

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

- Recommended vaccines.
- Examples of eating healthy and being active.
- Keeping your baby's teeth healthy.
- Ways to help your child learn.
- Requirements for kindergarten.
- How to help your child express their feelings.
- Nightmares.
- Safety around windows and vehicles.
- Swimming lessons.
- Safe cleaning products.
- Health problems caused by smoking.

Happy reading!

Vaccines

Make sure your child's vaccines are up to date.

Protect your child by making sure they get all recommended vaccines. In addition to a flu shot each year, your child will be due for booster doses of other vaccines between 4 and 6 years of age. Talk with your doctor or nurse to find out if your child has missed any vaccines. It's not too late to be up to date!

Also, check to make sure your child's vaccines are in the Washington State Immunization Information System (WAIS). It helps healthcare providers keep track of immunization records. It also makes sure records are complete in case you change doctors or clinics, and when your child registers for preschool and child care.

Access you and your family's vaccine records online at myirmobile.com.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Help your be active and eat healthy.

Set a good example. Help your child be active for at least 60 minutes a day. Walk, swim, or play outside together. Sit with your child for meals and snacks and eat healthy foods together. Here are some more tips for healthy eating:

- Offer small servings of a variety of healthy foods. Let your child eat as much as they want of the healthy foods you offer, but don't make your child eat more than they want.
- Your child needs about 1½ cups of vegetables and 1 cup of fruit a day. Try to offer a variety of colorful foods every day (green, yellow, orange, red, and purple).
- Offer your child two to three healthy snacks a day. A healthy snack includes something from at least three food groups. For example, offer low-fat dairy, a whole grain, and a protein, such as eggs or peanut butter. Other options are foods low in sugar and high in vitamins and minerals, such as vegetables; fresh, frozen, or canned fruits (with no added sugar); nuts or nut butters; and cheese.
- Serve salty, sugary, and fatty foods less often.

For information about the food groups visit bit.ly/AAP-5Food-Groups.



Pack healthy snacks for me and let's go on a hike together!

Oral Health

Keep your child's teeth healthy.

Children without tooth decay and cavities do better in school. Tooth decay hurts and may cause a child to be anxious or irritable. It may also slow speech development.

A child with missing or discolored teeth may not want to participate in activities and make new friends.

Check your child's teeth often. Lift their lip and check teeth for white or brown spots. If you notice changes in the teeth or gums call your child's dentist or doctor. Your child should see a dentist every 6 months.

You can prevent tooth decay. Help your child brush after breakfast and after their last meal or snack of the day with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Remind them to spit out the toothpaste.

Floss between any of your child's teeth that touch. Your child may get fewer cavities if they drink tap water with fluoride and eat foods low in added sugar. Crunchy foods that are full of fiber, like carrots and apples, can help clean teeth.

If you have questions, talk with your child's dentist or doctor.



Help me brush and floss my teeth!

Growth and Development

Practice problem-solving.

When your child is angry or upset about something, they need your help finding a solution. Talk to your child and help them explain to you why they are feeling bad. Ask questions, such as, "Are you upset because your sibling took the book you were looking at?"

Let your child know that you understand these feelings, but certain actions are not OK. For example, say, "I'd feel angry, too. You really love that book. I know you're really mad, but it's not OK to hit your sibling." Help your child calm down (try taking slow deep breaths together) and then help them come up with ideas, like "How else could you let your sibling know you weren't finished with the book? Is there another book you can look at?"

Have fun with learning!

You are your child's first and best teacher. You can help them learn while doing everyday things. For example, during at the grocery store, ask your child to help count pieces of fruit or compare the weights of different fruits and vegetables using the scale.

Child Care and School Readiness

Think about kindergarten early.

Each school district has its own rules. It's important to talk to your child's school a year before they start. If your child is in child care now or will be going to before- or after-school child care, look for a high-quality, licensed program with plenty of opportunities for early learning. Contact the child care or Child Care Aware of Washington at 1-800-446-1114 or childcareawarewa.org.

Family Support and Routines

Nightmares are common.

It is common for children to have nightmares. Here are some things you can do to help your child:

- Have a quiet before-bed routine to help your child calm down and get ready to sleep.
- Avoid scary books, movies, TV shows, or video games. Young children may be scared by things that aren't scary to adults and older children.
- Put your child to bed in the same room every night—a room that is cool, quiet, and dark.
- When your child wakes up from a bad dream, hold them and talk about the dream. Reassure your child that they are safe and stay with them until they are calm.

Safety

Prevent falls from windows!

About 3300 children under age seven fall from windows in the United States each year. Remember, window screens will not keep your child from falling out. Screens are meant to keep things out, not kids in. Keep things your child can climb on away from windows. Keep windows from opening more than 4 inches by using window stops or guards to prevent falls.

Falls can happen anywhere, not just at home. Share this information with grandparents, child care providers, friends, and neighbors.



This is a window stop and it keeps windows from opening more than 4 inches.

Practice street, parking lot, and driveway safety.

Your child is still so small that a driver may not be able to see them in between cars or when backing up. To keep your child and other children safe:

- Hold your child's hand when near vehicles.
- Look out for children in parking lots and driveways where they could be playing.
- Walk all the way around your parked car to check for kids, toys, and pets before getting in and starting the engine.
- Always do a "child check" before anyone backs out of the driveway.

Drowning is a major cause of child death.

Enroll your child in swimming lessons. If you do not know how to swim, take the time to learn. Swimming is fun and good exercise for the whole family. Even if your child knows how to swim or has had lessons, they are not old enough to be around water without an adult watching and within arm's length every minute. Swim in areas with a lifeguard when you can.

Make sure your child wears a Coast Guard-approved life jacket whenever they are near water. Make sure it fits snugly. Washington State law requires all children under 13 to wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket on boats less than 19 feet in length. Set a good example and always wear a life jacket yourself.

For information about life jackets visit ndpa.org/life-jackets.

Environmental Health

Use safer household products.

Household products such as cleaners and yard care items may cause health problems. Here are some tips:

- Avoid buying products labeled DANGER or POISON
- Limit use of bug killers and "weed & feed" products to specific areas
- Follow the instructions on product labels
- Always keep products out of reach of children

For tips on where to buy safer choice cleaning product and a lists of safer cleaning ingredients visit epa.gov/saferchoice/products.

Secondhand smoke and your child's health:

Breathing secondhand smoke or vapor of any kind raises a child's risk of ear infections, asthma, and bronchitis. Keep your home and care smoke-free and vape-free.

If you smoke, smoke outside away from children and ask others to do the same. The chemicals in cigarettes stay on your clothing so wear a jacket and leave it outside. The liquid nicotine (e-juice) used with vaping can be deadly to a small child. Be sure to keep it in a locked place. For help quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit quitline.com.

Resources

- **School vaccine requirements:** doh.wa.gov/SCCI
- **Online vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Before- or after-school child care:** 1-800-446-1114 or childcareawarewa.org
- **Safer cleaning products:** epa.gov/saferchoice/products
- **Tobacco Quitline:** 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669) and quitline.com

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 5 years old with information on:

- Vaccines needed for kindergarten.
- Creating a family screen time plan.
- Car safety.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm safety tips.

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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