

CHILD



PROFILE

childprofile.org

Watch Me Grow

2½ Years

Your child may need a check-up

Some doctors will want to schedule a check-up at 2½ years. This is a good time to talk about any development questions you have about your child. Ask your doctor or clinic if you should schedule a check-up now.

Be sure your child's immunizations are up-to-date!

Immunizations are the most important way to protect your child against serious diseases. Your child will meet the immunization requirements for both child care and school as long as she has had all the recommended vaccines. If she hasn't, now is a great time to catch-up. During an outbreak of a disease that she has not been fully immunized against, she may be required to stay home from child care or preschool.

Keeping immunizations current is also important for you, other household members and people who care for your child. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you get a flu shot every year?
- Have you received a pertussis booster (Tdap)?
- Do you have your own immunization record card?
- Are your child care providers vaccinated?

Ask your doctor or nurse about immunizations recommended for adults. For more information visit http://bit.ly/Adult_Schedule.

Hand washing – do it right and do it often!

Germs that cause many illnesses can pass from your child's hands to his mouth. Teach your child to cough or sneeze into the bend of his elbow, instead of into his hands.

It is important to always wash his hands:

- before eating
- after coughing or sneezing into his hands
- after using the toilet
- after playing outside
- after playing with pets

• after coming home from child care or preschool
Wash your hands with your child to show him it is important. Watch to be sure he does a good job.

- Use regular soap and warm water. Regular soap works as well as antibacterial soap and may be better for your child. **Only** use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- Wash for about 20 seconds. (Sing the Happy Birthday song all the way through to make sure you've washed long enough.)
- Rinse hands well and dry.

Your child learns from watching you

What you **do** is just as important as what you **say**. As a parent, you teach your child many things by talking to her. However, she also learns from watching and copying you and her older brothers and sisters.

Use the words that you want your child to use. She is likely to repeat words that you do not want her to, including swear words. Be careful what you say.

Practice healthy habits like getting regular exercise and not watching too much TV. Make sure she sees you brushing your teeth daily. Encourage healthy eating by eating nutritious foods yourself. If you smoke, now is a great time to stop. For help quitting, call 1-800-QUITNOW (784-8669) or visit www.quitline.com.

Read to your child – make it fun

Many children have favorite books. Reading the same book over and over helps a child learn new words. Most children love nursery rhymes. They enjoy the strong beat and words that sound alike. Reading to your child gives you special time together.



Family Health Hotline
1.800.322.2588
711 (TTY relay)

Programs of WithinReach

www.ParentHelp123.org

- Immunization information
- Child care referral agencies
- Affordable health insurance
- Food and nutrition assistance
- Prenatal resources
- Family planning services
- Local health clinics
- Free screenings for developmental concerns

Call the Family Health Hotline with questions about your CHILD Profile mailings.

This letter available in other formats. Call the Family Health Hotline at the number above.

Keeping Your Toddler Healthy and Safe

Avoid food battles

Be patient while your child finds out what foods she likes. Offer her a variety of healthy foods and let her choose from them. She may like a food this week and refuse it next week! She may like foods prepared a certain way, such as applesauce instead of apple slices. At mealtime, include at least one healthy food you know she likes. Visit www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers for help dealing with a picky eater.

Avoid forcing your child to eat, rewarding her for eating, or punishing her for not eating. Making your child eat a food she doesn't want will not teach her to like it.

If your child tells you she has finished her meal, let her stop eating. Children usually know when they have had enough. Wait until snack time to offer more food.

Try to make meals a pleasant, family time. Plan to eat together at least once a day. Talk with your child about what she did during the day. Ask about her favorite part of the day.

Start helping your child problem-solve

Show your toddler how you expect him to behave. This will help him learn to control his own behavior. It will also help him learn how his actions affect others.

If your child is throwing his toy truck:

1. Show him how he can play with the truck. "This is one way to play with the truck and be safe. Can you drive the truck like this?"
2. Give your child a chance to play with the truck safely. If he keeps throwing it, suggest another toy. "I can see that you want to throw. Let's put away the trucks and get a ball we can throw."



Finding a preschool

If you choose to send your child to preschool, it is important to start looking now for one that both you and your child like. There are many different kinds of programs to choose from. Here are a few things to do that may help you decide.

- Make a list of the things that are most important to both you and your child, and take it with you.
- Visit more than one preschool, talk to staff and watch a class. Talk with other parents at the schools.
- Take your child to visit your final choices. Let her help make the decision if possible.

Visit www.del.wa.gov/care for more information.

Lock up guns

All children, **even toddlers**, are in danger if they play with guns. If you have guns at home, unload them. Store them in a gun safe or lock box. Lock up bullets separately. Keep keys where children cannot get them. Find out if your child's other caregivers own guns. Make sure they are stored safely.

Safe Gun Storage Information

www.lokitup.org

Keep matches and lighters out of reach

Young children are curious about fire. Children as young as age two can start fires and hurt themselves if they play with matches and lighters. If you have lighters and matches at home, keep them out of your child's reach and out of sight. Remember that even though you tell your child to stay away from stoves, fireplaces and barbecues, you need to watch to make sure he does.

Start the helmet habit early

Help your child get in the habit of wearing a helmet whenever she uses a toy with wheels or rides on the back of your bicycle. If you ride a bike, wear your helmet, too. Remember, your child learns from watching you.

Closely watch your child in and around water

Children can drown in as little as two inches of water. An adult must always be within an arm's length whenever a toddler is in or around water.

At home, make sure to always stay with your child whenever he is in the bathroom or taking a bath. Keep buckets empty and out of reach. Empty the wading pool when you're not using it, keep garbage cans covered, and put fences around pools, hot tubs and ponds.

Make sure your child wears a life jacket when he is playing in or near the water, on a dock, or in a boat, raft or inner tube. Wear a life jacket yourself. Teach your child to wait for your "OK" before getting into the water.

Most children are not ready for formal swim lessons until about 4 years old. Even if your child has been in an infant or toddler water class, he can still drown.

Learn child CPR. Call your local fire station or American Red Cross chapter about classes.

WA State Drowning Prevention Project

www.seattlechildrens.org/dp

For the Health of All Our Children

CHILD Profile is a service of the Washington Department of Health

Three-year checkup time

Now that your child is turning three, it is important that he have dental and medical checkups every year. If you have questions or concerns about your child's health and development write them down and take them with you when you meet with your child's doctor or nurse. It is important to take his Lifetime Immunization Record card and Childhood Health Record booklet with you to these appointments. Be sure that his immunizations are up-to-date and recorded accurately. This will save you time and frustration when you register him for preschool.

For information on the recommended immunization schedule, talk with your child's doctor or nurse or call your local health department. Visit www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools for preschool and child care requirements.

Tips for keeping teeth healthy

Baby teeth are just as important as permanent teeth. They help your child speak and chew well. They also hold space for permanent teeth. Some of these teeth will not fall out until your child is about 12 years old.



- **Brush twice a day to help prevent tooth decay.** Your child still needs you to clean her teeth well. Let her practice brushing and spitting. Continue using a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste and a soft toothbrush.
- **Check your child's teeth often.** Lift her lip and look at her teeth and gums. If you see spots or other changes in her teeth or gums, call your dentist or doctor.
- **Protect your child's teeth from injury.** Do not let her run with anything in her mouth. Watch her while she plays and make sure other caregivers do also.

Call your dentist or doctor right away if teeth are knocked out or broken. The mouth bleeds easily when injured. Using gauze, apply gentle pressure to the area that is bleeding.

Using the bathroom is an important skill

Your child will be proud when he uses the toilet and may want to share the good news. Encourage him and let him know you are proud of him. Remember though that some children aren't fully toilet-trained until they are school age. Children who stay dry during the day may still wet at nap-time or at night. And stressful situations, like a new child care provider or a move, may cause a toilet-trained child to begin wetting the bed again. Make sure your child uses the bathroom before going to sleep. Once he regularly wakes up dry, try switching from a diaper or pull-ups to underwear. If he wets the bed, let him know that it's okay. Try not to get angry. Help him change into dry clothes right away.

Begin to teach your child about being safe

The best way to keep your young child safe is to make sure she is always with you or another adult you trust. At age three, your child is not able to tell the difference between who is a stranger and who is a friend. Make sure your child knows that she should always check with you before she goes anywhere with anyone. Teach her to ask you before she takes anything, like candy or a toy, from anyone, even someone she knows.

For a free packet
**"Personal Safety for Children:
 A Guide for Parents"** visit:
http://bit.ly/Child_Personal_Safety
 (Most libraries in Washington State offer free internet access.)

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Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Make time for active play

Experts recommend that children this age spend at least one hour every day running, jumping, and climbing in a safe area. This kind of activity helps your child's body become strong and well-coordinated. Active play during the day also helps her sleep well at night.

You can play active games 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-seek or take a walk.

Visit the **Active Bodies, Active Minds** web site at depts.washington.edu/tvhealth/ for ideas to cut down on screen time and be active!

Children need plenty of sleep

At age three, 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. This could be taking a bath, brushing his teeth, reading a short book, then cuddling before turning out the light. Talk with the doctor or nurse if your child often has trouble getting to sleep.

Set limits on "screen time"

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children over age 2 have no more than one to two hours of screen time per day. If your child spends too much time with computer games, video games and TV, he is not doing other things that help him learn and be healthy, like reading and playing outside. When he does watch TV or play games, educational choices are the best. Ask other caregivers to limit his screen time, and to only choose educational programs and games made for kids his age.

Your three-year-old's emotions

There may be a lot of changes in your child's life right now - a new child care or preschool, potty training, maybe even getting a new bed. This can be stressful and may lead to tantrums. Help your child name his emotions. This may help him feel more in control and help him to calm down more quickly.

Changing from a car seat to a booster seat

Many parents let their child switch from a car seat to a booster seat or seat belt too soon. Your child needs the protection of a car seat with a harness until she weighs at least 40 pounds or has outgrown the seat by weight or height. The harness keeps her secure during normal driving as well as in a crash.



Current state law requires that children ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall! Children smaller than this are not big enough to ride safely using regular seat belts.

Keep children younger than 13 in the back seat away from front air bags. The back seat is the safest place for all children to ride.

Questions? Visit www.boosterseat.org or call the **Safety Restraint Coalition** 1-800-BUCK-L-UP (1-800-282-5587)

Begin to teach your child street safety

Stay close to your child and hold his hand when you are near parked or moving cars. 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.
- 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. Set a good example. 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 by himself.

Know first aid and child CPR

Emergency skills give you practical ways to help a child who is injured or choking. Learn these skills before you need them! To find out about first aid or child CPR classes, call your local fire department, health department, American Red Cross chapter, or hospital. You can also call the American Heart Association at 1-877-242-4277 (1-877-AHA-4CPR).