



Watch Me Grow – 6 Years

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

- Making sure your child stays up to date on their vaccines.
- A nutritious diet.
- Being active.
- How to focus on your child's strengths.
- Monitoring what your child watches on TV and internet.
- Protecting your child from sexual abuse.
- Booster seats.
- Street, bike, and water safety.

Happy reading!

Vaccines

Vaccines for life!

Vaccines are an important part of staying healthy throughout your child's life. By this age, your child has most likely finished their primary vaccination series. To stay protected, your child will need a flu vaccine each year and the following vaccines at 11 to 12 years of age:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap).
- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine.
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) can be started at age 9. This vaccine protects against multiple cancers caused by HPV.

If your child has a high-risk medical condition, they may need other vaccines. Check with your doctor or nurse for more details. Ask your child's doctor for the most up-to-date copy of your child's vaccine records and that these records are in the Washington State Immunization Information System.

They will need these records for school, camps, college, and travel. You can also see and download your child's vaccine records online at myirmobile.com.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Nutritious eating helps your child learn.

Children need a nutritious breakfast and lunch to have energy and learn well in school. Encourage 2 to 3 food groups at breakfast to help your child feel full. Even if you're in a hurry, make sure your child eats something healthy in the morning, such as yogurt and fruit, toast with peanut butter, or a tortilla filled with scrambled eggs, or refried beans and cheese.



Let's eat a nutritious breakfast together.

Help your child decide what they want to eat for lunch. If your child brings lunch from home, let them help make it. Offer your child a variety of foods from all 5 food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, protein, and dairy). Each group has important nutrients your child needs to grow and stay healthy. Limit juice, soda, and sports drinks. Diet soda is also not recommended for young children because it contains artificial sweeteners. The effects of artificial sweeteners on young children are not well known. For more information, visit myplate.gov.

You can call your child's school to find out the qualifications for a free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch program.

Encourage your child to be physically active

Daily physical activity is important for the whole family. Help your child make exercise a habit for life. Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity each day for your child. Try new activities together. Biking, walking, hiking, and swimming may become lifelong activities.

If your child wants to be active in a team sport, try several sports to find the ones that your child enjoys. Look for programs that are based more on fun and learning skills rather than winning. Remind yourself that having fun while being active is most important.

Family Support and Routines

Focus on your child's strengths.

When your child brings home schoolwork, talk with them about what they did well. Praise specific things and talk about what areas need more work to improve and offer them help. Don't only talk about the things they done wrong.

Know what your child is watching and playing!

Your child will learn many things from TV shows, movies, the Internet, and video games. Some of this information you will agree with and some you won't.

Here are some ways to make screen time a positive learning activity:

- Watch and play with your child. Ask questions, such as "Who is your favorite character?" or, "Could a real person do that?"
- Teach your child that violence is not OK. Help them learn to solve problems with words, not by hurting others.
- Explain to your child ads on TV, websites, and in game apps are made to sell things. Teach your child not to click on ads while playing games or watching videos without you knowing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends checking and setting limits to screen time for your child's health and safety.

Safety

Protect your child from sexual abuse.

Protecting your child from sexual abuse is a safety issue. Talk to your child about sexual abuse. Talk about the subject in the same calm and matter-of-fact way that you discuss other safety issues. This may make it easier to talk about this difficult subject.

Teach your child about safe and unsafe touching and behaviors. Children should be aware that unsafe touching doesn't necessarily cause pain. They need to know that strangers aren't the only people who can abuse them. In fact, most children who are abused are abused by someone they know.

Let your child know there are people they can talk to even if they've been told not to tell. Talk with your child about asking for help right away from a trusted adult, such as a teacher, neighbor, or family member.

Continue using a booster seat in the car!

Washington State law requires children to use a car seat or booster seat until the seat belt fits correctly, which is normally when children are around 4 feet 9 inches tall. Seat belts that do not fit right may cause serious injuries. Your child is big enough to use the lap and shoulder belt without a booster seat only if you can answer yes to all of the following questions about your child:

- Do they sit all the way back against the seat?
- Do their knees bend at the edge of the seat?
- Does the shoulder belt cross the middle of the shoulder and lap belt fit low against the thighs?
- Do their feet rest of the floor?
- Can they ride this way the entire trip?

Make sure your child wears the lap belt low and snug and the shoulder belt across the shoulder and chest, not under their arm or behind their back. Remember, the backseat is the safest place for anyone under 13 years old. To find the nearest car seat inspection service, visit wacarseats.com.

Keep teaching your child street and bike safety.

Children this age should not cross streets or bike on the street without an adult. Your child may not always remember to follow traffic rules until about 10 years old. Your child also may forget the dangers of traffic while playing. Cross the street with them and set a good example by crossing safely yourself.

Let your child bike in playgrounds, parks, or on trails. Bikes should be the right size for your child. Feet should touch the ground when standing over the bike. There should be about two inches between the crossbar and your child's body.

Make sure they wear a helmet and other safety gear when using a bike, scooter, or skates.



Make sure to put my helmet on when we go for bike rides.

Water safety to keep your child safe.

Swimming is a life-saving skill. However, even children who know how to swim must be watched around water. A child could easily become tired or get into deep water.

When swimming in or playing around lakes, rivers, and the ocean, there are dangers, like strong currents.

Everyone should wear a life jacket and be extra careful. State law requires children under age 13 to wear life jackets in boats under 19 feet long.

Children should always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket that is the appropriate size.

Congratulations!

Your child is graduating from Watch Me Grow!

We hope you have found these mailings helpful. We have enjoyed providing you with information to help your child grow up healthy and safe.

Your child will continue to need regular health and dental checkups.

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. To continue to get information from us, follow us on Facebook @WatchMeGrowWA.

For the Health of All Our Children

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


 @WatchMeGrowWA

 www.watchmegrowwa.org

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers needing assistance, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov



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 **Resources**

General Health & Vaccine Information

WithinReach
 Call the Help Me Grow Washington Hotline
 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay)
 ParentHelp123.org

Vaccine information
 1-866-397-0337
doh.wa.gov/immunization,
bit.ly/CDC-vaccines-schedule

Tobacco Quitline
 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669)
quitline.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 1-800-232-4636, 1-888-232-6348 (TTY),
cdc.gov

Health, illness, and safety information
healthychildren.org

Safety Information

Washington Poison Center
 Call 911 if your child is having difficulty breathing or will not wake up
 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 711)
wapc.org

Car and booster seat safety tips
wacarseats.com

Safe firearm storage
lokitemp.org

Sexual abuse prevention
bit.ly/UW-a-safer-family-a-safer-world

Product safety and recalls
 1-800-638-2772, 301-595-7054 (TTY)
recalls.gov

Environmental Public Health
 DOH Consumer Hotline 1-800-525-0127
bit.ly/DOH-EPH

Emergency preparedness
mil.wa.gov/personal

Parenting Support

Family Help Line
 Support for parents and families
 1-800-932-4673
parenttrust.org/call-fhl

Child Care Aware of Washington
 Free and unbiased child care referrals in your local area
 Family Center: 1-800-446-1114
wa.childcareaware.org/families

Washington State Libraries
 Find libraries in your community
 (Internet access is available at most libraries)
 360-704-5200
sos.wa.gov/library

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 Information about child development and positive parenting tips
cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting