

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

- Vaccines your child needs to be up to date.
- Helping your child eat well.
- Different ways to get your child active.
- How to keep your child's teeth healthy.
- How much sleep your child needs.
- Your child's emotions.
- Toilet training.
- Creating a screen time plan.
- Car seats and booster seats.
- CPR.
- Teaching your child about safety.

Happy reading!

Vaccines

3 year checkup time!

If your child has received all recommended vaccines, congratulations! They are up to date for child care and preschool. If your child has missed any vaccines, the series does not need to be started again and it's not too late to catch up.

By age 3, most children will have had these vaccines:

- Hepatitis B (HepB), 3 doses
- Diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis (DTaP), 4 doses
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), 3 or 4 doses
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), 4 doses
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), 3 doses
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), 1 dose
- Chickenpox (varicella), 1 dose
- Hepatitis A (HepA), 2 doses
- Flu (influenza), yearly
- COVID-19, 2 or 3 doses

Ask your child's doctor or nurse for a copy of your child's vaccine records during your well-child visit. Also check to make sure your child's current vaccines are in the Washington State Immunization WAIS. 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.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Help your child eat well.

Preschool years are an important time for children to learn to enjoy foods and join in with family meals and snacks. It's normal for your 3 year old to feel strongly about what they will and won't eat. Keep offering a variety of healthy foods and let your child choose what and how much to eat. Offer small amounts of new foods with their favorite foods and encourage, but don't force, your child to try them.

To learn more about what and how much your child should eat to meet their needs, visit myplate.gov/life-stages/toddlers.

Make time for active play!

Active play, like running, jumping, and climbing in a safe area, helps your child's body stay active throughout the day and helps them become stronger and well-coordinated. Active play during the day can also help your child sleep better at night.



Let me play dress up with friends!

Here are some ideas for active play you can do together indoors or outside:

- Dig with plastic shovels, pails, and cups.
- Read together and act out the stories in books.
- Play "dress up" and "make-believe" with scarves, shoes, and other clothing.
- Dance, play hide-and-go-seek, or take a walk.
- Create an obstacle course that you can climb over, under, and through.

For more activity ideas, visit bit.ly/KH-active-play.

Oral Health

Baby teeth are important!

Baby teeth help your child speak well, chew, and they hold space for adult teeth. Check your child's teeth often. Lift your child's lip and look at the front and back of their teeth near the gums. If you see any pale or dark spots on their teeth or gum problems call your dentist or doctor.

Here are some tips to keep your child's teeth healthy:

- Brush after breakfast and after the last meal or snack of the day. Your child will need the help of an adult until age 8 to remove all the sticky plaque and germs that cause cavities.
- Have an adult apply a small pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste to the brush. Fluoride helps prevent cavities. Be sure your child spits out any excess toothpaste.



This is the amount of toothpaste I need to brush my teeth.

- Brush your together every day. Try taking turns with your child when brushing their teeth. This allows your child to feel independent and makes sure their teeth are brushed well.
- Begin gently flossing the sides of your child's teeth that touch, but do not force your child to let you floss. Brushing teeth is more important at this age.
- Do not let your child run or play with anything in their mouth. If a dental injury occurs, call your dentist or doctor right away.

Want to make brushing fun but need ideas? Visit themightymouth.org.

Growth and Development

Children need plenty of sleep.

At age 3, children need 10 to 12 hours of sleep at night and may need a nap or quiet time after lunch. Help your child get to bed at the same time each night. Start a regular bedtime routine if you don't already have one, such as taking a bath, brushing teeth, reading a short book, and cuddling before turning out the light. Talk with your doctor or nurse if your child often has trouble getting to sleep.

Your 3 year old's emotions are developing.

There may be a lot of changes in your child's life right now, such as a new child care or preschool, toilet training, or even getting a new bed. This can be stressful and may lead to tantrums. Stay calm and ask what's upsetting your child. Help your child name their emotions. This may help your child calm down more quickly and return to play and learning.

Using the bathroom is an important skill!

Your child will be proud when they use the toilet and may want to share the good news.

Encourage your child and let them know you're proud.

Some children aren't fully toilet-trained until they are school age. This is normal but can be challenging for parents. Children who stay dry during the day may still wet at nap time or at night. Stressful situations, such as a new child care or moving to a new home, may cause a toilet-trained child to begin wetting the bed again.

Encourage your child to use the bathroom before going to sleep. Once they regularly wake up dry, try switching from a diaper or pull-up to underwear at night. If your child wets the bed, let them know it's OK. Try not to get upset and help your child change into dry clothes right away.

Find helpful resources about toilet training and bedwetting at bit.ly/AAP-toilet-training.



Celebrate with me when I use the toilet!

Family Support and Routines

Set limits on screen time.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children aged 2 to 5 years old have no more than 1 hour of screen time per day. To help limit screen time, plan your child's day with lots of active play.

When your child watches TV or plays video games, educational, nonviolent, and ad-free choices are the best.

Ask other caregivers to limit screen time and to only choose programs and games made for kids your child's age. To create a screen time plan for your family visit bit.ly/stguide2.

Safety

When to change from a car seat to a booster seat?

Be careful not to switch from a car seat to a booster seat or seat belt too soon. Keep your child in a rear-facing or forward-facing car seat with a 5-point harness until they reach the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer. The harness keeps your child secure during normal driving as well as in a crash.

Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the backseat. Washington State law says children younger than 13 should sit in the backseat.

The backseat is the safest place for all children to ride. To find the nearest car seat inspection services, visit wacarseats.com.

Begin to teach your child street safety!

Stay close to your child and hold their hand when you are near moving or parked cars, especially in parking lots and driveways.

At this age, children:

- Move fast and can run into the street without warning.
- Don't know safety rules and need grown-ups to look out for them.
- Are small and hard for drivers to see, especially when backing up.
- Can't judge how fast a car is moving or how close or far away it is.

Keep your child away from traffic. Fenced yards, parks, or playgrounds are good places to ride and play. When walking, talk to your child about street safety. Show your child how to cross the street safely but remember that your child is still too young to do this alone.

Know first aid and child CPR.

First aid and CPR classes teach you how to help a child who is injured or choking. Learn these emergency skills before you need them. Make sure your child care provider also has this training as well.

To find out about first aid or child CPR classes, contact your local fire department, health department, American Red Cross chapter, or hospital. For CPR classes from American Heart Association, visit cpr.heart.org.

Continue to teach your child about safety.

Help keep your child safe by making sure they are always with you or another adult you trust.

At age 3, children are not able to tell the difference between a stranger and a friend. Make sure your child knows to always check with you or their caregivers before going anywhere with anyone.

This is also a good time to be sure firearms are locked in a lockbox and all medications, cleaning supplies, tobacco, marijuana (including edibles), and vaping products are out of reach of your curious 3 year old.

If you think your child has eaten, drank, or touched a potentially harmful substance, stay calm and call the Washington Poison Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Resources

- **Preschool and child care requirements:** doh.wa.gov/scci
- **Online vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Nutrition information:** myplate.gov/life-stages/toddlers
- **Oral health information:** themightymouth.org
- **Activity needs for preschoolers:** bit.ly/KH-active-play
- **Toilet training resources:** bit.ly/AAP-toilet-training
- **Family screen time plan:** bit.ly/stguide2
- **Car seat inspection services:** wacarseats.com or 360-725-9860 (Traffic Safety Commission)
- **CPR training:** cpr.heart.org

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 3.5 years old with information on:

- Fire and water safety.
- Locking up poisons.
- Playing with your child.

For the Health of All Our Children

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

[@WatchMeGrowWA](https://www.facebook.com/WatchMeGrowWA) www.watchmegrowwa.org



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