



Watch Me Grow – 4 Years

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

- Scheduling your child's yearly medical and dental checkups.
- Which vaccines your child may need.
- Vaccines for adults.
- Tips for eating together as a family.
- The importance of exercise.
- How to talk to your child about their body.
- How to help your child express their feelings.
- Car and helmet safety.

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Checkup time!

A medical and two dental checkups are the best way to make sure your child is healthy and developing well.

Before you go to the checkup, write down any questions or concerns you have and take the list with you.

If you want a free developmental screening, call your local school district or the Help Me Grow Washington Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

Vaccines

Finish the vaccine series to protect your child.

When your child turns 4, they will finish a vaccine series started when they were younger. These remaining vaccine doses will help your child build the best protection against certain diseases, such as whooping cough (pertussis).

On or after your child's 4th birthday, they will need another dose of these vaccines:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Flu, every year
- COVID-19

Be sure your child's vaccines are up to date and correct. You have the right to review your child's records, ask questions, and make corrections. Talk with your doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions.

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

Adults need vaccines, too.

Adults and older children often spread diseases to younger children and older adults. Get vaccinated to protect your family, friends, and community from diseases that vaccines can prevent. Encourage everyone who spends time with your child to make sure their vaccines are up to date. Consider these questions:

- Have you asked your child's preschool or child care provider if all staff and children are vaccinated?
- Did you get the Tdap vaccine to protect myself and others from whooping cough?
- Did you get your flu vaccine this year?
- Have you had measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox or do you have a record of getting these vaccines?

Check with your doctor, nurse, or clinic to find out which vaccines you need. Most pharmacies also offer vaccines for adults.



Read the "Parents need vaccines, too!" brochure that came in your last mailing for more information.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Eating together as a family is a good habit.

When you eat at home your family is more likely to eat healthy foods from all 5 food groups. Your child can help you plan meals, shop, and prepare food. Your child may be more willing to try a new food if they helped pick it out at the store and make it.

Sit down to eat together as a family at least once a day. Keep screens off during meal and snack times. Give everyone a chance to talk and share stories about their day. When children listen and talk to grown-ups it helps them learn new words, which helps them read better.

When the meal is done, include your child in helping to clean dirty dishes and messes. Your child will learn that cleanup is part of the of cooking.



Let us make dinner together.

Be active as a family.

If your child enjoys being active now, they are more likely to be active throughout their life. Staying fit may help lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, and stroke, later in life. It may also help self-esteem. Be active as a family and set a great example for your child. Here are some suggestions:

- Go for a walk or bike ride after dinner.
- Go to the park and play on the playground.
- Turn on your favorite music and dance together.
- Set up an obstacle course with chairs, boxes, and toys for your child to go over, under, through and around.

Growth and Development

Children are curious about their bodies.

If your child asks questions about their body, give simple, and honest answers. Teach them the correct names for body parts. It's normal for young children to look at and touch their genitals (private parts).

They may also be curious about other children's genitals. Check on children while they play. If they talk about or explore each other's bodies, calmly help them find other things to do.

Teach your child where it's ok to take off clothing and touch their genitals. The bathroom and bedroom are such places. Remind your child to wash their hands before and after. Teach when it's ok for other people to touch their genitals. Examples are a doctor's exam or a parent or caregiver helping to clean up after using the toilet.

Touching and exploring are normal, but sometimes you might worry or have questions about sexual abuse. Signs may include changes in mood and behavior as well as physical symptoms, such as genital bruises, bleeding, or infections.

If you see these physical symptoms, take your child to the doctor or emergency room right away. You should also be concerned about a child who knows things about sex that only a grown-up should know or who is sexually aggressive. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

School Readiness

Help your child get ready for school.

You may be thinking about what you can do to get your child ready for school or child care. Many of the things you do every day help them get ready. For example:

- Talk with your child about things they are interested in.
- Read a story with your child and talk about how it could have a different ending.
- Look at family pictures and talk about them.
- Help your child learn how to solve problems that come up when playing with friends.
- Help your child learn how to write their name.

Did you know good oral health is also an important part to a child's ability to learn? A cavity can make it hard to talk and focus during school. Help your child brush after their last meal or evening snack with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Your child will need your help brushing until about 8 years old.



Let's read a story together.

Family Support and Routines

Help your child express their feelings.

Your 4 year old may have very strong feelings. This is normal, but it may worry or surprise you. Your child is learning to express feelings and needs your help. Here are some tips:

- Help your child use words to tell you when they feel happy, sad, frustrated, angry, or afraid.
- Take a moment to stop and listen when your child wants to talk.
- Find books about feelings to read together.

Safety

Make care safety your priority.

Everyone who rides with you must use a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt that fits properly.

In Washington State, the law requires children to ride in a 5-point harness child restraint until at least age 4. Keep your child in a harness seat as long as possible until they reach the height or weight maximum of the seat. Booster seats are required until your child is 4 feet 9 inches tall.

Children under 13 must ride in the backseat when possible. If your vehicle does not have a backseat, slide the front seat as far back from the dash as you can and turn off the airbag, if possible.

As your child gets older, they are likely to ride with other parents or caregivers. Make sure they buckle your child into a car seat or booster seat correctly. For more information, contact Washington's Child Passenger Safety Program at 360-725-9860 or visit wacarseats.com.

Make sure your child wears a helmet.

A helmet can protect your child from serious brain injury when using tricycles, bikes, skates, and scooters. Check to make sure it fits correctly. Let your child know you expect them to use a helmet every time they ride. Set a good example by wearing your helmet. If your child skis or rides a horse, be sure they use the right kind of helmet.

Remember to take the helmet off before your child plays on playground equipment. A helmet can get caught in the equipment and cause serious injury.

Buy a helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or Snell standards. Don't use secondhand helmets. They may not be safe. For more information, contact the CPSC at 1-800-638-2772 or visit bit.ly/choicehelmet.

To find your local Safe Kids Coalition and get resources on where to get a helmet and other safety information at safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-washington.

Correct Helmet Use

- Snug fit on the head, adding pads if necessary
- Front edge level, with 2 fingers width above eyebrow
- Strap buckled under chin
- Chin strap adjusted snugly, no more than 1 finger should fit under
- Straps form a "Y" under each earlobe



Use these 5 tips when wearing a helmet.

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 4.5 years old with information on:

- Preparing for kindergarten.
- How to deal with nightmares.
- Swimming lessons.

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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