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

- Recommended immunizations.
- Good 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 his or her feelings.
- Nightmares.
- Safety around windows and vehicles.
- Swimming lessons.
- Safe cleaning products.
- Health problems caused by smoking.

Happy reading!

Immunizations

Make sure your child’s immunizations are up-to-date

Protect your child and his or her classmates by making sure he or she gets all required immunizations before starting school. At this age your child will need:

- 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
- Hepatitis A (HepA): 2 doses

For best protection, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend your child also gets these vaccines:

- Flu (influenza): yearly
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib): 3 to 4 doses (before age 5)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV): 4 doses (before age 5)

Talk with your doctor or nurse to find out if your child has missed any immunizations. It’s not too late to catch up! Bring your child’s Lifetime Immunization Record to every visit. To view your family’s immunization records online, see the flyer about MyIR in this mailing.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Help your child eat well and be active

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 he or she wants of the healthy foods you offer, but don’t make your child eat more than he or she wants.
- 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.

Oral Health

Healthy teeth matter

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 his or her lip and check teeth for white or brown spots. If you see changes in the teeth or gums, call your child’s dentist or doctor. Your child should see a dentist at least once a year.

You can prevent tooth decay. Help your child brush after breakfast and before bed with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Remind him or her to spit out the toothpaste.

Floss between any of your child’s teeth that touch. Your child may have fewer cavities if he or she drinks fluoridated water and eats foods low in sugar and carbohydrates.

Practice problem-solving

When your child is angry or upset about something, he or she needs you to help find a solution. Talk to your child and help him or her explain to you why he or she is feeling bad. Ask questions, such as, “Are you upset because your brother 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 brother.” Help your child calm down (try breathing slowly and deeply together) and then help him or her come up with ideas, such as, “How else could you let your brother 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 him or her learn while doing everyday things. For example, during trips to 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 he or she starts. 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**

**Children and nightmares**

Many children 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 him or her and talk about the dream. Reassure your child that he or she is safe and stay until your child is calm.

**Safety**

**Prevent falls from windows**

About 3,300 children under age seven fall from windows in the United States each year. 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 four inches by using window stops or guards to prevent falls. Falls don’t only happen at home. Share this information with grandparents, child care providers, friends, and neighbors.

**Environmental Health**

**Use safer household products**

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

- Avoid buying products labeled DANGER or POISON
- Avoid buying bug killer and “weed & feed” products
- Follow instructions on product labels
- Always keep products out of reach of children

For safer cleaning product recipes and lists of where to buy safer products 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. Do not allow smoking or vapor in your home or car. 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 fatal 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.

**Street, parking lot, and driveway safety**

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

- Firmly holding your child’s hand when near vehicles.
- Looking out for children in parking lots and driveways where they could be playing.
- Walking all the way around your parked car to check for kids, toys, and pets before getting in and starting the engine.
- Doing 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 has had lessons, he or she is 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 he or she is 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.

**Refractions**

- Online immunization records: myir.net
- 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 five years old with information on:

- Immunizations needs for kindergarten.
- Creating a family media plan.
- Car safety.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm safety tips.

For the Health of All Our Children

Child Profile is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

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