



A parent's guide to raising healthy, happy children.



Raising Texas

Texans Care



For Children

Dear Parent:

The early years are the most important years in your child's life. That's why it's so important that you talk to your child, hug your child, and read to your child—even when your child is still a baby. These things will help form the person your child will become.

One very important thing to do is to find a doctor or nurse for your child as soon as possible. This might be a pediatrician, family physician, or nurse practitioner. Your child will visit this doctor or nurse regularly for check-ups and other health care. This is the first step to having a "Medical Home" for your child.

A Medical Home is a respectful partnership between a child, the child's family, and the child's primary health care staff.

When you visit your child's primary care doctor or nurse:

- Bring this calendar and a list of questions or concerns to discuss.
- Talk about how your child is growing or changes you are noticing.
- Ask about resources that may help your child and family.
- Ask about how to get health care after hours.
- Ask to meet the office staff working with you and your child (nurses, referral coordinator, billing person, and others).
- Talk about how your child will get his or her health care. Will your child also get health care from other doctors or from other places around town?

The benefits of a Medical Home are:

- You see the same doctor and office staff regularly. They will:
 - Partner with you in getting care for your child; and
 - Ask for and give you information with honesty and respect.
- Your family has support in finding ways to help your child grow at every age.
- You have a place to go for answers about your child's health.
- You are connected to family support organizations.
- Your Medical Home keeps your children healthy as they grow.

Your child's primary care doctor and office staff are there for you.

Your child's doctor respects you and listens. He or she:

- Asks you to talk about your child.
- Asks what you think before making decisions.
- Talks to you about how your child's condition affects your family (other children, child care, expenses, work, sleep).
- Respects your family's culture and religious beliefs.
- Gets an interpreter if you need one.

Your child's doctor and office staff help you plan your child's care.

- They help you set short-term (3-6 months) and long-term (next year) goals for your child.
- They give you advice and new treatments in writing.
- They help you write a plan for your child's medical and non-medical needs.
- They go over your child's medical records with you.
- They help you decide about new treatments for your child's condition.

Your child's doctor and office staff support you as a caregiver.

- They connect you with family support organizations and other parents in your community.
- They tell you about community resources.
- They pass along research and other helpful materials about your child's health.
- They help you advocate for your child.
- They plan for adult health care services (if child is old enough).

Your child's doctor and office staff help you get the care your child needs.

- They follow up with difficult referrals.
- They can help you find transportation, durable medical equipment, and home care as well as ways to pay for them.
- They explain your child's needs to other health professionals.
- They make sure your child's school or day care understands your child's medical condition.
- If you want, they get everyone involved to talk to each other about your child's health care.

- They can help you after hours, on weekends, and on holidays.
- They take your child's health insurance.
- The office and equipment are physically accessible to your child.

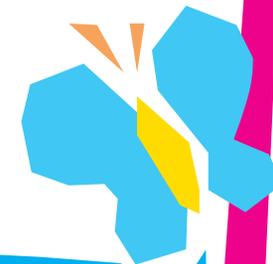
The staff at your doctor's office know you and can help.

- They know you and your child when you call.
- They understand and work with your child's special needs.
- They help you with requests for prior approvals, letters of medical necessity for your child's insurance, and documentation for other programs and services.
- They give you things to read in a language you understand.

- They meet with you and others as a team about your child's health care plan.

Every child is unique. Every parent is unique. It only makes sense that every parenting style is unique as well. But there are a few things every parent can do to have a happier, healthier child. This guide gives suggestions to help you at different stages of your child's development. Pin the guide up on your wall and read it often as your child grows.

Parenting isn't an easy job, but it's one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. Enjoy it!



Contributions to the guide have been made by the following agencies and organizations.



Texas Workforce Commission
Member of the Texas Workforce Network



Information, recommendations and suggestions found in this material are to be used at the discretion of the reader. This material is not intended to be used as a replacement for your child's doctor.

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Special thanks to **I Am Your Child** for their leadership.

Help me be healthy.

Before I go home from the hospital, I need:

- **Blood tests.** Blood tests will help us look for genetic/metabolic problems. The doctor or nurse will prick my heel and take a little blood. I will need another blood test before I'm two weeks old. My doctor will tell you where to go for the second test. If the tests show a possible problem, you and my doctor will talk about it together.
- **A hepatitis B shot.**
- **A hearing test.** If I need another hearing test after I leave the hospital, my doctor will send us to an audiologist close by. Or we might go back to the hospital for a follow-up hearing test.

Find a doctor or nurse to see me for my regular checkups.

I need a Medical Home. Bring this calendar to all my checkups. Ask questions, share any worries you have, and work closely with my doctor or nurse to plan all the care I need.

When I go for my first checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check me from head to toe by:
 - Looking in my eyes, ears, and nose;
 - Listening to my heart and lungs; and
 - Looking at my hips, abdomen, and umbilical cord.
- Check my vision and hearing.
- Answer any questions you have. Ask the doctor questions about my health. That is why you take me for my well-baby checkups.

Feed me whenever I am hungry.

Breast milk or iron-fortified formula is the only food I need. It will probably take us many weeks to get used to a feeding schedule. This is normal. If I am breastfeeding, I might eat every 2 to 3 hours.

I am getting enough to eat if I am:

- Gaining weight.
- Having at least six wet diapers a day.
- Having at least one stool a day.

newborn

My name is: _____

My birthday: _____

Keep me safe.

Whenever we ride in the car, put me in a car seat with the straps on right.

- Texas law says that I have to be in a car seat when I am in a car.
 - The car seat is the only safe place for me.
 - Use the car seat even if I fuss. Fussing is my way of telling you that I know I'm in a different place.
 - Place my car seat in the back seat so I look out the back window.
 - If you have questions about my car seat, or want to be sure my car seat is in the car right, call **Safe Riders** toll-free at 1-800-252-8023.
- Place me on my back to sleep.** Keep my sleeping area clear of stuffed toys and soft, fluffy things.

Keep me safe from fire and smoke.

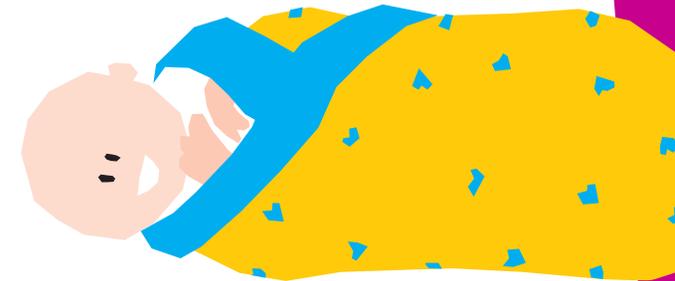
- Check the batteries in our smoke detector.
- Practice a fire escape. How would you help me get out if there was a fire?
- Keep me away from cigarette and cigar smoke. It makes it harder for me to breathe.

Pay attention to me. I talk by crying.

If I'm crying, it could mean that I:

- Am wet.
- Am too hot or too cold.
- Am sleepy.
- Am hungry.
- Want to change position.
- Want to be held.
- Need to be burped.
- Have colic.

Remember, most babies have a fussy time each day. To help me calm down, read "How to Help Your Crying Baby" at the end of this guide. The **Parents Action for Children** website is also helpful. Go to www.parentsaction.org.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations and Hearing Test:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

If nothing seems to help me calm down, check with my doctor to see if something is wrong. Soon you will be able to tell the difference between the cry that says “Feed me” and the cry that says “Pick me up and hold me.”

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Hold me, cuddle me, rock me and hug me. Let me look at your face.
- Change my position every once in a while.
- Talk to me, sing to me, read to me.
- Put a picture on the side of my bed. Hang a mobile over my crib. Put them on securely so they don't fall on me.
- Listen to gentle music with me.

Watch how I grow.

Each child grows and changes at a different rate.

Watch the things that I do. If I was born early or have some special needs, it may take me a little longer to do some things. If you are worried about what I can and cannot do, talk to my doctor or nurse.

Watch for me to:

- Look to see who is talking.
- Move my eyes to follow something that moves in front of my face.
- Look at you, look away, and then look at you again when we are playing. I can see best when an object is about eight inches from my face.
- Sleep a lot. I don't know when it is night, so I will wake up in the night and want to eat.
- Eat every few hours. When I'm not eating, I may sleep most of the time.
- Be fussy and cry more than you would like me to cry. Don't be afraid to hold me.
- Suck on my fingers or pacifier. I like to suck even when I'm not hungry.
- Be startled by loud noises.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup:

- I will be weighed and measured.
- I will get a few vaccines. These vaccines help my body fight disease.
- The doctor will ask you if I have had a follow-up hearing test. If I don't pass this hearing test, I need to see an audiologist. The audiologist will give me a diagnostic hearing test. The doctor will also send us to the nearby Early Childhood Intervention program.

Keep a special notebook for my health journal.

Write about my doctor visits and the times when I'm sick. Take my health journal to my doctor visits so you can write the date that I got my vaccines.

Feed me often. I eat day and night.

Some babies, especially breastfed babies, eat more often on some days.

Follow these tips:

- Holding me while I eat makes me feel safe and loved.
- Breast milk or iron-fortified formula should still be my only food now. Don't put cereal or other solid food in my formula. My body isn't ready for solid foods until I'm 4 to 6 months old. Feeding me solids too early might make me have allergies or eat too much.
- If I'm nursing or was born early, my doctor might say I need vitamin drops. Talk to the doctor about this.

How do you know when I'm hungry?

If I'm fussy, it's okay to try to feed me. I want to nurse or drink iron-fortified formula.



1-2 months

Keep me safe.

- Handle me gently. Don't pick me up by my arms or swing me by my arms or legs. Don't shake me or throw me in the air.
- Protect me from falls. Be careful not to fall with me in your arms. Don't leave me alone on a changing table, bed, or other high place. I could fall.
- If you give me medicine at night, turn on the light and read the label every time to make sure you are giving me the right medicine and the right amount of medicine.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Let me feel different objects by rubbing them against my hands. Let me feel some soft and some bumpy materials. I like to feel the different clothes you wear.
- Tell me how special I am. Smile and talk to me a lot.
- Show me bright colors. I can easily see the difference between black and white or red and yellow.
- Put me in a baby carrier or carry me and hold me while you move around the house. Talk to me about what you are doing. I like to see what is happening.
- Look at me when you talk to me. I want to copy your mouth.
- Repeat the sounds I make. I like the game of making sounds.
- Read to me. I like to hear the sound of your voice.

Being a parent is hard work.

Read about being a parent. Go to your local library for books, magazines, newsletters, and leaflets on parenthood. Use the library's computers. The **Mental Health America of Texas** website has help for parents at www.parentinginformation.org. Read the section "How to Help Your Crying Baby" or the childcare checklist at the end of this guide.

How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

My Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

- **Ask someone you trust to come watch me so you can have a break.** Join a group of parents that talks about ways to help children grow. To find parent educators near you, go to the **Texas Registry of Parent Educators Resources (ROPER)** at www.unt.edu/cpe/.

- **When you feel stressed,** talk to your partner, a family member, or a good friend about your feelings. It helps to talk with someone who is close to you.

Watch how I grow.

Watch for me to:

- Wave, kick, and squirm when lying on my back.
- Make sounds like “uh,” “eh” and “oh.”
- Look and stare at things. I look at you a lot.
- Lift my head up and turn it side-ways when I’m on my stomach.
- Turn to you and smile at you when I see or hear you.
- Quiet down, move my eyes, or change my expression when I hear your voice or some other noise.

You might notice that I also:

- Cross my eyes sometimes. This is normal. I will do this until my eye muscles get stronger.
- Gurgles, smiles, and laughs when I’m happy.
- Have tears when I cry. My tear ducts are starting to work now.
- Like to suck my thumb or pacifier. Sucking is a way that I learn about my world. It is also one way that I calm myself down.

Children are very different from one another.

If I was born early or have special needs, it might take me a little longer to do some things. You can help me learn. If you are worried, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check me from head to toe to see:
 - How I move.
 - How well I hear.
 - How well I see.
- Give me a few vaccines. Remember to write them in my health journal.

Feed me and take care of my teeth and gums.

- Ask the doctor or WIC nutritionist about eating cereal at 4 months. Rice cereal is the first cereal I should try. Please feed me my cereal from a spoon. Don't put it in a bottle.
- Hold me while I drink my bottle. It makes me feel safe and loved.
- Don't put me in my crib and prop the bottle up for me. I could spit up and choke.
- Don't put me to bed at night with a bottle. If I have a bottle in my mouth all night, the milk or juice could decay my new teeth.
- Holding me at feeding time makes me feel secure and loved.
- Clean my mouth with a soft, moist washcloth - even before I get my first teeth.
- Once my teeth start coming in, use a very soft, infant-sized toothbrush to brush my teeth.

Keep me safe.

- **It's time to make our house safe for babies.** Look at it from my eye level. Crawl on your hands and knees and look around. Take away or move anything that I can reach or that could hurt me when I crawl around. Keep me away from cords of all kinds: telephone cords, drapery cords, and electric cords. Cover the electric outlets and put safety latches on the doors.
- **Keep me away from cigarette and cigar smoke.** It makes it harder for me to breathe.
- **Make sure that the toys, pacifiers, and other things you give me are safe for me.** They should not have any sharp edges or loose pieces. Toys should be big enough that I cannot fit them into my mouth.
- **Use the safety strap and keep the baby seat on the floor and**

3-4 months

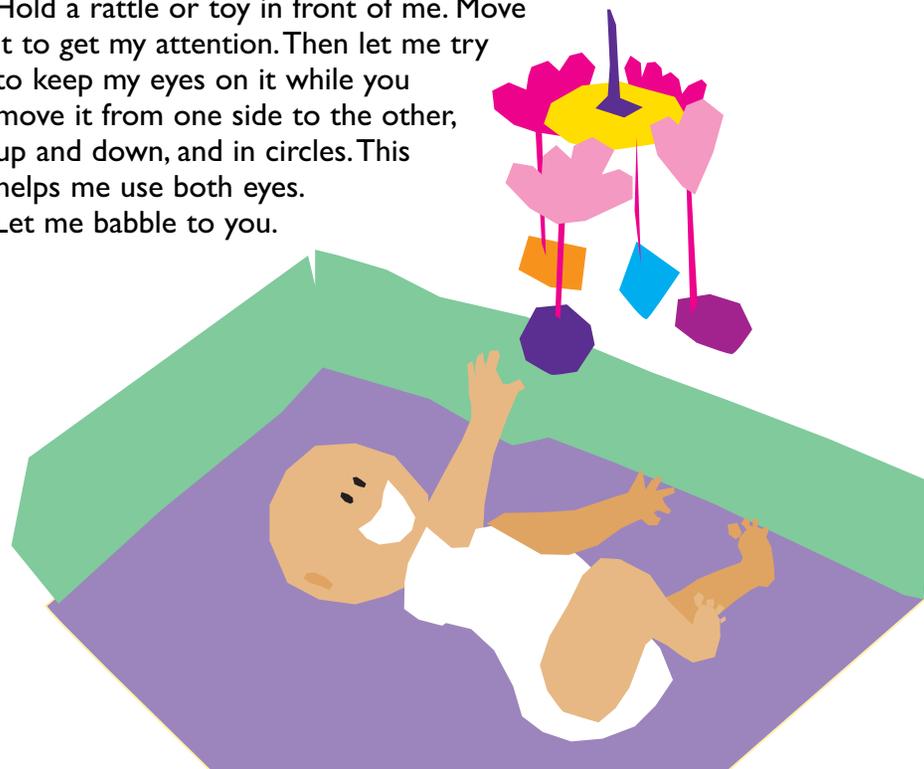
away from steps or other dangers. I'm now strong enough to wiggle out of the baby seat or tip it over.

- **Never leave me alone** on a bed, sofa or changing table, or in a walker or tub.
- **Keep me away from hot liquids** like coffee, tea, and soup. When you're holding me, don't try to drink anything hot. A hot liquid could spill on me and burn me badly.

- **Keep balloons away from me.** If a balloon covers my mouth, I can't breathe.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Play "Talking back and forth." First, I make a noise and you listen. Then, you make the same noise and I listen. We can do this many times.
- Put me on my back and let me reach for toys hanging from the sides of my crib or playpen. Make sure these are tied tight so they won't hurt me.
- Read to me. I like rhyming words and stories that are short.
- Play Peek-a-boo with your hands or a blanket.
- Hold a rattle or toy in front of me. Move it to get my attention. Then let me try to keep my eyes on it while you move it from one side to the other, up and down, and in circles. This helps me use both eyes.
- Let me babble to you.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

My Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Watch how I grow.

New things are happening to me.

When something new happens to me, I might fuss. Change is hard for me. You could get confused and angry with me. What I really need is for you:

- To be patient.
- To show me new things, new people, and new situations very slowly.
- To let me try three or four times to get used to something new. I might like it better the second or third time I try it.

Each child grows and changes at a different rate.

Help me learn new skills by playing with me. Most babies have the following skills at the end of 4 months. If you are worried, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Smile at you.
- Hold up my head without bobbing it around when I sit in your lap.
- Hold a small toy, like a rattle, for a few seconds in my hand if you place it in my hand.
- Laugh out loud.
- Say “oo,” “aah,” and other vowel sounds. Sometimes I say these sounds fast. Sometimes I say them slow and kind of sing them.
- Hold my head all the way up and rest on my arms when I’m on my stomach.
- Recognize sounds I hear a lot, like your voice, the sound of a favorite toy, or running water.
- Let you know I recognize you as a special person. I get excited when I see people I know or my bottle.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup:

- The nurse will weigh and measure me. I will get a check-up.
- I will get the next set of vaccines. Write down the date of these vaccines in my health journal. If I had a reaction to the vaccines before, tell the doctor.
- I should get a flu shot in the fall.
- The doctor might check my eyes for crossed eyes or a lazy eye.
- I might get a blood test to see if I have enough iron in my blood.
- Ask about my eating habits. Tell the doctor when and how much I eat.
- If I need them, I will get hearing aids. I might get help from my nearby Early Childhood Intervention program. An audiologist will check my hearing every few months until I'm a year old, and after that, every six months.
- Ask if I need fluoride supplements to help my teeth. Ask about my eating habits. Describe when and how much I eat.

Start feeding me vegetables and fruits.

At 6 months, I'm old enough to try vegetables and fruits. Start with vegetables. Try an orange vegetable like squash or sweet potatoes first. Give me only one new food each week. This way, if I have an allergy, you will know what food caused the allergy.

Take care of my teeth.

- Start planning for my first dental visit for when I'm 6 months old or when my first tooth comes in.
- Call your dentist or a dentist just for me and set up my first visit.
- As soon as my teeth come in, gently brush my teeth with a little, soft-bristled toothbrush and some water.
- I should not have toothpaste now.

If you don't have health insurance for me, call the **Children's Health Insurance**

5-6 months

Program (CHIP) toll-free at 1-877-543-7669 (1-877-KIDS_NOW) to find out about children's health insurance.

Keep me safe.

When we ride in the car, put me in a car seat with the straps on right.

- My car seat is the safest place for me when

I'm in the car.

- Until I'm a year old and weigh 20 pounds, my car seat should be in the back seat of the car and placed so I look out the back window.
- If you have questions about my car seat or how you put it in, call **Safe Riders** toll-free at 1-800-252-8255.

Put gates at the stairs so I don't go up or down the stairs.

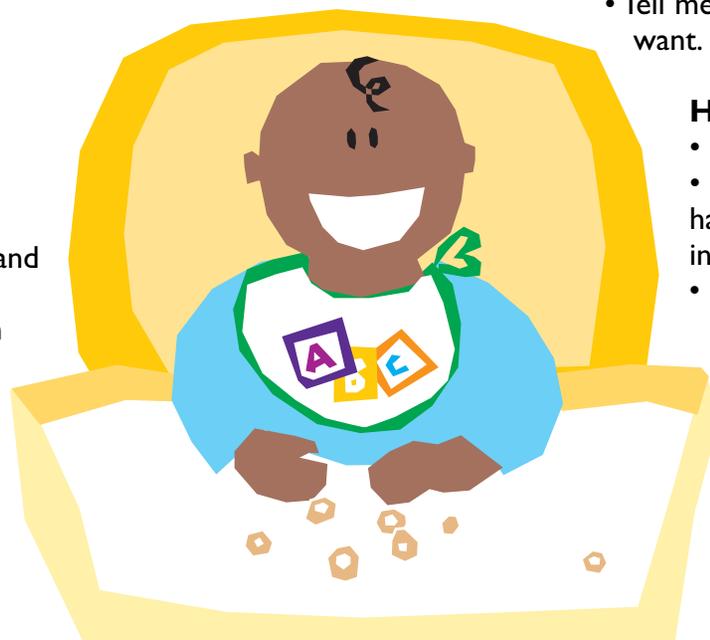
After you make our house safe for me, teach me to be safe.

- Tell me what you want me to do, over and over. Don't get tired of telling me. I'm too young to remember.
- Until I learn what to do, take me away from the place I shouldn't be or take away the thing I shouldn't be playing with. Get me interested in something else. Don't slap my hands or hit me. Try not to yell at me, either.

- Tell me, hug me, and praise me when I do what you want.

Help me use the high chair safely.

- Put the safety belt on me when I'm in the chair.
- Be sure the tray is locked in place. Make sure my hands are out of the way when you lock the tray in place.
- Be sure there are no sharp edges to cut me or you.
 - Don't let me stand in the chair.
 - Don't leave me alone in the chair.
 - Don't leave the chair too close to a table or counter. I can push on the table and tip my chair over.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Talk to me in complete sentences. Tell me what you are doing. Make sounds for me to copy like “eee,” “uh-oh,” and “aaa.”
- Tell me about a toy and show me how to use it. I will want to look at it, smell it, chew it, squeeze it, pat it, and bang it.
- Put a favorite toy just out of my reach. Help me move to get to it.
- Hide a toy under a cloth so I can look for it.
- I like to use blocks that I can hold in my hands.
- Read to me. Point to the pictures as you tell me about them.

Each child grows and changes at a different rate.

I might do some activities earlier than others. Playing with me helps me learn new things. If you are worried about what I do, talk to my doctor or nurse or call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Pick up my head and chest when I’m on my stomach. I can hold myself up with my arms.
- Stand up if you hold me under my arms.
- Roll from my stomach to my back or from my back to my stomach.
- Notice small things that are placed in front of me.
- Lie on my back and look at my hands. I can bring my hands together over my chest or at my mouth.
- Reach for toys or other interesting things near me.
- Squeal and make high pitched sounds when I’m happy.
- Start to have my teeth come in.



7-9 months

Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check my development.
- Check my heart, lungs, and other body parts.
- Give me any vaccines and blood tests I missed before.

Remember to take my health journal to the doctor visit.

Plan my meals

- At 8 months, I can have meats prepared for babies. Add the baby food meats to my meals of cereal, vegetables, and fruit.
- Don't feed me hard foods or foods that crumble easily, like graham crackers. I could choke on them.
- Help me start drinking from a cup. This will take time. I like the cups with a cover to keep me from spilling. If you don't have a cover for my cup, put only a small amount in the cup when you give it to me. Don't give me a Styrofoam cup. I like to chew on the foam. If I chew off a piece of foam, I could choke.

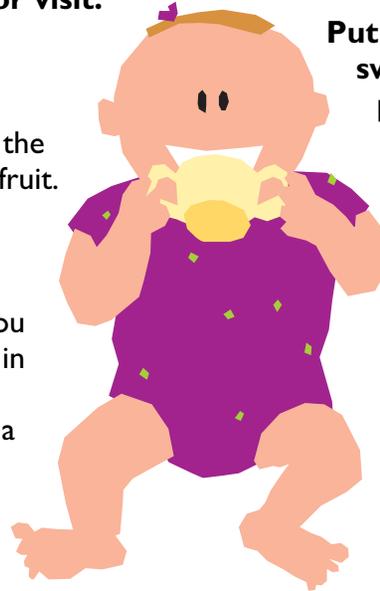
Shoes or no shoes.

I don't really need shoes to help me learn how to walk. After I do learn how to walk, shoes or sneakers will protect my feet.

Keep me safe.

Now that I can pull myself up, there are new dangers.

- When you cook, turn pot handles to the center of the stove.
- Don't leave spoons or anything hanging over the edge of the stove.
- Check knobs on the TV and stereo to make sure they can't come off.
- Watch out for carts, chairs, tables with wheels, floor lamps, and aquariums that could fall over. When I pull or push on these, they could fall on me.
- Move the crib mattress to the lowest position so I can't fall or climb out.
- Keep things picked up so I don't trip on anything or swallow something I should not.
- Use corner protectors on sharp edges of furniture.



- Keep the bathroom door closed so I don't play in the toilet bowl.

Check my toys. Make sure they are not broken and they don't have any sharp edges or pieces that can hurt me. If I have stuffed animals and dolls with button eyes or noses, make sure they cannot come off. I could choke on them.

Put things out of reach that you don't want me to swallow or put in my mouth. Pills, cleaners, makeup, and plants are dangerous. If you think I have swallowed something, first call the Poison Control Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

Take away anything that dangles. I will pull on a table cloth or dresser scarf. Keep my crib away from curtains and venetian blind cords.

When you take me shopping, strap me into the shopping cart seat. If there isn't a strap, make sure that I stay in the seat.

Watch me carefully when I'm around water. I like to play in water, but I can easily drown in a few inches of water in a tub, toilet bowl, bucket, or wading pool.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Put a small ball on my high chair tray and teach me how to make the ball move.
- Help me learn the names of my body parts by pointing to them and naming them.
I won't be able to say them for a while.
- Play hide and seek with me. Ask me, "Where is (name a person)?" I will try to look for them.
- Read to me. Look at magazines and picture books with me. Point to a picture and name it. Say "See the cat," and, "Look at the flower." Ask me sometimes, "What is that?" Wait a few seconds before you tell me. Soon I will be able to give you an answer.
- Build towers with blocks or toys.

How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

- Play “So Big!” Show me how to lift my arms over my head and say, “So big.”
- Give me a chance to smell some safe things, such as food, flowers, and spices.
- Help me learn why some things are not safe. If I go to the stove or heater, say, “hot,” and move me away. If I reach for a shoe and you know it will go in my mouth, say, “Tastes bad,” and move me away.

Watch how I grow.

Children are very different from one another.

I’m special. I learn at my own pace. Help me practice new skills when you play with me. Most babies have the following skills at the end of 9 months. If you are worried about me, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Sit for a few seconds without any help.
- Feed myself dry cereal or foods I can eat with my fingers. I’m pretty messy.
- Say “ma,” “ga,” “da,” “di,” “ba,” and other sounds.
- Pick up small things, like a piece of dry cereal, using my whole hand in a raking motion.
- Listen to people talking and try to make the same sounds.
- Hold a small block in one hand and pass it to the other hand.
- Look for something that I have dropped.
- Hold onto something and stand for about five seconds.

You may notice that I also:

- Get upset if you leave me, even if it’s for a short time. I will feel better when you return.
- Start to drink juice from a cup.
- Know which toys are mine. I don’t like it when my toys are taken away.
- Might be afraid of things that were okay before. I might be afraid of my bath, a babysitter, or the dark.
- Might be stubborn sometimes.
This is part of growing up.
- Might be fearful or shy of strangers.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Give me any vaccines or blood tests I missed before.
- Give me vaccines at 12 months of age.
- Check my teeth.
- Screen me to see if I have been exposed to lead. I can get lead in my body by breathing or eating lead dust, chips, or flakes. The lead can get into my nerves and my bones. It can affect the way I learn, grow, and hear. The earlier we catch the problem, the less harm will happen to me.
- Ask my doctor about a tuberculin test.

Watch for signs of an ear infection.

If I tug at my ears or have a cold lasting many days, this could mean I have an ear infection. Ear infections could affect my hearing. Being sick a lot could affect my growth and learning. If I don't feel well, it might be hard for me to see, hear, think, and learn. If I act, look, or feel like I'm sick, please call the doctor or nurse right away.

Take care of my teeth.

- Start planning for my next dental visit for when I'm 12 months old.
- Call your dentist or a dentist just for me and set up this visit.
- Brush my teeth every day, and look for any white or brown spots. These could be cavities.
- If I have any white or brown spots on my teeth, take me to the dentist as soon as possible.

Help me be safe.

- **I like to pull things out of drawers.** Make sure drawers cannot be pulled out all the way.

10-12 months

Make sure that unsafe things are not in the drawers. Give me a low drawer or cupboard of my own to store some of my toys.

- **Store my toys, books, and other things where I can reach them.** Sturdy shelves, dishpans, buckets, and cardboard boxes are good.
- **I can choke on food.** Don't give me hard-to-chew foods such as popcorn, nuts, raisins, tortilla chips and grapes. Don't give me hotdogs, even if they're cut into pieces.

- **I still need to be watched carefully.** Common accidents for children my age are: falls, burns, choking, poisoning, car accidents, and drowning. Don't leave me in a bath or around anything with water (like a mop bucket).

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Make a book for me using cardboard for the pages. Paste photographs and pictures from magazines on the pages. I like to see pictures of me, my family and my favorite toys, foods, and places. Let me turn the pages.
- Play a game of "Which-hand-is-it-in?" Hold a small object in your hand. Show me what's in your hand. Switch back and forth between your hands. Let me guess which hand the object is in.
- Let me practice dropping things into containers such as a block into a box. I will need help getting the blocks back out.

Good Days and Bad Days

All parents have bad days and sometimes feel worn out.

It is common for a parent's body to ache a little from the work of being a parent. This doesn't mean you are doing anything wrong. Remember that these bad days are usually followed by good days.

Young children need parents who try their best, but that doesn't mean you will succeed all the time. Try not to worry about being a super parent or a super family.

Talking to someone and asking for help:

Shows that you love me and care about me.

Shows that you are being a good parent.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Watch how I grow.

I'm special. I learn at my own pace.

Most children have the following skills by the time they are a year old. If I'm not doing several of the items on this list, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Play Pat-a-cake or other clapping games.
- Pull myself up by hanging onto a chair or my crib rail.
- Pick up a cube or small toy in each hand and bang them together.
- Pick up a small object, like a piece of cereal, using my thumb and a finger.
- Say the same sound over and over, like, "babababa" or "lalalala."
- Say "mama" or "dada." Even though I say these words, I don't know what they mean. They are sounds for me to say.
- Stop doing something if you say "No." I sometimes stop doing it only for a short time, though. Changing my attention with a toy is best.
- Follow some easy directions, like, "Come here" or "Give it to me."
- Stand by myself for at least two seconds.
- Sit up all by myself.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, my doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Give me a few vaccines at 15 months. If I missed some vaccines before, I will get more. These vaccines help me grow up healthy. If I had any reactions to the vaccines before, remind the doctor or nurse what happened.
- Ask the doctor or WIC nutritionist about my eating habits. I'm eating lots of different foods. Don't worry if my appetite changes from meal to meal.

Take my health journal whenever we go to the clinic or doctor. Write the date I get any vaccines and the reason I see the doctor. For example, write if I'm sick or hurt. If you don't have health insurance for me, call the **Children's Health Insurance Program** at 1-877-543-7669 (1-877-KIDS_NOW) to find out about children's health insurance.

Take care of my teeth.

Take me for a dental visit. The dentist will count my teeth, look for cavities, and talk to you about how to take care of my teeth. The dentist might also paint some fluoride on my teeth to make them stronger. If we start taking care of my teeth when they first come in, I can grow up without cavities. Remember:

- Brush my teeth every day.
- Don't share my spoon when you feed me.
- Don't put my pacifier in your mouth.

Keep me safe.

- **Help me learn what is all right to do.** Show me and tell me what you want me to do. If I don't do it, show

13-15 months

me or tell me again. Praise me when I do it right. Do not yell at me or hit me. I learn more quickly and easily if you teach or show me than if you punish me.

• **Teach me not to play around stairs and windows.** Accidents can happen. Check the screens on the windows. Make sure the screens are not broken or torn. The screens should be attached securely so I can't open them.

- **Help me get ready to go to sleep.** Bedtimes can be a problem when I'm overly tired. I really enjoy a story or other quiet activity before I go to sleep. This bedtime routine helps me settle down.
- **Be calm when I have a temper tantrum.** It's okay for me to cry and scream when I'm angry. This is one way I say "I'm angry." I don't have enough words yet to explain my anger. You can say, "I know you feel really angry when that happens!" As I grow older, I can learn other ways to deal with my anger. But don't give in to me just because I'm screaming. Let me calm down and then help me change my attention to something I can do. Here are some ways you can help me stop the tantrum:
 - Keep calm.
 - Put me in a safe place to keep me from hurting myself.
 - Hug me and comfort me when I have calmed down. Spanking and yelling at me don't help. They only make me angrier. I will calm down on my own. When I'm quiet, help me do an activity I enjoy.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Read me stories. This helps me learn new sounds and words.
- Play hide-and-seek games.
- Pretend with me. Let's make believe we are cooking, eating, washing, cleaning, drinking, or going on a hike. I like to copy what you do. Some of the time it will be fun for you to copy what I do.
- Build a tower with blocks.
- Reward me when I do a good thing. Think about rewarding me with activities that I like to do, like reading a favorite story or spending time with a favorite person. Using food as a reward can lead to problems later.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Watch how I grow.

I learn at my own pace.

If you have questions because you think it's taking me a long time to learn to do some things in this list, please call my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Let you know what I want without crying. I might point, reach, make a sound, put up my arms, pull on you, or even say a word.
- Stand by myself or walk.
- Wave bye-bye when someone is leaving and says "bye-bye" to me.
- Call you "Mama" and "Dada." You are so happy to hear me say those words when I see you.
- Talk all the time. Most of the time it sounds like jabbering. I'm the only one who knows what it means.
- Know the meaning of some words like "juice," "Cup," "on," and "out."
- Stoop to pick something up and stand up again without holding on to anything.
- Drop small things like a block into a container. When I do this, I open my hand to drop the block.
- Turn and look when you call me.

You might notice that I also:

- Have a change in appetite. I may not eat as much as I used to because I'm not growing as fast.
- Put all my energy into learning to walk. Because I'm learning to walk, I might be slow to learn some other things.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check me from head to toe.
- See how I walk.
- Check my teeth.
- Check my eyes and ears.
- Give me any vaccines I missed before.

Take my health journal with us to write down my height and weight and any vaccines I might get.

Keep me safe.

- **Close the bathroom doors so I don't play in there.**
- **I can feed myself, but it's still easy for me to choke on food.** Don't give me small foods like peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, or gum drops. Other foods that aren't safe for me to eat are raw carrots and celery, grapes, hot dogs, and Vienna sausage. Always watch me while I eat. Help me get into the habit of sitting quietly while I eat.
- **Now I can climb.** I can push a chair to climb into the cupboards, over the porch railing, or to an open window! I don't know what trouble I can get myself into. Put screens in the windows and make sure they are latched tight. Only open the top section of the window so I can't get out.

Help me control my behavior.

- **Show me things that are okay for me to do.** If I'm fighting with another child over a toy, take away the toy or give us each a toy. If I'm doing something you don't want me to do, take me away from the area and give me something else to play with. Hitting me and yelling at me won't teach me what I should do.
- **Join a parenting class to learn more ways to help me behave.** Call the local county extension office or a nearby elementary school to find out about parenting classes.

16-18 months

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- When I point, tell me the word I am trying to say. If I point to the cat, say "It's a cat," so I can hear the words that I'm trying to say.
- Let me help you. Let me take a spoon to the table or put dirty clothes with the clothes to be washed.
- Let me play in the bath to learn to pour and squeeze. I like to use plastic bowls and containers in the tub. Never leave me alone in the tub.
- Remind me again and again what I can and cannot touch. I'm just learning how things work. I can't remember what I should not touch.
- Teach me to take care of my teeth. Help me brush my teeth with a child-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush and water. I'm still too young to use toothpaste. Let me watch you when you brush your teeth so I can learn from you.

Watch how I grow.

I learn new skills at my own pace.

I need help in lots of ways to practice my new skills. By the time I'm 18 months old, I should be able to do most of the things in the list below. If you are worried about what I can do, talk to my doctor or nurse. To



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Walk by myself! I have good balance. I don't tip from side to side and I hardly ever fall down.
- Help around the house. I can put something on the chair when you ask me. I can get what you ask me to get. I can put something away if you remind me.
- Drink from a cup or glass by myself, maybe spilling a little of it.
- Say "No" and shake my head from side to side.
- Roll a ball back and forth with you.
- Say at least 3 words other than "Dada" and "Mama."
- Scribble on paper with crayon and pencil. This keeps me busy for a few minutes. Watch me carefully because I might chew on the crayon.
- Try to brush my own teeth, but I'm too young to do it by myself. I still need your help.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Test how well I hear and see.
- Ask to describe how I play and what I like to do.
- Ask to describe what and how much I eat.

Ask my doctor if I should be screened for lead.

Find out about children's health insurance.

If you don't have health insurance for me, call the **Children's Health Insurance Program** toll-free at 1-877-543-7669 (1-877-KIDS_NOW).

Be patient about potty training.

I know you are getting tired of changing my diapers. You would really like me to use the toilet. Don't rush me. It will be easier to teach me how to use the toilet if you wait until I can tell you I'm wet.

Take me to the dentist again.

Set up a time for me to see the dentist and get my teeth checked. Be sure to check my teeth when you brush them for me. If you see any white or brown spots, take me to the dentist soon. Help me grow up with no cavities.

Keep me safe.

- **My house may be safe for me, but what happens when we visit new places?** Keep me in your sight so I don't get into any safety problems. Take some toys for me so I don't have to go exploring.
- **If someone comes to visit us,** put the visitor's pocketbook or bag in a place where I can't reach it. There could be some pills and other things in there that I should not have.
- **Are there any doors that I could lock?** Could I lock myself in the bathroom? Is there a way that you could get me out? An outside lock release on the bathroom door would solve that problem.

1¹/₂ - 2 years

Help me feel good about myself.

- I like to be told when I have done a good job.
- Hug me, cuddle me, and tell me you love me.
- Thank me if I'm helpful.
- Tell me what to do, instead of what not to do.
- Listen to what I have to say and answer my questions.

Praise me when I'm doing what you want. For example, if I cover my mouth when I cough, say, "I'm glad you covered your mouth when you coughed."

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Play "Dress Up" and "Telephone" with me. Help me pretend.
- Say nursery rhymes and sing songs with me.
- Help me put puzzles together and build with shoe boxes.
- Let me play in front of a mirror.
- Show me how to use things we have around the house. Let me use a broom or a mixing spoon.
- Take me on walks and let me look, listen, and touch.
- Find a playmate for me. Have another child come over or take me to a community play group. I can learn to play with other children.
- Offer me choices. I can tell you if I want to wear red or blue today or if I want a banana or cracker.
- Let me play with a pan of water or sand so I can pour, scoop, and dig.
- Point at different objects and tell me the color of each object. Soon I can tell you what colors they are.
- Play some music so we can dance.
- Talk with me before I go to bed. Let's talk about what happened today and what's going to happen tomorrow.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

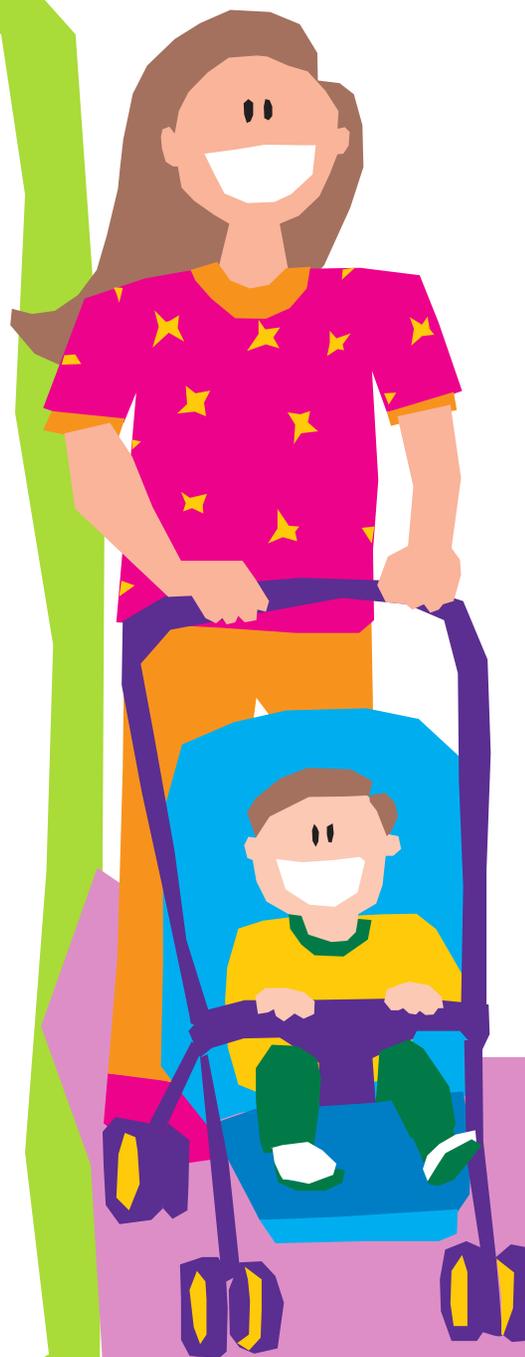
My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:



Watch how I grow.

I learn at my own pace.

I may learn to do some things a little early or some things a little later than others. By the time I'm 2 years old, I should be able to do most of things on the list below. If you are worried about what I can do, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Use a fork or spoon when I eat. I can get most of the food in my mouth.
- Undress myself and take off my jacket, pants, and shirt.
- Pretend to do things. I will try to feed a doll or my stuffed animals using a bottle or spoon.
- Run.
- Make a tower of 4 blocks.
- Point to the picture in a book if you ask me to find something. For example, "Show me the dog."
- Use at least 6 different words.
- Point to 2 different body parts when you ask me where they are. For example, "Where's your mouth?"
- Walk up the stairs all by myself! I will have to hold onto the wall or railing.
Kick a ball forward.

Help me be healthy.

Look for signs that I'm ready to start using the toilet.

I will let you know when I'm ready. If you wait until I'm ready to start teaching me to use the toilet, it will be much easier for both of us. I will let you know I'm ready when I can:

- Stay dry for a few hours after emptying my bladder.
- Tell you, "I'm wet or I have to use the potty."
- Pull my pants down and up.
- Understand and follow your directions when you tell me "Go into the bathroom," "Wipe," or "Pull up your pants."

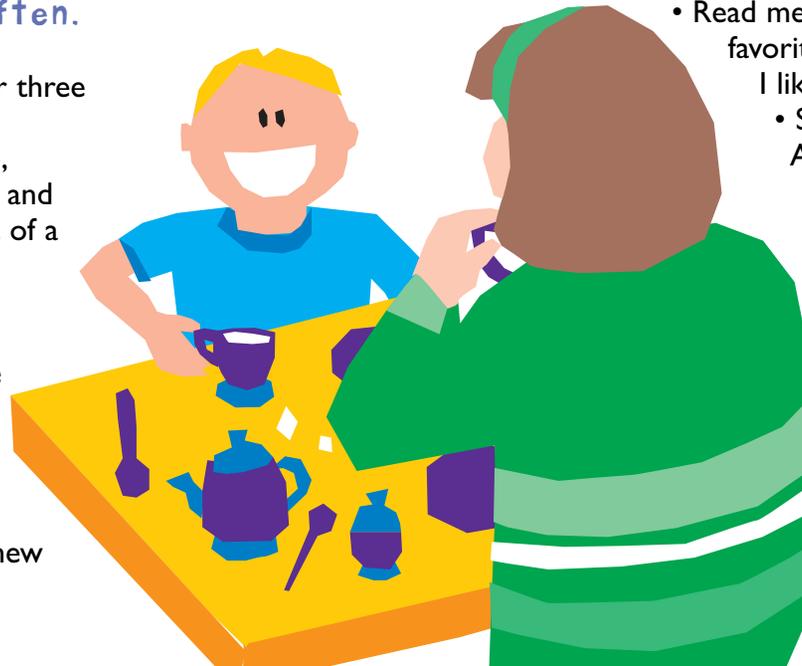
At first, I may not even go when I sit on the toilet. I need time to get used to sitting on the toilet first. Be patient with me. There are books at the library about toilet training that could answer many of your questions.

Take care of my teeth.

It may be time for my 6 month dentist visit. Regular visits help me keep my teeth healthy and keep little cavities from becoming big cavities. Remember to brush my teeth every day and limit my sweet drinks and snacks.

Feed me often. I get hungry often.

- I will usually eat three meals and two or three snacks a day.
- Snacks that are good for me are cheese, yogurt, juice, unsweetened cereal, fruits, and vegetables cut into small pieces, or part of a sandwich. Don't give me a lot of soft drinks, cookies, and candy. Sport drinks aren't good for me either.
- I'm learning what foods taste like. There will be some foods that I don't like now. There are some foods you don't like either. If I'm a picky eater, I might try a new food if you give me a very small serving I'm more willing to try a new



2^{1/2} years

food if I know you won't force me to eat it. I like it when you give me a taste of the food from your plate.

Help me be safe.

- **Teach me what to do if someone is touching me in a way I don't like.** I'm the boss of my own body. If I don't like the way someone is touching me, I should tell you right away.
- **When you cook on the stove,** turn the pot handles to the center of the stove. Don't leave spoons or other things hanging over the edge of a pot. I can pull on the handles and spill hot liquid over me.
- **When I do have an accident,** such as touching a hot oven and burning my fingers, help me understand what happened. Explain that if I touch the oven when it is hot, I will get burned.
- **Empty ashtrays.** You don't want me playing with cigarette ashes.
- **Empty drinking glasses** and take away drink cans.
- **Look at the toys in my toy box.** Are there any broken toys? Fix them or throw them away. Do any toys have sharp edges? Be sure all my toys are safe for me to use.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Read me stories every day. I like to pick out my favorites. I like to hear them over and over again. I like to have my very own books.
- Sing songs like "London Bridge" and "Ring Around the Rosie."
- Play "Copy Me" games in front of the mirror.
- Let me help you around the house. I can pick up my clothes and toys or put napkins on the table. Give me a job to do.
- Help me learn the names of new people, colors, feelings, animals, plants and other things.
- Listen to what I say, even if it doesn't make sense to you.

How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

Sleeping Habits:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Think about preschool for me.

Now is the time to start looking for a preschool for me. You can look in the phone book yellow pages under the heading of schools, preschools, or child care to find a list. You can also call the **Day Care Information Line** at 1-800-862-5252. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services also has a statewide list of regulated child care facilities on their website at www.txchildcaresearch.org. You can get this list also by calling 2-1-1. Not all parents want to use preschool. They may want to think about the Mother's Day Out Program.

Watch how I grow.

I'm learning what is important to me.

If there are some things on this list I can't do yet, talk to my doctor or nurse. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Watch for me to:

- Point to different body parts, either on me or one of my dolls.
- Say my own name.
- Stand and balance.
- Put on some clothes that are easy to get on.
- Run and jump. When I jump up, I can get both feet off the ground at the same time.
- Point to a picture and name something in the picture.
- Say two-word phrases like "Play ball" or "Want drink."
- Ask you questions.
- Understand and do something you ask me to do, like "Get the doll and bring it to me."

You might notice that I also:

- Say new words, but I may not know the meaning of them.
- Eat the same food you eat. I like mine cut into small pieces that I can eat safely with my own little spoon.
- Ask to go to the toilet sometimes.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check my hearing and vision.
- Give me a blood test to see if I'm healthy.
- Ask what new things I can do, what my sleeping habits are, and what I eat.
 - Give me any vaccines I missed before.

Take care of my teeth.

- It might be time for my next dentist visit. I want to have healthy teeth, so please take me to the dentist every six months.
- Remember to brush my teeth every day.
 - Check my teeth for white or brown spots.
 - Don't give me a lot of sugary foods and drinks.

Help me be safe.

- **Keep all plants out of my reach.** Some plants are poisonous. If I do eat any parts of a plant, call the **Poison Control Center** at 1-800-222-1222.
- **Keep the trash inside a latched cabinet** or in a place where I can't get into it. Don't let me reach for anything in the trash. I could find can lids, food, plastic bags, and many other dangerous things.
 - **If I have a swing and slide,** make sure they are sturdy and safe for me to use. Are they anchored in the ground?
Stay with me while I swing and slide.

3 years

Help me learn to do what you want.

When I need to do something, tell me and show me what I should do. If I throw a doll at my sister because I want to play with her game, I need to know why I should not throw the doll. I also need to learn that I can't have what I want all the time. Tell me, "Please don't throw the doll. It could hurt someone. You can use the blocks to make a house for the doll. You can play the game when your sister finishes."

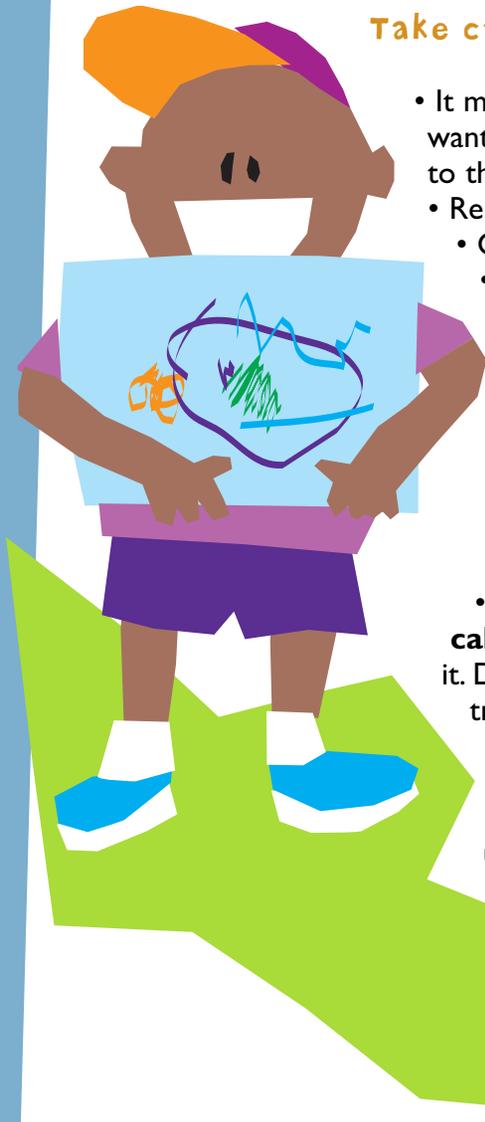
- Yelling or spanking me will not help me learn what you want me to do.
- Praise me when I'm doing what you want me to do.
- Telling me that you like the good things that I do will help me learn quickly. Hug me to show that you are happy about what I'm doing. I like to please you. This discipline works better than punishing me.

Register me for Head Start or preschool.

You can sign me up for **Head Start** anytime of the year. If you meet the federal guidelines, the Head Start program will help us based on our needs. To find out more, go to www.uth.tmc.edu/thssco or call 1-866-282-7780.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Show me how to take things apart and put them back together again.
- Take me to the library to check out books. Find out what programs the library has for young children like me.
- Take me outside. Show me how to run and throw a ball. Teach me the things that are better to do outside rather than in the house.
- Teach me how to describe how things feel. Show me what is soft, sticky, hard, rough and furry.
- Write down the stories that I tell. Read them back to me.
- Play a game with me of matching colors.
- Help me learn to pick up my toys and put them where they belong.
- Take me to a play group or invite a child who is about my age to my house so we can play together.



Watch how I grow..

I'm growing at my own pace.

I do some things a little early and some things a little late. If we already know I have a disability or a delay that keeps me from doing some of the things listed below, I might be able to do these things later. It will just take me a little longer to learn how to do them. If I can't do most of the things on the list, talk to my doctor or nurse. Also, call the Special Education office of the school district where we live.

Watch for me to:

- Build a tower with at least six blocks.
- Talk in sentences that have three or four words in them. About half of the time you can understand what I say.
- Point to and tell you about the pictures in my favorite books.
- Put an easy puzzle together.
- Brush my teeth with your help.
- Throw a ball overhand.

You might notice that I also:

- Sing songs by myself.
- Don't take a nap every day.
- Know the difference between words—like the difference between “go” and “stop,” “yes” and “no,” “cold” and “hot,” “up” and “down.”
- Know what belongs to me.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, the doctor will:

- Weigh and measure me.
- Check me from head to toe.
- Test how my vision.
- Give me a few vaccines. I will need to get some vaccines before I go to kindergarten. Ask if there are vaccines I need now.

Take my health journal with us so we can write the date I got my vaccines.

Notice what I'm able to do.

If you think I'm clumsy and fall a lot, if I don't talk or play with others, or if I don't enjoy moving around, you might want to talk to my doctor about this and have me checked. Call for an appointment now!

Take care of my teeth.

- It might be time for my six month dentist visit. Call and set up a visit for me.
- I'm still too young to brush my teeth by myself. Help me keep my teeth clean.

Help me be safe.

- **Teach me to be very careful in a garage or storage area.** While ours may be safe, other people's garages or storage areas may have insecticides, paints, equipment, and other things stored that are dangerous to me. Explain to me that garage door openers are not toys and that I'm not to play with a garage door.
- **Practice crossing the street** and walking through parking lots with me. I'm short. People can't see me in their rearview mirror when they are backing up. I need to be by your side, holding onto your hand or your clothes.
- **Make sure I wear a helmet** when I start to ride a bicycle/tricycle.
- **Remember, I still need to be watched** and can't be left alone.

4
years

Help me deal with my fears.

I might be afraid of monsters, snakes, or many other things. Don't force me to get near something that scares me. If I'm afraid of the dark, use a night light or leave the hall light on.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Let me use play dough. I like to make it into shapes, cut it with cookie cutters, and roll it.
- Let me tear or cut paper and paste these pieces onto another piece of paper.
- Let me tell you the stories from my favorite books.
- Play listening and guessing games with me. Make the sounds of different animals and let me guess what the animal is. Another guessing game is to find something that I can see, describe it for me, and let me tell you what it is.
- Let me trace in the sand or do a finger painting.
- Let me help make and serve our snacks and meals.
- Take me to the zoo, library, and other places that have special events just for kids my age.
- Let me help you do things around the house so I can learn how to be a helpful family member.
- Make an obstacle course with boxes, chairs, and tables, and let me find my way around all these things.
- I should not watch much TV. One hour is the most I should watch in a day - it doesn't matter if it's a video or a TV show. I should be active and learning how to do things. The TV that I watch should help me learn. Watch my favorite TV program with me. That way we can talk about it. Don't let me watch shows that upset or scare me.



How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Watch how I grow.

I'm always learning and trying.

I will learn some things faster than other things. If you have questions about what I can and cannot do, talk to my doctor or nurse. Call my preschool or Head Start teacher or the Special Education office in our school district. If you're worried about how I'm doing, don't wait for my next doctor visit. Call and ask now. The sooner we find out if there is something to worry about, the better it will be for me. To learn more, read the pages at the back of this guide, *What If I'm Concerned About My Child's Development?*

Watch for me to:

- Put on my t-shirt all by myself.
- Tell you the names of my friends.
- Wash my hands with soap, rinse them, and dry them with a towel.
- Use a normal tone of voice.
- Ask you many questions.
- Copy a line that goes up and down on my paper after you show me how to do it on your paper.
- Copy a picture of a circle.
- Tell you what I need if I'm cold, tired or hungry.
- Tell you how I use something when you ask me to talk about something I use almost every day. For example, "What do you do with a fork?"
- Point to a picture of something you are describing to me. I can answer questions like "Which one says meow?" or "Show me what flies?"
- Stand on one foot for a few seconds.
- Jump forward with my feet together.

You may notice that I also:

- Know at least one color.
- Use sentences with four or five words most of the time.
- Brush my teeth.
- Take care of myself at the toilet.
- Play with other children.

Register me for kindergarten.

Call a school near where we live. Ask when and how you can register me for kindergarten.



Help me be healthy.

At this checkup, my doctor will:

- Test my vision and hearing.
- Ask how I play with other kids.
- Ask what I like to do.
- Ask what I eat.

Ask my doctor questions:

- What does my doctor think about my weight?
- Some doctors will want to screen me for cholesterol and anemia. What does my doctor think?

Take care of my teeth.

- It might be time for my six month dentist visit. Call and set up a visit for me.
- I might be fussy because I have new teeth trying to come in. My dentist can check and say what's going on in my mouth.

Help me be safe.

- **Help me learn the difference between friends, helpful people, and strangers.** When we go to a place where there are many people, show me who the helpful people are, like police, clerks at the store, lifeguards at the pool, or park workers at the amusement park. Just in case I can't find you, I will know a safe person to ask for help to find you.
- **Be careful about having matches and lighters around the house.** I like to try to do what I see you do with the matches and lighters. People my age have been known to start fires playing with these. Don't smoke around me.

Play with me. It helps me learn.

- Let me have a friend over so we can play games together.

5
years



- Read with me. Help me learn to read my name and the words on street signs and labels on containers.

- Play guessing games with me. Pretend to do something and let me guess what you are doing.

- Make different expressions with your face and let me tell you what feelings I see on your face.

- Let me have a job to do around the house like setting the table, putting clothes away, or helping you do something else.

- Teach me our family's name, my phone number, and my address. If you and I can't find each other at the park or store, I can ask someone to find you.

- Teach me what the healthy foods are.

- Show me how to answer the phone and make a phone call, especially in case of an emergency.

- Help me pick the TV programs I watch.

Remember, I copy the language I hear and the behaviors I see.

Watch how I grow.

Watch for me to:

- Hop on one foot.

- Dress myself, zip zippers, button buttons, and comb my hair.

- Play board games and card games with others. We take turns and follow the rules.

- Copy two solid lines that cross, so it looks like a plus sign (+).

- Name at least four colors.

- Name at least two shapes like a circle or square.

- Be able to follow directions that tell me to put something in, on, under, or behind something else. For example, "Put your book on the bookshelf."

- Draw pictures. When I draw a person, it has at least three parts.

- Speak so you can understand most of what I say.

- Hear when you talk to me and hear you call me from another room.

How I am growing:

My Doctor is: _____

My Dentist is: _____

My Length: _____ inches

My Weight: _____ pounds _____ ounces

Immunizations:

New Things I Can Do:

Favorite Things and Activities:

Some skills are easy for me. Other skills are harder.

Talk with my teacher about what's easy and hard for me to do. If you have questions or think I need some help because of some things I can't do, please ask my doctor, nurse, teacher, or someone in the special education office in my school district.

In these first 5 years, we both have learned a lot. There is much more for us to learn.

I will need you to take some time to:

- Listen to what is happening in my life each day.
- Look at the papers I bring home from school.
- Help me understand how important it is to pay attention in class.
- Help me do my school work.
- Talk to my teacher.
- Support me and encourage me to do the best I can do.
- Tell me that you are proud of me when I have done the best I can do.

I will probably do better in school if:

- I know you care about the work I do at school.
- I know you think school is important.
- You help me with my school work.

Be the best parent you can be!



A baby cries for many reasons.

Sometimes I cry to tell you:

- I'm hungry.
- I have a gas pain.
- I'm too cold or too hot.
- Something scared me.
- I'm sick or I hurt.
- I'm bored or lonely.
- There is too much noise.
- I'm being held by too many different people.
- My diaper is wet and I need to be changed.
- I'm tired.
- I have colic.

Sometimes I cry when I think you are feeling upset or grumpy.

Sometimes I'm just fussy because I don't know how to settle down.

You might feel bad, angry, helpless, or worried if you don't know why I'm crying or how to comfort me or keep me from crying so much.

Help me to be happy most of the time.

Each baby is different.

Get to know me and what I need. I have different cries that mean different things. One cry means "I want to eat." Another cry means "I want to do something else." By thinking about what I need, you can help me stay happy. Knowing what I don't like can keep me from being fussy.

- Be sure to change my diaper if I'm wet or dirty. Like most babies, I will need to be changed at least every three hours or more when I'm awake.
- Make sure I'm not too hot or too cold.
- Don't feed me more than I need. I will tell you when I've had enough.
- Don't feed me cereal or solid food without talking to my doctor first.
- Don't leave me in a baby seat too long. I like to do many activities. I might fuss to tell you I want to do something else.

How to Help Your Crying Baby

I need to suck.

Let me suck as much as I want—either a pacifier or my fingers.

I need to learn I belong to my parents.

You can't spoil me at this age. As I learn that you will help me, I will cry less.

- Spend as much time with me as you can when I'm awake.
- Touch, hold, hug, cuddle, and love me.
- Talk to me.
- Read to me.
- Walk or rock me.
- Come to me as soon as you can when I cry.

As a young baby, I need lots of sleep and quiet time.

- Let me sleep all I want.
- Put me in a quiet place on my back. I don't like much noise, and I don't need a lot of visitors.

As I get older, I will want to do more things with you.

- Play with me and talk with me.
- I will tell you when I am tired of doing something. I will fuss or turn my head away.

I like a routine.

As much as possible, try to do things the same way and at the same time each day.



Try to find out why I am crying:

Look to see if I:

- Am wet or have a dirty diaper.
- Am too hot or too cold.
- Am hungry.
- Am too full.
- Need to burp.
- Have a stomach ache.
- Am tired.
- Have a new tooth trying to come in.
- Could be upset by something you ate if you are breastfeeding. Talk to a WIC nutritionist or a doctor for help. If you are breastfeeding, don't drink coffee, tea, or cola. Don't eat spicy foods or foods that cause gas.

Is there too much going on?

- Is there too much noise in the room?
- Are there too many people holding or touching me?
- Are people smoking around me?

Am I sick?

- Do I have a fever?
- Am I vomiting?
- Have I had a bowel movement in a while?
- Do I have loose bowels or diarrhea?
- Do I have a diaper rash or some other rash?
- Do I have a cold or runny nose?
- Am I pulling on my ears? This could mean I have an ear infection.
- If I have any of these problems, you can check with my doctor to see if I'm sick.

To help me stop crying:

- Pick me up and hold me.
- Snuggle me or wrap me in a blanket.
- Talk or sing to me.

- Play soft music.
- Lower the lights.
- Rub my gums with your clean finger when I have a tooth coming in.
- Give me something to look at or something to play with.
- Give me a pacifier.
- Sit with me in a rocking chair.
- Walk or dance with me.
- Take me for a ride in the car or in the stroller.

If nothing works and I get on your nerves:

- Put me in a safe place. Let me cry alone for 5 minutes. Sometimes I get too tired and need a chance to settle down.
- Ask someone to come over and care for me while you take a break from me.

Never shake me!

- No matter how upset or angry you feel, do not shake me.
- Shaking me can cause brain damage or even death. I will outgrow this constant crying.
- Holding and cuddling me tells me that you love me and that you want me to feel better.

**Love your child.
IT makes a difference.**



child care checklist for Parents

Basic Information

- The hours fit my schedule.
- A valid license or certificate is posted where I can see it.
- I can afford the fees.

The Place

- It is clean and well maintained.
- The setting is bright, cheerful, and well-ventilated.
- It is free of safety hazards.
- There are enough toys and equipment that are safe, age-appropriate, and in reach of the children.
- There is enough space for all activities (indoor/outdoor play, naptime, diapering, etc.).
- The meals and snacks are appetizing and nutritious.

The Provider

- The caregiver has good training and experience with children.
- Staff turnover is low.
- The provider is committed to staying in business.
- If dealing with a child care center, there are enough staff to give children individual attention.

- The provider uses positive reinforcement, sets limits consistently and gently, and gives children choices.
- The provider and children seem to like each other and the children seem happy.
- The provider is warm, friendly, patient, and holds the children in a loving and caring manner.
- The provider plays with, listens to, talks with, and encourages children to express themselves.
- The provider understands a child's different developmental stages.
- The children are encouraged to learn to get along and respect each other.
- The provider responds quickly to children's needs.
- The provider's ideas about raising children are similar to mine.
- There is a posted, written schedule that shows a balanced, daily routine.
- There are active/quiet times, outdoor/indoor play times, with varied and age appropriate activities.
- There is time for children to work as a group and time for children to be alone.
- The schedule can be changed to meet my child's needs and moods on any given day.
- Boys and girls are equally encouraged to take part in activities.
- The values of the program are compatible with my values.



Parental involvement

- Parents can make unannounced visits at any time.
- Parents are involved in making some decisions.
- Parents can speak with the provider when they drop off and pick up children.
- Parents meet with the provider on a regular basis.

Care for infants

- There is a quiet place for a baby to sleep.
- Providers respond to crying babies in a caring way.
- Infants have space and freedom to play, climb, and crawl.
- Diapers are changed often and in a clean area. Staff wash their hands after each diaper is changed.
- Babies are fed on demand and are held.

Care for School-Aged children

- Transportation is safely provided to and from school.
- Children have freedom and flexibility after a structured school day.
- Children have space and time to do homework.

Final considerations

- Parents of other children in the program speak well of it.
- I would be happy here if I were a child.
- I feel comfortable leaving my child here.
- This checklist has been adapted from materials developed by *The Family & Workplace Connection*.



You may notice your child is behind in some of the activities listed in the guide.

Taking longer to do new things could mean that a child has a developmental delay or a disability. The sooner you have your questions answered about your child, the better it will be for both you and your child.

Children can be behind in learning new skills because of illness, an accident, or one of many other reasons. By knowing what the problem is, you can begin to help your child develop in ways that are best for him or her. Don't wait, thinking that the situation will change on its own.

If you are concerned

For children, newborn to age 3

Ask your child's doctor or nurse about your concerns. Or contact your local **Early Childhood Intervention** program. Early Childhood Intervention is part of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). The program helps families with children who have developmental delays. It supports families to help their children reach their potential. There are local Early Childhood Intervention programs all over Texas. Screenings and evaluations are free. The program can help families both in their homes and in their communities. To find a nearby **Early Childhood Intervention** program, call the DARS Help Line toll-free at 1-800-628-5115.

Early Childhood Intervention services for children and families may include:

- Developmental screenings and tests.
- Physical, occupational, speech, and language therapy.
- Supportive child care teachers.
- Education and counseling.
- Coordination of needed social and health services.
- Access to support groups.

What if I'm concerned about my child's development?

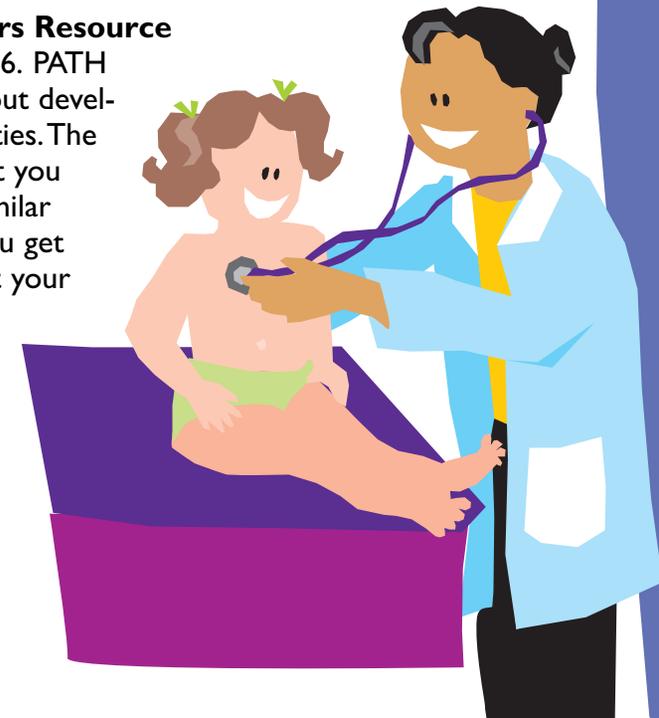
For children ages 3 years and older:

Local school districts can evaluate kids ages 3 and older through the Child Find program. If your child is found to have a delay or disability, he or she can get needed help from the school district. To learn more, call the special education office in your school district.

Additional resources:

The **Early Childhood Intervention Directory** has more information on local resources for children with developmental delays and disabilities. Call the **DARS Help Line** at 1-800-628-5115 and ask for a copy of the directory. Also, the Department of State Health Services Audiovisual Library has books, video tapes, audio tapes, and journals about child development and early intervention. Anyone in Texas can borrow these materials for only the cost of return postage. To find out more about the library and to order library materials online, go to www.dars.state.tx.us, click on "Early Childhood Intervention Services," and then click on "Resources."

Call **PATH of the Partners Resource Network** at 1-800-866-4726. PATH has materials and books about developmental delays and disabilities. The people at PATH can connect you with parents of kids with similar conditions. They can help you get the answers you need about your child. They can also tell you about some useful services and resources.



The most important thing you can do to help me do well in school is read aloud to me every day.

Reading to me from the time I'm a newborn helps the part of my brain that deals with speech and language develop. The more words I hear when you talk, read, and sing to me, the more this part of my brain grows. Reading to me will give me the skills I need to learn to read, write, and understand information when I'm older.

There are a lot of things you can read with me:

- Library books
- Newspapers
- Catalogs
- Magazines

You can help me like reading.

- **Read to me as a newborn** for a few minutes at a time. When I lose interest, stop reading. As I get older, read to me longer.
- **Read to me at least one time each day.** Say nursery rhymes and finger play and sing songs with me throughout the day. They help me learn to listen and remember.

Read to your child every day.

- **Get a library card** so that we can borrow books and videos for free from the library. The librarian can tell you about good books for you to read to me.
- **Let me pick the books I want you to read to me.**

- **Be patient** if I want you to read the same books over and over. Repeating helps me remember. It's my way of practicing.
- **Keep books where I can reach them.** Have books in the rooms where I play.
- **Keep books in the bag we take** everywhere we go.
- **Encourage me** whenever I try to read letters, pictures, signs, and books.
- **Take me to story time** programs at the library.

As we read together:

- **Point to the pictures and words** you are describing.
- **Talk the way you think the character speaks.** If the character is happy, sound happy when you read to me.
- **Talk to me about the story.** When you talk to me, I learn new words. Point to the pictures and ask me what I liked about the story and what happened. Asking me questions about the story will help me learn to think.
- **Let me try to read the story back to you,** even if I make up the words. This will help me become a good reader and also will help me learn to talk.

When you read to me, we share a new world. I have fun and feel very close to you.



Helpful Phone Numbers

Getting help to support your child's development:

Early Childhood Intervention is a statewide program for families with infants and toddlers birth to 36 months with developmental delays. **ECI** assists families through education, family support, and learning activities. It is best to identify developmental delays in children as early as possible. For more information call **1-800-628-5115** or visit www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis.

For children 3 years and older, call your local school district's Special Education office.

PATH is a grant project of the **Partners Resource Network**, a training and information center for parents of children with disabilities. **PATH** offers resources and referrals for your child and access to other parents who have children with similar special needs. Call **1-800-866-4726** or visit www.partnerstx.org.

Help finding licensed child care:

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licenses and inspects Texas child care facilities. For a list of licensed child care centers and homes in your area or for information on choosing child care, call the **Day Care Information Line** at **1-800-862-5252**. This information also is online at www.txchildcaresearch.org.

Early Head Start serves pregnant teens, young pregnant women, and children ages 0 to 3 years. **Head Start** serves children ages 3 to 5 years. Visit www.uth.tmc.edu/thssco or call **1-866-282-7780** to find the **Head Start** program closest to you.

Texas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies works through its local and regional network to help parents find child care. They also help child care providers with better resources. They have information about services for children having trouble at home or school. Call **1-866-892-4453** or visit www.taccrra.net.

The **Texas Workforce Commission** and the **Texas Health and Human Services Commission** offer a statewide child care referral service through 2-1-1 Texas. This referral service is open to low-income, working families who need help paying for child care, as well as families at risk but making too much money to get help paying for child care. Call **2-1-1** or visit www.211texas.org.

Has your child swallowed, breathed in or touched a poisonous substance?

Call the **Poison Control Center** at **1-800-222-1222**.

Texas Department of State Health Services:

Call the **Family and Community Health Services** hotline at **1-800-252-8023** for information on a wide variety of health services for children and parents. Or visit www.dshs.state.tx.us/programs/fhquery.asp.

The **Women, Infant, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)** gives nutrition education, food supplements, and health and social service referrals. The program is for pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, as well as infants and children under the age of five who are at nutritional risk. Services are available based on financial and nutritional needs. Call **1-800-942-3678** to find the WIC office closest to you. For information about **breastfeeding**, call **1-800-514-6667**.

If your child is covered by **Medicaid** and you need help finding a doctor or dentist, call **Texas Health Steps** at **1-877-847-8377**.

The program **Children with Special Health Care Needs** helps children with special medical needs, disabilities, and chronic health conditions. Benefits include payments for medical care, family support services, and other services not covered by Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance. Visit www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn/ or call **1-800-252-8023**.

Car seat and bike safety information:

Call **Safe Riders** at **1-800-252-8255** for advice on bike helmets and buying and installing car seats.

To find your local library:

Look in your local phone directory's blue government pages. You can also go to the **Texas State Library** online at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/pls.

For health insurance options:

Visit www.texashealthoptions.com or call **1-800-252-3439** to speak to an insurance specialist with the Texas Department of Insurance.

For low or no-cost health care coverage:

Visit www.CHIPmedicaid.org or call the Texas CHIP/Children's Medicaid Hotline at **1-877-543-7669 (1-877-KIDS_NOW)**. That hotline is open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Central Time. You can also call **2-1-1**, and ask about local health insurance programs for low-income families.