

Healthy Habits Start Early

Good activity habits begin early in your child's life. As early as infancy, you can help your child grow lifelong healthy play habits. Your child learns from you, so while you help him be active, try to do the same activities!

Play Time Can Be Active Time!

For Your Infant

- Keep your baby active with tummy time and time spent out of the swing or bouncy chair. This will give him plenty of chances to stretch, reach, and kick so he can reach important milestones like crawling and sitting up.
- Avoid putting a TV in your baby's room. The more YOU talk to and play with your baby, the more likely he is to be healthy as he grows.

For Your Toddler

- Even very active toddlers need physical activity. Keep moving by dancing, jumping, and walking together.
- Try to limit screen time to 2 hours or less a day. Children who have lots of active play time outside and indoors are more likely to stay healthy and active as they grow up.

For Your Preschooler

- Help your child to stay active and learn at the same time by spending time outdoors.

- Try to limit TV, video games, and computer time to 2 hours or less a day. Children who watch more than 2 hours of TV a day are more likely to be overweight as they get older.

For Yourself and Your Family

- When you spend time being active, your child learns healthy habits from you.
- Set playtime, mealtime, and bedtime routines to make daily life easier to handle.
- Talk with your child's pediatrician, early care and education staff, and other parents to get ideas for making playtime active time.



HEALTH LITERACY: A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING AND USING HEALTH INFORMATION



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Understanding What Your Doctor Tells You

Health literacy is how well you understand health information and make good choices about health and medical care.

Why Is It Important?

Many people find it hard to understand the health information they need to take care of themselves and their families.

When Parents and Caregivers Understand Health Information and How to Use it, Children Are More Likely to:

- Miss fewer days of school
- Make fewer trips to the pediatrician or the emergency room that are not needed

- Live healthier lives
- Get preventive care like flu shots
- Have a safe home where fewer accidents happen

Learning Ways to Understand and Use Health Information Can Help With:

- Talking with your doctor
- Asking questions
- Following a doctor's directions
- Taking or giving medicine the right way
- Getting needed medical tests and care
- Knowing what to do when your child gets sick
- Preventing diseases like diabetes, asthma, cancer
- Making healthy choices for you and your family
- Asking for help

Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- ASK for help if you do not understand a health form or do not know how to fill it out.
- ASK for handouts in the language that is easiest for you to read.
- WRITE DOWN questions you have before you go on any health care visit.
- TELL YOUR DOCTOR if you do not understand what he or she is saying.
- Go to the library and ask how to find accurate information about your health concerns and medicines.
- Ask your Head Start or child care program for information on health issues that concern you.
- Go to health workshops at your child's Head Start program and in your community.



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HEALTHY BREATHING AT HOME



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Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Help Prevent Asthma: Keep Your Home Smoke-Free

Why Is It Important?

- Children should be in places that are smoke-free, all of the time.
- Secondhand and thirdhand smoke are triggers for asthma, but you can avoid them.
- Cigarette smoke and e-cigarette smoke contain chemicals, including some that can cause cancer.

What are E-cigarettes or Vapes?

E-cigarettes produce vapor-containing flavored liquids and nicotine. The vapor is not harmless and can damage children's growing lungs.

What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition that causes swelling and narrowing of the airways. Asthma can cause chest pains and tiredness, and make people wheeze and cough.

What Is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke is tobacco smoke in the air. It is the smoke that people breathe in from cigarettes, e-cigarettes or vapes, pipes, and cigars.

What Is Thirdhand Smoke?

Thirdhand smoke is smoke that stays on surfaces and fabric even after someone finishes smoking.



Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- The most important thing you can do to help a child with asthma is to have a smoke-free home.
- Secondhand smoke is never safe.
- Secondhand smoke can cause infections.
- Because children are smaller and still growing, secondhand smoke is even more dangerous for them than it is for adults.
- Children are in the hospital for asthma more often than for most other health problems.
- Children with asthma miss more days of school than children without asthma.
- If a child has asthma, breathing in secondhand smoke can cause more severe asthma attacks.
- Being near secondhand smoke can cause children without asthma to have asthma-like symptoms.
- Chemicals from tobacco smoke (thirdhand smoke) may stay in the air and on your clothes for days or weeks after a cigarette is put out.
- Thirdhand smoke is never safe.
- Your pediatrician can help you or others quit smoking.



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Healthy Habits Start Early



Good eating habits begin early in your child's life. As early as infancy, you can help your child grow lifelong healthy eating habits. You are your child's best role model so while you help her to eat healthy, try to do the same too!

Healthy Feeding and Eating

For Your Infant

- It is important to breastfeed for at least 6 months. She will be more likely to have a healthy weight as she gets older.
- Put breast milk or formula, not cereal, in your baby's bottle. Cereal adds extra calories that she doesn't need.
- Try to wait until your baby is around 6 months to start healthy solid foods like pureed vegetables, jarred baby foods, and infant cereals. Starting solid foods too early can lead to problems with overweight and obesity later.
- Around 8 or 9 months try offering your baby small amounts of healthy finger foods like grilled chicken, cooked carrots, and cut up strawberries. This will help your baby learn to eat healthy.
- Breast milk, formula, and water are the best drink choices for your baby. Soda pop, 100% fruit juice, and sport drinks add extra calories to her diet and can harm her new teeth.

For Your Toddler

- Offer your toddler healthy snacks like small cubes of cheese, sliced banana, or whole grain crackers two to three times per day. This will help him stay full in between meals and reduce hunger-related temper tantrums.
- Try to be patient with picky eaters. He may need to try a food 10 to 15 times over several months before he will eat it.
- Try giving your toddler a choice between two healthy options. He will be more likely to eat healthy food if he picks it out.
- Milk and water are the healthiest drink choices for your toddler. Soda pop, 100% fruit juice, and sport drinks add extra calories to his diet and can harm his teeth.

For Your Preschooler

- Let your child help you in making healthy meals and snacks. She will be more likely to try healthy foods if she helps out.
- Try to keep your kitchen stocked with simple, healthy snacks like carrots, sliced apples and peanut butter, or string cheese. This will help you and your preschooler eat healthy, even on busy days.
- Milk and water are the healthiest drink choices for your preschooler. Soda pop, 100% fruit juice, and sport drinks add extra calories to her diet and can harm her teeth.

For Yourself and Family

- Your child is learning healthy habits by watching you. Try to eat healthy too.
- Set playtime, mealtime, and bedtime routines to make day-to-day life less stressful.
- Talk with your child's doctor, Head Start staff, and other parents to get healthy eating tips.



What is mental health?

Mental health means that young children are growing in their ability to:

- understand and share feelings
- have close and positive relationships
- explore and learn

Why Is It Important?

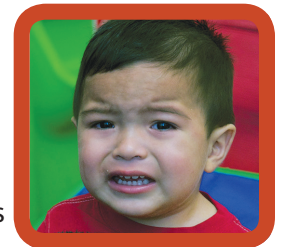
Having Positive Mental Health Makes It Easier for Children to:

- Have close relationships with family and friends
- Do well in school
- Learn new things
- Solve tough problems

- Develop patience (or not give up)
- Focus on a task
- Ask for help

When Young Children Are Worried, Sad, or Angry, It Can Be Hard To:

- Make friends
- Follow directions
- Express feelings or wishes
- Follow simple directions
- Pay attention in class
- Solve problems in positive ways
- Do well in school



Things You Can Do and Say to Help Your Child

• For Your Infant

- Hold your baby during feedings.
"I love cuddling when I feed you."
- Look at your baby and smile, smile, smile!
"Hey, when I smile, you smile back."
- Talk about what you are doing.
"I'm going to change your diaper now."
- Try to relax and have fun.
"When I am happy, you are less fussy."
- Read and sing to your baby every day.
"It is bedtime. Time for a story and favorite song."
- Take care of yourself.
"When I am rested, I take better care of you."

• For Your Toddler/Preschooler

- Make sure they always feel safe.
"I know loud noises can be scary, but it's OK."
- Offer choices.
"Do you want the blue shirt or the red shirt?"
- Practice patience.
"Let's wait until the song is over and then we'll go outside."

- Show understanding.
"You REALLY want another cookie! It is hard when you can only have one."
- Leave extra time.
"I see you don't want to leave the playground. One more time on the slide, then we need to leave."
- Play together at least 15 minutes a day.
"There is so much to do but it is important for us to play together."
- Follow her interest.
"I see you want to play with the blocks. What are you going to build?"
- Praise your child when she keeps trying.
"I love the way you keep trying to find the right piece for the puzzle."
- Practice following directions.
"First pick up the blocks, then take out the cars."



ORAL HEALTH

Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

You Can Promote Good Oral Health By:

- Knowing how to make sure you and your family have healthy mouths and teeth
- Helping your children learn good mouth and teeth habits

Why Is It Important?

When Children Have a Healthy Mouth, They:

- Can speak clearly
- Can eat healthy foods
- Feel good about themselves

Having a Healthy Mouth Also Means:

- Healthy growth and development
- Being able to focus and learn
- A pain-free mouth
- Lower dental care costs for your family



Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- Brush your child's teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- If your child is younger than 3 years, brush with a smear of fluoride toothpaste.
- If your child is age 3 to 6 years, brush with a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Young children will want to brush their own teeth, but they need help until their hand skills are better. Brush children's teeth or help children brush their teeth until they are about 7 or 8 years old.
- Be a role model for oral health! Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day (in the morning and at bedtime) and floss once a day.
- Serve healthy meals and snacks like fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk and milk products, whole-grain products, meat, fish, chicken, eggs, and beans.
- Limit the number of snacks your child has in a day.
- Do not give your child food for rewards.
- Take your child to the dentist for a check up by her first birthday and keep taking her.
- If your child has not gone to the dentist take him.
- Ask your dentist what you can do to keep your mouth and your child's mouth healthy.
- Make sure to go to the dentist as often as your dentist would like you to go.
- Let your child care, Early Head Start, or Head Start program know if you need help or have questions about oral health.



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



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SAFETY AND INJURY PREVENTION



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Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Safety and Injury Prevention for Young Children Is:

- Making sure children have safe places to grow and learn
- Protecting children from danger
- Teaching children what to do to be safe

Why Is It Important?

Children Like to Explore But Need:

- Safe places to play
- Adults who watch and listen so they can prevent an injury before it happens
- Opportunities to practice new skills safely

When Children Are Safe, They Are More Likely To:

- Be injury-free
- Focus on learning
- Explore new situations with confidence



Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- **At Home:**
 - Keep all medicine, cleaning and harmful products away from children.
 - Use cabinet locks and electrical socket covers.
 - Use safety gates on stairs.
 - Use cribs with fixed sides rather than drop sides.
 - Keep cribs away from windows and blind cords.
 - It is best to use cordless window coverings, if possible. If not, keep cords tied high out of children's reach.
 - Put babies to sleep on their backs in a crib with no soft blankets, pillows or bumpers.
 - Keep children away from hot foods and liquids.
 - Turn pot handles to the back of the stove.
 - Set your water-heater thermostat to 120 degrees or less.
 - Keep children away from heaters or fires.
 - Have a smoke alarm on every floor. Replace batteries in the spring and fall.
 - Get a carbon monoxide detector, if you do not have one.
 - Check with your local fire station to see if they can help you find a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector.
 - Ask your pediatrician about foods and small objects that can cause choking.
 - Make and practice an escape plan.

Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

Continued from previous page

● Outside:

- Use sunscreen.
- Teach your child to stay out of the street.
- Look for playgrounds with soft surfaces instead of dirt or grass.
- Watch your child closely on the playground.
- Remove drawstrings from clothing.
- Keep shoelaces short and tied.

● Water Safety

- Know that a child can drown in any amount of water that covers his mouth and nose.
- Always stay within arm's reach of your child if he is in or near water.
- Learn to swim, and take your child to professionally supervised swim lessons.
- Use four-sided fences with self-latching gates around pools.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

● Car and Truck Safety

- Choose a car seat that is right for your child's age, height and weight.
- Choose a seat that fits in your car or truck and use it all the time.
- Ask your Head Start staff where you can go in your community to learn how to install your child's car seat safely.
- Be sure that children younger than 13 only sit in the back seat.
- Never leave your child in a car without an adult.
- Teach children that vehicles are never safe places to play. Even if the windows are open, young children can become dangerously overheated within the first 10 minutes.

