

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

- Your child's yearly checkup.
- Kindergarten vaccine requirements.
- Healthy eating for your child.
- Different types of play.
- Helping your child prepare for school.
- A bedtime routine.
- Creating a screen time plan for your family.
- Tips on how to be involved in your child's school.
- Ways to prevent injuries.
- Creating a home escape plan.
- Car seat safety.

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Schedule health and dental checkups!

Your child continues to need to visit their doctor or nurse at least once a year for their well-child visit. Talk about any illnesses or injuries this past year.

Visit the dentist twice a year. Ask if your child needs sealants, fluoride varnish, tablets, or drops.



Remember to schedule a dentist appointment for me.

Vaccines

Vaccines for school and child care.

When you enroll your child in school, they will need a Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) that lists the vaccines your child has received. Your doctor, clinic, or some school staff can print the CIS for you. You can also download your child's official CIS online on myirmobile.com.

Your child needs these vaccines before starting school:

- Hepatitis B (HepB), 3 doses
- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTaP), 5 doses
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), 4 doses
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), 2 doses
- Chickenpox (varicella), 2 doses

Your child may also get other important vaccines. Booster doses and other vaccines recommended for your child's age will continue to keep your child protected. Being fully vaccinated protects them from getting and spreading serious diseases.

If your child does not get their recommended vaccines, they will be at risk for disease and may be required to stay home from school, preschool, or child care if there's an outbreak. If your child has not received all recommended vaccines or you have questions about vaccines, talk to your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic.

For more information on vaccine requirements for school entry, call your local health department or visit doh.wa.gov/immunization/schoolandchildcare.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Offer healthy choices to your child.

Offer your child healthy foods for meals and snacks. Include fruit, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and milk. This gives them the energy to learn, be active, and stay healthy. If you have trouble getting your child to eat fruits or vegetables, try offering at least one for every meal and snack. Your child learns best from watching you. Be a role model and eat more fruits and vegetables yourself.

Remember, it's your child knows when they are full. Start with smaller portions and don't ask them to clean their plate. This helps your child learn to listen to their natural hunger and fullness cues.

For more tips on helping your child eat well, visit myplate.gov/life-stages/preschoolers.

Growth and Development

Playtime helps your child learn.

Playtime is how your child learns about themselves and the world. It even helps your child get ready for school. They need many kinds of play. Help your child find ways to use their whole body, especially their hands, brain, and imagination. Here are some easy ideas:

Body

- Toss a ball or a Frisbee outside
- Climb, run, and jump at a local park or playground

Hands

- Put together puzzles with up to 50 pieces
- String buttons or beads on yarn

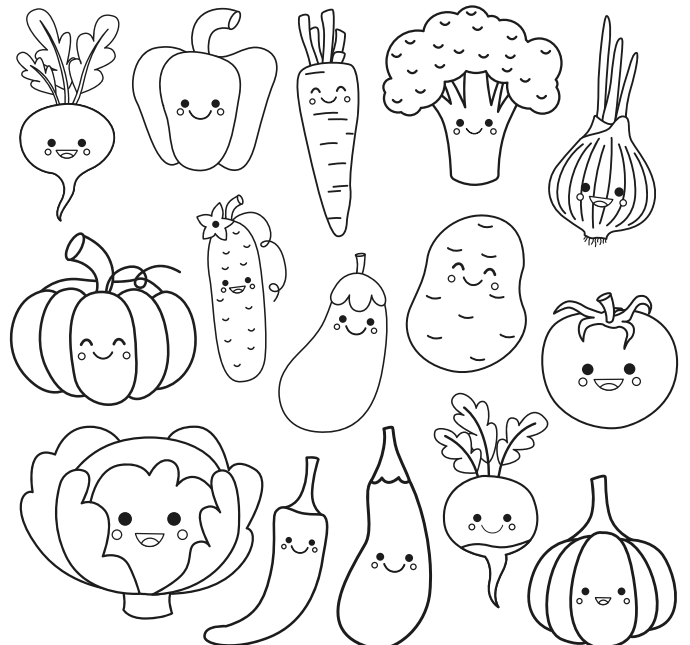
Brain

- Play simple card or board games
- Read stories, share poems, and sing songs

Imagination

- Draw pictures, color with crayons, and paint
- Dress up in old clothes and act out a story

Whatever your child is doing during playtime, remember that they still need you to watch and help keep them safe. Bolt or strap furniture, such as dressers, TVs, and TV cabinets, to the wall from the top. If your child is playing outside make sure they play in a safe area where they can't fall into ditches, holes, or sewers.



Ask me to color my favorite fruit and vegetable!

School Readiness

Prepare your child for school!

Help your child feel ready to start school. Visit the school with them before classes start. Talk about what to expect, such as meeting new friends and learning new things. Practice getting ready for school on time.

Children this age should have an adult with them when walking to school. Walking to school can be a healthy and safe activity, when your child is with a trusted adult. For children who ride a bus, a trusted adult should wait with your child at their bus stop. Be sure an adult also meets your child at the bus stop after school.

Some children are eligible for free or reduced school meals. To find out if your child is able to sign up, go to benefits.gov/benefit/1994.

Family Support and Routines

Help your child get enough sleep.

Children are happier and learn better if they get enough sleep. School-aged children still need at least 10 to 13 hours of sleep each night. Bedtime should be at the same time every night. A quiet routine may help your child calm down before bed. Read a story or talk about their day. Say good night and let your child fall asleep on their own. End screen time at least 1 hour before bedtime.



Read me my favorite bedtime story.

Set screen time limits for your child.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends school-aged children spend no more than 2 hours a day in front of a screen. Too much time spent looking at the TV, video games, tablets, computers, or other devices can limit the ways your child learns and may prevent them from getting enough physical activity. To read more on screen time tips, visit bit.ly/KH-screen-time-guidelines.

There are rating systems for TV shows, movies, and video games. This can help you decide if a movie or game is OK for your child's age. It's best to watch with your child and talk about what they see. Move TVs and computers into a family room. It's hard for you to know when and what your child watches when the TV or computer is in your child's room. For information to know more about what your child is watching, go to bit.ly/KH-more-on-screen-time.

Be involved in your child's school!

Talk with your child's teacher and others at school to help them learn about your child. For example:

- Visit your child's teacher and describe the things your child knows how to do and any special needs.
- Talk with the teacher throughout the year about what's going on in your child's life and how that might affect how they feel and act.
- Volunteer at your child's school if you can.

Safety

Prevent injuries for your child.

Injuries are the leading cause of death among children. Between the ages of 5 and 9, children are most likely to be seriously injured by:

- Car crashes.
- Cars that hit children who are walking or biking.
- Crashing into something or falling while riding a bike, scooter, or skateboard.
- Drowning.
- Burns and fires.
- Falling from playground equipment and furniture.
- Guns.

Children this age need the protection of watchful parents and caregivers. Safe driving; helmets; booster seats; life jackets; locking up poisons, including tobacco and vaping products; safe gun storage; and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors save lives. You are your child's best role model, so they are more likely to practice good safety behavior if they see you doing it, too.

Create a home escape plan.

Create a home escape plan in case your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms go off. Practice your escape plan to the sound of the alarms. The more practice your child has with your escape plans, the better. This will help them learn to recognize the sound and follow the plan. The more you practice, the less scary it will be if your child ever needs to follow the plan.

Teach your child that matches and lighters are tools for grown-ups, not toys for children. If they find them, teach your child to leave them alone and tell you right away.

Know more about car seat safety.

It can be an exciting time when your child switches from a car seat with a harness to a booster seat. Don't rush it.

Each change in seat type increases a child's chances of getting hurt in a crash. A car seat with a 5-point harness is safer than a booster seat. For this reason, it is strongly suggested to use a 5-point harness. Check the upper weight and height limits of the seat.

It's what's on the inside that counts! A child's size and weight are less important than the strength of their bones and body structure, which aren't strong enough to prevent them from getting hurt in a crash. Washington State law requires children under 13 to sit in the backseat. If your vehicle doesn't have a backseat, slide the front seat all the way back and, if possible, turn off the air bag.

To find car seat inspection services near you, visit wacarseats.com.

Resources

- **Online vaccine records:** myirmobile.com
- **Vaccine information:** doh.wa.gov/immunization
- **School vaccine information:** doh.wa.gov/immunization/schoolandchildcare
- **Healthy eating tips:** myplate.gov/life-stages/preschoolers
- **Free or reduced lunch:** benefits.gov/benefit/1994
- **Family screen time:** bit.ly/KH-screen-time-guidelines
- **Car seat inspection:** wacarseats.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 5.5 years old with information on:

- Helping your child with stress.
- Questions about sex.
- Teaching your child about 911.

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



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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.

