CHILD PROFILE
childprofile.org

Watch Me Grow - 3½ Years

Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date

In addition to a yearly flu shot, your child will be due for booster doses of other vaccines between four and six years. Talk to your child's doctor or nurse if you have questions about vaccines or the recommended schedule.

Bring your child's Lifetime Immunization Record and Childhood Health Record to every visit. Be sure that your child's immunizations are up to date and recorded accurately. You will need your child's immunization record when you register for preschool and child care.

Growth spurts

It's normal for children to grow faster some months than others. During growth spurts, your child may eat more than usual. Most children get taller and thinner, and gain weight more slowly at this age. If you wonder whether your child weighs too much or too little, or see changes in your child that worry you, talk to your doctor or nurse.

Help your child eat well

Your job is to offer your child a variety of healthy foods. Your child's job is to choose how much of those foods to eat.

- Set regular meal and snack times. Offer healthy snacks in the morning and afternoon. Apples, blueberries, cheese, crackers, tortillas, and pieces of vegetables are good choices. (Be careful of small, hard foods that can cause choking.)
- Offer at least one cup of vegetables and one cup of fruit a day.
- Offer water when your child is thirsty between meals and snacks. Limit fruit juice. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than four to six ounces (½ to ¾ cup) of 100 percent juice a day.
- Avoid sodas, sweet drinks, and snacking during the day. These things may spoil your child's appetite for healthy foods at mealtime and aren't good for your child's teeth.

Avoid comforting your child with food

There are many reasons why your child may get unhappy or upset other than being hungry. If he or she has eaten a meal or snack recently, think about other things that may be bothering your child. Your child may be bored, tired, sick, or want your attention. Try these ideas instead of food:

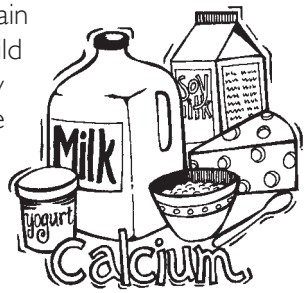
- Snuggle up with each other and talk or read a book.
- Go for a walk together.
- Turn on some music and dance. Be silly together!

Offering food or drink to comfort your child when he or she is upset may lead to an unhealthy habit of over-eating.

Calcium and vitamin D are important

Calcium and vitamin D help build healthy bones and teeth. Four servings of milk, cheese, or yogurt a day give your child enough calcium. A serving is one slice of cheese or ½ cup of low-fat milk or yogurt. Other good sources are well-cooked tofu made with calcium sulfate and calcium-fortified soy milk or orange juice.

Vitamin D helps your child's body use calcium. The recommended allowance is 600 IU of vitamin D a day for children over one year. Few foods contain vitamin D naturally. This means your child may not get enough vitamin D each day from food. Talk to your doctor or nurse about whether your child needs a vitamin D supplement.



WithinReach
Family Health Hotline
ParentHelp123.org

Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or visit ParentHelp123.org to find:

• Immunization information • Free or low-cost health insurance • Breastfeeding support and nutrition programs • Free developmental screenings and referrals to get your child school ready • Information about your Child Profile mailings

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

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Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Children learn and develop at their own rate

Most children this age can:

- Hold a crayon between the thumb and fingers.
- Kick and throw a ball.
- Understand simple directions.

By now, people outside your family should be able to understand what your child says at least half the time. If you have questions about your child's development or speech, talk with your doctor or nurse. You can also call your local school district or the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 to find out about a free screening.

Talk with your child

Talking together is one of the best activities for you and your child. "Why" is probably one of your child's favorite words. He or she thinks you know everything! You may get tired of answering the same questions over and over, but taking time to talk with your child is very important. Listen to your child's ideas and stories to find out what he or she is thinking and understanding. Knowing that you listen when he or she talks to you now may make it easier for your child to come to you with problems as he or she gets older.

Stay involved with preschool and child care

If your child is going to preschool, stay involved to help make sure he or she has a good experience.

- Meet regularly with your child's teachers and ask questions about how he or she is doing.
- Offer to volunteer.
- Join in on special events, such as field trips and holidays.

Pretend play is part of learning

When your child plays "make believe" he or she learns many things, such as how to care about other people when pretending to be someone else. When your child makes up stories, he or she learns how to be creative. Your child even learns how to handle feelings and solve problems.

Fire safety

Create an escape plan to be sure everyone knows how to get out of the house in case of a fire. There should be two ways out of every room. Make sure your child knows what your smoke alarm sounds like. Visit the National Fire Protection Association at *www.nfpa.org* for more information.

Protect your child in or near water

A child can drown quickly and silently in a tub, pool, river, lake, canal, or the ocean. Swimming and water safety are important skills for your child to learn. **Even if your child has had lessons, he or she is not old enough to be around water unless an adult is within arm's length every minute.** If you do not know how to swim, take the time to learn. Learning to swim is fun and great exercise for the whole family.

Put a life jacket on your child whenever he or she is near or on the water. Use a Coast Guard-approved life jacket. Choose one made for your child's weight. It should have a strap between the legs. Adjust the straps to fit snugly. Washington State law requires all children under 13 to wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket on boats less than 19 feet.

Lock up poisons

Poisons may look like food or drinks. Teach your child to ask an adult before eating or drinking anything you haven't given him or her.

- Store medicines, vitamins, toothpaste, mouthwash, and household products in original containers and where your child cannot see or reach them.
- Do not store cleaning products, paint, or gasoline in used soda, juice, or milk containers.

If you think your child has been poisoned, stay calm and call the **Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Call 911 if your child has collapsed, has stopped breathing, has trouble breathing, or will not wake up.**

Protect your child at home

Your child may seem very grown up now, but does not understand danger or how he or she may hurt him or herself or others. Keep your home safe and watch your child carefully.

- Purses, backpacks, and briefcases often have pills, cough drops, nail files, makeup, pocket knives, or lighters in them. Keep them out of reach.
- Keep screens in front of the fireplace and space heaters.
- Don't allow your child to help cook at the stove. When you cook outside, keep your child away from the grill or fire.
- Never use a fuel-burning heater, stove, or grill in your home or in a tent to provide heat or to cook with.
- Remember, 3½-year-olds still need supervision at bath time to prevent drowning and burns from hot water. Most bathtub injuries are due to slips. A non-skid mat in the tub or shower helps prevent falls.