanup days or help with activities.
- Join in special events, such as field trips, career day, or on dates that are culturally important for your family.
- Visit and watch your child while they are at child care.
- Talk to your child's caregiver if you have questions or concerns about their development.

For more information on choosing quality child care, visit the Department of Children, Youth, and Families at dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care.

Safety

Prevent drownings!

Drowning happens quickly and quietly. Children can slip into water when you are not looking. Watch your child at all times when they are near water, whether it is a bathtub, toilet, garden fountain, pool, hot tub, lake, or the beach. Stay within arm's reach. Children 0 to 5 years old should wear a life jacket while in or near water.

Empty small pools and buckets and keep the toilet lid closed. Swimming pools or hot tubs should have a fence around them with a self-locking gate. For more information, visit bit.ly/KH-prevent-drowning.

Button batteries and magnets can be dangerous.

"Button" batteries are used in remote controls, greeting cards, watches, toys, and other devices. Keep products with button batteries out of the reach of young children.

Your child can find and swallow them without being seen. They can quickly damage the throat and digestive system. A child who has swallowed a battery may cough, choke, wheeze, drool, vomit, or not want to eat or drink. Take your child to the emergency room right away if you think they have swallowed a button battery.

Magnets are also a serious health threat if swallowed. Keep all magnets or other products that contain magnets out of your child's reach. If you think your child has swallowed a magnet, contact their doctor or nurse right away.

Child-proof your house!

Your child can open and reach things now that they could not before, so now is a good time to child-proof your house again. Here are some child-proofing tips:

- Bolt or strap furniture, such as dressers, flat panel TVs, or TV cabinets, to the wall from the top.
- Keep furniture away from windows so your child can't climb up and fall out.
- Install window stops so frames will not open more than 4 inches from the bottom or side. A window screen won't protect your child from falling out.
- Cover all electrical outlets, even those behind chairs and tables, using child safety outlet covers.
- Make sure cords to window coverings and blinds are not looped and are out of reach.
- Keep cleaners, poisons, nicotine and tobacco products and marijuana products (including edibles), vitamins and supplements, toothpaste, and medicines out of sight, where your child cannot reach them, and in a locked cabinet or closet.
- Store ladders out of reach and do not leave them unattended when in use.

- Store ladders out of reach and don't leave them unattended.
- Store firearms in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault, or lock box so they're not accessible by children and cannot be handled by anyone without your permission. Store ammunition separately. For more information go to bit.ly/gun-home-safety.

Protect your child's skin from sunburn.

Your child's skin burns easily. All skin colors can get sunburned. Sunburns in childhood increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. The sun's rays are most harmful from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Try to keep your child out of the sun and encourage your child to play in the shade.

Have your child wear lightweight clothes covering their shoulders, arms, and legs as well as a hat and sunglasses.

Use sunscreen (at least SPF 15) to help protect your child's skin. Rub plenty onto all bare skin about 15 to 30 minutes before going outside. Put more on every 2 to 3 hours and whenever your child has been in the water.



My skin burns easily. Protect me from the sun.

Check alarm batteries.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives when they work properly. Install alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions. If you don't have a 10-year sealed lithium battery alarm, replace your alarm batteries if they don't respond or if they "chirp." Replace all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every 10 years or when the "test" button fails.

Resources

- **Child development tool:** bit.ly/parenthelp123-child-development-screening
- **Vaccine schedule:** bit.ly/CDC-vax-schedule
- **See and download vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Choosing quality child care:** dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 18 months old with information on:

- How to handle difficult behavior.
- Playground and driveway safety.
- Feeding your toddler.

For the Health of All Our Children

Watch Me Grow Washington is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

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