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

- Water safety.
- The dangers of swallowing button batteries and magnets.
- Childproofing tips.
- How to prevent sunburns.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Schedule checkups in the coming year

There are fewer well-child visits after your child turns one. Call your child’s doctor or clinic to find out when to schedule checkups. Since these visits happen less often, it’s important to review your child’s immunization schedule and ask about his or her development. You can assess your child’s development using an online tool at ParentHelp123.org/child-development/child-development-screening-public.

Immunizations

Vaccines are the best protection!

Immunizations safely protect children from many serious diseases. It’s important for your child to get immunized on time. Diseases that vaccines can prevent, and their long-term effects, can be more severe in young children. Diseases are often spread to children by parents or other family members who may only have mild symptoms of illness. Some diseases can spread even before symptoms appear. Make sure your child is up-to-date on his or her immunizations to help protect him or her from diseases he or she may be exposed to at home, child care, or in public. Visit wa.myir.net to view your and your family’s immunization records online. Visit cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child.html for a current recommended immunization schedule.

Oral Health

Take care of your child’s teeth

Cavities can be painful and make it hard for your child to eat, sleep, talk, and learn. Here are some tips to take care of your child’s teeth:

- Brush your child’s teeth twice a day and always after his or her last meal or snack. Use a toothbrush with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Offer your child water when he or she is thirsty. Offer tooth-healthy foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, to your child for snacks. Starchy and sticky foods can cause cavities.
- Fluoridated water is best. Avoid juice, which has lots of cavity-causing sugar.
- Schedule an oral health checkup with a dentist. Ask about fluoride varnish. It strengthens teeth and helps prevent cavities.
- Offer tooth-healthy foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, to your child for snacks. Starchy and sticky foods can cause cavities.

Growth and Development

Your child’s development

Children learn by trying new things and doing them over and over again. Help your child learn by playing together. He or she will begin to do new things, such as:

- Say simple words.
- Scribble.
- Walk without help.
- Explore without help.
- Talk about the things you are doing and what you see as you walk or drive. This will help your child learn new words. It’s important to use real words, not “baby talk.” Your child can understand more than he or she can say. Saying “no” is normal for your child. When your child says “no” it’s important not to get angry.
- Stay calm and be firm about what you want your child to do. Give him or her choices when you can. For example, ask your child, “Do you want to wear your blue or yellow shirt?”

Teach hand washing

It is important that your child learns to wash his or her hands. Make sure that hands are washed often at child care. Germs that cause many illnesses can pass from hands to mouth even if hands don’t look dirty. Use plain soap and warm water. Make washing your hands fun with your child! Sing a song together that takes about 15 to 20 seconds (the time needed for proper hand washing). Rinse hands well and dry them. Use alcohol-based hand gel or disposable wipes only when there is no soap and water available.

Help your child learn about emotions

Your child is starting to express feelings. Help him or her learn how to handle them. Here are some tips:

- Let your child know you understand his or her feelings. Tell your child when you notice he or she is happy, sad, angry, disappointed, excited, etc.
- Play with your child. You may be able to learn why he or she is anxious, scared, happy, or proud.
- Read or look at books about feelings together. Ask your librarian for ideas.
- Be aware of your own emotions. The better you understand your own feelings, the better you will understand your child’s. Your child learns about handling feelings by watching how all adults who care for him or her handle theirs.

Help your child get to sleep

Most children need a nap during the day and should sleep about 11 to 12 hours at night. A bedtime routine can help your child get used to going to sleep on his or her own. Put your child to bed at the same time every night. Brush teeth and wash his or her face and hands. Look at a picture book together in a quiet room. Then put your child in bed, give him or her a hug and a kiss, and leave the room.

When there are changes in your child’s life, such as being sick, going on a trip, moving, or getting a new sibling, his or her sleep habits may change. To help, follow a bedtime routine every night. Let your child choose a special blanket to take to bed. At age 15 months, the greatest risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) has passed. If you have concerns about sleep, talk with your child’s doctor or nurse.
Child Care and School Readiness

Stay involved in child care

Your child care provider is your partner in caring for your child. He or she can help your child feel safe and cared for when away from you or another family member. It may help your child to have a drop-off routine. This may include a special hug or a kiss. Here are some tips to stay involved:

- Ask often about how your child is doing at child care and at home.
- Volunteer for cleanup days or help with activities.
- Join in special events, such as field trips, career day, or on dates that are culturally important for your family.
- Visit and watch your child while he or she is at child care. Drop in at different times fo the day.
- Talk to your child’s caregiver if you have concerns about his or her development.

For more information on choosing quality child care, visit the Department of Children, Youth, and Families at dcyf.wa.gov/node/106.

Safety

Drowning dangers

Drowning happens quickly and quietly. Children can slip into water when you are not looking. Watch your child at all times when he or she is near water, whether it is a bathtub, pool, lake, or the beach. Stay within arm’s reach. Water in a wading pool, hot tub, garden fountain, toilet, or cleaning bucket often attracts young children. Empty small pools and buckets and keep the toilet lid closed. Swimming pools or hot tubs should have a fence around them with a self-locking gate.

Button batteries and magnets can be dangerous

‘Button’ batteries are used in remote controls, greeting cards, watches, toys, and other devices. Your child can find and swallow them without being seen. They can quickly damage the throat and digestive system. A child who has swallowed a battery may cough, choke, wheeze, drool, vomit, or lose his or her appetite. Take your child to the emergency room right away if you think he or she has swallowed a button battery. They cannot be allowed to pass through the body. Keep products with button batteries out of the reach of young children.

Magnets are also a serious health threat if swallowed. Keep all magnets or other products that contain magnets out of your child’s reach. If you suspect your child has swallowed a magnet, contact his or her doctor or nurse right away.

Child-proof your house

Your child can open and reach things now that he or she could not before, so now is a good time to child-proof your house again. Here are some child-proofing tips:

- Bolt or strap tall or heavy furniture, such as dressers, flat panel TVs, or TV cabinets, to the wall from the top.
- Keep furniture away from windows so your child can’t climb up and fall out.
- Install window stops so frames will not open more than 4 inches from the bottom or side. A window screen won’t protect your child from falling out.
- Cover all electrical outlets, even those behind chairs and tables, using child safety outlet covers.
- Make sure cords to window coverings and blinds are not looped and are out of reach.
- Keep cleaners, poisons, nicotine vials, tobacco and marijuana products (including edibles), vitamins and supplements, toothpaste, and medicines out of sight and locked up or on a high shelf where your child cannot reach them.
- Store firearms in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault, or lock box so they’re not accessible by children and cannot be handled by anyone without your permission.
- Store ladders out of reach and don’t leave them unattended.

Protect your child’s skin from sunburn

A child’s skin burns easily. All skin colors can get sunburned. Sunburns in childhood increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. Keep your child out of the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when the sun’s rays are most harmful. Encourage your child to play in the shade. A hat, sunglasses, and lightweight clothes that cover his or her shoulders, arms, and legs will help provide protection.

Use sunscreen (at least SPF 15) to help protect your child’s skin. Rub plenty onto all bare skin about 20 to 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two to three hours and whenever your child has been in the water.

Check alarm batteries

Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives when they work properly. Install alarms according to the manufacturer’s instructions. If you don’t have a 10-year sealed lithium battery alarm, replace your alarm batteries if they don’t respond or if they “chirp.” Replace all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every 10 years or when the “test” button fails.

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child’s life. You’ll hear from us again before your baby is 18 months old with information on:

- How to handle difficult behavior.
- Playground and driveway safety.
- Feeding your toddler.

Referrals

- Online immunization records: wa.myir.net
- Immunization schedule: cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child.html
- Choosing quality child care: dcyf.wa.gov/node/106

For the Health of All Our Children

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This letter is available in other formats. Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay).

My skin burns easily: Protect me from the sun.