**Prepare your child for school**

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

A child in kindergarten should have adult supervision when crossing streets or walking to school. Walking to school can be a healthy and safe activity, but only when your child is with a trusted adult. For children who ride a bus, a trusted adult should wait with your child at his or her 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 eligible visit https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1994.

**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 he or she feels and acts.
- Volunteer at your child’s school if you can.

**Schedule health and dental checkups**

Have your child visit the doctor at least once a year. Share any concerns you have about your child starting school. Talk about any illnesses or injuries this past year. Visit the dentist twice a year. Ask if your child needs sealants and/or fluoride varnish, tablets, or drops.

**Immunizations for kindergarten**

When you enroll your child in school, he or she will need a Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) that lists the shots your child has received. Your doctor, clinic, or school staff can print the CIS for you or you can sign up to get your and your family’s immunization information online, including the official CIS, at https://wa.myir.net. To meet vaccine requirements for school entry in Washington State, your child needs:

- 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 his or her age will continue to keep your child protected. Being fully immunized protects your child from getting and spreading serious diseases. If you choose to exempt your child from vaccines, he or she will be at risk for disease and may be required to stay home from school or child care if there’s an outbreak.

If your child is not fully immunized or you have questions about vaccines, talk to your doctor, nurse, or clinic. For more information, visit www.doh.wa.gov or call your local health department.

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

**TV, videos, and games**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends school-aged children spend no more than two hours a day in front of a screen. Visit www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan to get tips on creating a family media plan. 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 him or her from getting enough physical activity. 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. However, it’s best to watch with your child and talk about what he or she sees. 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.

Visit www.commonsensemedia.org for information on and reviews of movies, games, and books.

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**For the Health of All Our Children**

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

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Healthy eating for your child
Offer your child healthy foods for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. Include fruit, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and milk. This gives him or her 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. Be a role model and eat more fruits and vegetables yourself. Your child learns best from watching you. Remember, it’s your child’s job to decide how much to eat. Start with smaller portions and don’t ask him or her to clean their plate. This helps your child learn to listen to his or her natural hunger and fullness cues. For more tips on helping your child eat well, visit www.choosemyplate.gov/health-and-nutrition-information.

Play is your child’s job
Play is how your child learns about him or herself and the world. It even helps your child get ready for school. He or she needs many different kinds of play. Help your child find ways to use his or her whole body, especially his or her 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 he or she still needs you to watch and help keep him or her safe.

Prevent injuries to children
Injuries are the leading cause of death among children. Between the ages of five and nine, 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 he or she is more likely to practice good safety behavior if he or she sees you doing it, too.

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 his or her day. Say good night and let your child fall asleep on his or her own. End screen time at least one hour before bedtime.

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm safety tips
Create a home escape plan in case your 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 him or her 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 he or she finds them, teach your child to leave them alone and tell you right away.

Safety in cars
Children and parents both get excited to switch 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 five-point harness is safer than a booster seat. For this reason, it is strongly suggested to use a five-point harness as long as the seat allows. Check the upper weight and height limits of the seat.

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 www.safercar.gov/parents.

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