

# your child @<sup>™</sup> birth

highlights of what's happening  
at this stage of your child's development...



**Welcome to a whole new world!** No parent is ever really ready for the changes that come with having a new baby. It's a wonderful time, but it's also a challenging time, full of new worries, new feelings and new experiences. Just remember, ask for help when you need it and don't expect everything to be perfect.

## your child's health

### take note...

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that you tell your doctor if you notice any of the following during your baby's second, third, and fourth weeks of life:

- Sucks poorly or feeds slowly.
- Doesn't blink in bright light.
- Doesn't focus and follow movement of a nearby object.
- Rarely moves arms and legs, seems stiff.
- Seems very loose in the limbs or floppy.
- Lower jaw trembles constantly, even when the baby is not crying or excited.
- Doesn't respond to loud sounds.



American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN<sup>™</sup>

Reviewed and approved by the  
American Academy of Pediatrics

### Well Visits

Before leaving the hospital, your baby should have a complete physical exam. Unless there are health problems, your baby should have her first well visit sometime during her first month, and another one at eight weeks. If you are concerned about your child's health in between visits, call her doctor.

### Sleep

Your infant's sleep will be disorganized during her first six weeks, because she doesn't yet know the difference between day and night. At six weeks, her total sleep may be about 16 hours per day, including a stretch of four to six hours per night. You can help to soothe your newborn to sleep by:

- Swaddling her securely in a blanket or cloth.
- Letting her suck on a pacifier, bottle, hand or wrist.
- Rocking or swinging your baby gently.
- Giving her a soft massage.

### Typical immunizations at this age will include:

- Hepatitis B

### SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) was formerly known as crib death. To reduce the risk of SIDS:

- Always place your baby on his back to sleep during naptime and at nighttime, and remind other caregivers to do so as well.
- Keep toys and other small objects out of your baby's crib to prevent choking.
- Make sure the mattress and bedding are firm and flat and fit perfectly into the crib without gaps between the crib walls.
- Do not place your infant to sleep on soft surfaces such as waterbeds, sofas, soft mattresses, pillows, comforters or sheepskins. Also, keep toys and stuffed animals out of the crib. They can smother your baby.

- Dress your baby in as many layers of clothing as you would wear and keep the temperature in your baby's room comfortable for an adult.
- Do not smoke around your baby.

### Nutrition

Breast milk is the ideal food for infants, however, formula is an acceptable and nutritious alternative. If you want to breastfeed and need support, talk with your doctor.

According to the AAP, breastfed babies generally eat more frequently than bottle-fed infants. Some breastfed newborns will need to nurse every two hours, others every three. Formula-fed infants will need to eat every three to four hours. Remember to burp him after each feeding.

### Cleaning and Bathing

#### Sponge Baths

Your infant's umbilical stump will fall off 10 to 20 days after birth, leaving a small wound that will take a few days to heal. Until then, wipe your baby's body with a clean, warm, wet washcloth instead of using a bathtub. Be sure to regularly wipe her face and hands and carefully clean her genitals.

#### Tub Baths

After the umbilical stump heals, you can give your baby a traditional water bath in the kitchen sink or a plastic baby tub. To bathe a newborn:

- Fill the tub with two to three inches of warm water. (Double-check the water temperature before placing your baby in the tub.)
- Gradually slip the baby into the tub using your hand to support her head and neck.
- When using the sink, seat your baby on a washcloth and hold her under the arm to prevent slipping.
- Pour cups of bath water over her instead of water directly from the spout.
- Wash her with a gentle hair and body soap.
- Wrap your baby in a towel and pat her dry.

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## your child's health (continued)

### Jaundice

Many newborns have a jaundiced or yellowish skin color, which may last the first week or two — until the newborn's liver begins to remove bilirubin from the blood. Your baby should be examined for jaundice at the hospital. If she has been diagnosed with jaundice at the hospital, it is important that she be examined again between three and five days of age. If you have any concerns, you should call your baby's doctor.

### Skin Care: Sun Exposure

Do not expose your baby to direct sunlight. The risks or

benefits of sunscreen use are not yet known for babies younger than six months of age. If your baby needs to be outdoors, discuss sunscreen use and other options with your pediatrician.

### Skin Care: Cradle Cap

*What it is:* A dry, flaky, harmless scalp condition that usually goes away on its own after several months.

*Treatment:* Washing with water or gentle baby shampoo and brushing the hair regularly can help. If the problem continues, talk to your doctor about special shampoo to treat the condition.

## your child's growth and development

The AAP says that your infant should achieve these milestones by the end of his first month:

### Movement:

- Makes jerky, quivering arm thrusts.
- Brings hands up to eyes and mouth.
- Moves head from side to side while lying on stomach.
- Has strong reflex movements.

### Eyesight:

- Focuses 8 to 12 inches away.
- Eyes wander and occasionally cross.
- Prefers black and white or high contrast patterns.
- Prefers human faces to patterns.

### Hearing:

- Has fully matured hearing.
- Recognizes some sounds.

### Smell and Touch:

- Recognizes the scent of his mother's breast milk.

## nurturing your child

**Take Care of Yourself.** Becoming a parent is overwhelming and exhausting. Make sure you get plenty of support from friends, family or community groups. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Call your doctor if your "baby blues" last more than two weeks.

**Follow Your Baby's Cues.** As you respond to your baby's needs, you will learn what her different cries mean and how to soothe her. If she likes what you're doing, you know you are getting it right! If she does not, experiment. After all, this is a learning process for both you and your baby.

**Understand and Respond to Your Baby's Needs.** You cannot spoil an infant, so be sure to go to him whenever he fusses or cries. When you answer him, he learns that you understand his signals and are going to take care of his needs.

**Talk, Sing, Read and Play with Your Baby.** Just as a baby's body depends on parents for food to grow, his brain depends on experiences to grow and develop. Talk, sing, read and play with your baby right from the start to help him learn.

## your child's safety

### take note...

Never place a baby in the front seat of a car with an activated air bag. The strength of the air bag could kill your baby.

### General Safety

- Never leave your baby unattended on any surface above the floor.
- Don't attach pacifiers or other objects to your baby or the crib with a cord, string or necklace of any type.
- Always support the baby's head and neck when moving her body.
- Never shake your baby.
- Call **1-877-KIDS-NOW** to see if your baby qualifies for free or low-cost health insurance.

### In the Car

The law requires that your baby ride in:

- A properly installed, federally approved car seat every time she is in the car.
- The rear facing position.
- The back seat.
- For more information, go to [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).

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## 2 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

Help your baby grow! Spend lots of time holding, cuddling, playing, and reading with your child.

### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** At your baby's 2-month visit, your doctor will give vaccinations that will keep your child healthy and strong. Schedule your next visit for when your baby is 4 months old.



Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Does not notice his hands.
- Does not smile at the sound of your voice.
- Does not follow objects with his eyes.
- Does not respond to loud noises.

Call 1-877-KIDS-NOW to see if your baby can get free or low-cost health care.

**Sleep** Begin to put your baby to sleep between 6 and 10 pm. Turn off the lights and keep the area quiet. Your baby should sleep for 4 to 6 hours each night. He is still too young to have a daytime nap schedule.

**Crying** There are many ways to soothe a crying or fussy baby:

- Let her suck on a pacifier, bottle, hand, or wrist.
- Gently rock or swing your baby, or take her for a drive or walk.
- Wrap her tightly in a blanket.
- Create "white noise." Run a fan or a vacuum cleaner near your baby.

Remember to stay calm. Your baby will sense when you are stressed.

**Nutrition** At this age, your baby only needs breast milk or formula. Your baby will generally eat 4 to 5 ounces per feeding, or 20 to 25 ounces per day.

#### Safety Tip

Always put your baby to sleep on her back to reduce the risk of SIDS.

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## 2 months

### Nurturing your child

**Early Care** *Take Care of Yourself.* Call your doctor if you feel sad, anxious, or restless.

*Create Regular Routines for Your Baby.* Make routines during everyday activities, such as singing the same song as you change his diaper.

*Respond to Your Baby.* Pick up your baby whenever he cries. You cannot spoil an infant.

#### Safety Tip

Never shake or spank your baby. Shaking will cause brain damage.

#### Early Learning

Your baby will learn and grow as you read, talk, sing, and play with her.

- Read with your baby. Use cloth or board books with pictures of babies or common objects.
- Play together. Make silly faces. Tickle her. Move objects slowly in front of your baby and watch as she follows them with her eyes.
- Sing songs again and again. Play fun music at play time or relaxing lullabies at bedtime.
- Talk with your baby throughout the day. Let her answer with her coos, squeals, and gurgles.

### Your child's safety

#### In the Crib

- Do not put blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals in a crib. If they cover your baby's face, he could stop breathing.
- Keep your baby's room at a comfortable temperature. Don't make it too warm or too cold.

#### In the Car

By law, your baby must ride in a secure, rear-facing car seat. She must ride in the back seat of your car.



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## 4 to 6 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

Watch your baby coo, wiggle, kick, roll over, and try to sit up all by herself.

### Your child's health

#### The Well Visit

At the 4-month visit, your doctor will give vaccinations that will keep your child healthy. Remember to schedule your next visit for when your baby is 6 months old.



Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Does not respond to loud noises.
- Does not reach for or hold toys.
- Does not coo or try to copy your sounds.
- Has trouble following objects with her eyes.

#### Nutrition

At this age, your baby only needs breast milk or formula. But you can start giving cereals, such as rice or oatmeal, at around 4 to 6 months. Here are tips for starting with solid foods:

- Mix simple solids (like rice cereal) with breast milk or formula.
- Start with 1 feeding of solids a day. Add another when your baby can eat 2 to 3 tablespoons at a feeding.
- When your baby is used to eating cereal, move on to smooth, single-ingredient foods (like smooth carrots or applesauce, or "stage 1" jars of baby food).
- Wait for 2 to 3 days before starting a new food to make sure your baby is not allergic. Call your doctor if you think your child has had a reaction.

#### Sleep

Your baby should sleep about 15 hours per day and may take 2 or 3 daytime naps. He may be getting up 2 times each night to eat. To help your baby sleep:

- Put him to bed between 6 and 8 pm every night.
- Start a bedtime routine. Give him a bath, sing a song, read a book, hug or rock him, and then put him to sleep.

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## 4 to 6 months

### Your child's health, continued

#### Sleep Safety

- Always put your baby to sleep on his back (do not worry if he rolls over on his own).
- Put the mattress at its lowest level, if your baby can sit up.
- Don't put stuffed animals, pillows, or blankets in the crib with your baby.
- Keep your baby's room at a comfortable temperature. Do not make it too warm or too cold.

### Nurturing your child

#### Behavior

Discipline is never right for babies this age. Always check on your baby when she cries. You can't spoil your baby.

#### Early Learning

Help your baby learn by reading, talking, and playing.

- Play with your baby. Use toys your baby can chew on, such as rattles and teething rings.
- Place your baby on his tummy for several minutes, a few times a day to help build his strength.
- Give him cloth or board books to play with. Read to him every day.
- Talk and sing to him all the time. Look at him and listen for him to coo or squeal back at you.

#### Safety Tip

Never shake or hit your baby. Shaking can cause brain damage.

### Your child's safety

#### Around the House

- Never leave your baby on a bed, couch, or chair. She could roll off and get hurt.
- Do not drink or carry hot liquids when you are holding your child or are near children.
- Always check the water temperature in the bath. Never leave your baby alone near water.



#### In the Car

By law, your baby must ride in a secure, rear-facing car seat. He must ride in the back seat of your car.

United Way Born Learning<sup>®</sup> is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way. For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

This tool was adapted for the United Way Born Learning campaign.

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## 6 to 9 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

By now, your child might be rolling, reaching, and laughing his way through the day.

### Your child's health



#### The Well Visit

Your baby should visit the doctor at 6 months. Your doctor will give vaccinations that will keep your child healthy and strong.

Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Seems very stiff or floppy, or cannot sit with help.
- Does not laugh or squeal.
- Does not actively reach for objects.
- Does not roll over from front to back.

Schedule your next visit. Your baby will need to come back at 9 or 12 months.

#### Dental Health

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends a first dental visit within six months of a baby's first tooth, or by age 1.

#### Sleep

At this age, your baby still needs 2 or 3 naps a day. Put your baby to sleep at night between 6 and 8 pm. She may get up for a night feeding, especially if she's breast-fed.

To help your baby sleep, create a regular bedtime routine. Give her a bath, sing a song, read a book, or give her a hug and say good night.

#### Nutrition

Your baby should drink up to 24 ounces of breast milk or formula per day. You may have started to give your baby cereals over the past few months. Once your baby gets used to eating baby cereal, move on to smooth, single-ingredient foods.

- Start with fruits and vegetables. Talk to your doctor about starting meats and other foods.
- Introduce 1 type of food at a time.
- Serve it for at least 2 to 3 days to make sure your child is not allergic. Call your doctor if you think your child has a reaction.

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## 6 to 9 months

### Nurturing your child

**Behavior** At this age, babies do not understand discipline. Instead, as they explore, focus on safety. You can:

- Distract or move your baby from unsafe objects or activities.
- Childproof your home. Keep all dangerous objects out of reach of your child.
- Never shake, spank, or hit your child.

**Play** Learn about your child's interests by watching and playing with him. You can:

- Let him play on his tummy. This will strengthen his neck, back, and arms.
- Give your child musical instruments or objects to play with. A pot and a spoon make a great drum.
- Move your play time outside when you can. You can go for walks, look for birds or airplanes, or just sit with your child on a blanket on the grass.

**Language** You are your child's first teacher. To encourage her language skills you can:

- Read and tell stories together every day.
- Hold and hug your baby when you talk and read with her.
- Ask your child a question, and wait for her to answer with her babble or a smile.
- Provide books that are made of cardboard or cloth to make page turning (and chewing) easier.

### Safety Tip

By law, your baby must ride in a secure, rear-facing car seat. He must ride in the back seat of your car.

### Your child's safety

- Around the House**
- Cover electrical outlets. Tie up cords hanging from blinds.
  - Put safety latches on cabinets, drawers, and toilets.
  - Keep her away from toys or items with small parts. These can cause choking.
  - Keep cleaning supplies, medicines, and sharp objects out of reach.
  - Call poison control right away if you think your child has swallowed poison: 1-800-222-1222.



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## 9 to 12 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

As your child approaches her first birthday, she may be crawling and trying to take her first steps.

### Your child's health



**The Well Visit** Your baby should visit the doctor at 9 months. Your doctor will give vaccinations that will keep your child healthy and strong. Schedule your next visit. Your baby will need to come back at 12 months.

Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Drags one side of her body after crawling for over a month.
- Does not point to objects or pictures.
- Does not look for objects that she sees you hide.

**Dental Health** By age 1, your baby should have his first dental visit and then see the dentist every six months.

**Sleep** At this age, your baby still needs 2 or 3 naps a day. Put your baby to sleep at night between 6 and 8 pm.

#### Safety Tip

Never give your baby whole grapes, popcorn, raw vegetables, hot dogs, nuts, or candy.

**Nutrition** Your baby should drink up to 24 ounces of breast milk or formula and eat 3 meals per day. It is important to let your baby practice picking up food and feeding himself. Serving tips include:

- Give soft finger foods such as small pieces of cheese, cooked vegetables, soft fruit, or Cheerios.<sup>®</sup>
- Cut food into safe, bite-sized pieces.
- Around your child's first birthday, talk with your doctor about switching from a bottle to a cup.

Watch your baby as he eats. Is he refusing or having a hard time chewing the pieces of food? Then stop serving. But be sure to try again in a few weeks.

### Nurturing your child

**Behavior** At this age, you will need to set limits for your baby.

- Stay one step ahead. Distract a child from unsafe objects and show her an activity that may get her attention.

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## 9 to 12 months

### Nurturing your child, continued

#### Tip

Never spank or hit your child.

#### Behavior, continued

- Save “no” for safety issues. If a child hears “no” too much, it will lose meaning to her. Instead, let your child know what she can or should do.
- Use signs and signals to let your child know how to act. Give a shoulder pat or thumbs up when your child is doing something good.

**Attachment** Your child may have a hard time when her parent or caregiver leaves. To help, you can:

- Say goodbye. Explain that you are going to leave but that you’ll return. Do not sneak out.
- Give her a teddy bear or a blanket to help her feel close to you.

#### Early Learning

Encourage your baby’s natural curiosity through talking, reading, singing, and playing with him.

- Play hide-and-seek with objects. Your child will like to see things come and go.
- Look at your baby when you talk and read with him.
- Point to the objects and people you see all the time and name them.
- Sing nursery rhymes and songs that repeat and have hand motions. Try *The Wheels on the Bus*.

### Your child’s safety

#### Around the House

- Put gates at stairs. Cover edges of furniture. Put safety latches on drawers, cabinets, and toilets.
- Cover electrical outlets. Tie up cords hanging from blinds.
- Keep cleaning supplies, medicines, and sharp objects out of reach.
- Call poison control right away if you think your child has swallowed poison: 1-800-222-1222.

#### In the Car

By law, your baby must ride in a secure, rear-facing car seat. He must ride in the back seat of your car.

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## 12 to 18 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

As your child begins to walk, run, and climb, she needs freedom to explore and clear limits to keep safe.

### Your child's health

#### The Well Visit

Make sure your child has a 1-year check-up. Your doctor will give vaccinations and ask you questions about your child's development.

Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Does not crawl.
- Drags 1 side of his body after crawling for over 1 month.
- Cannot stand while supported.
- Says no single words.
- Does not point to objects or pictures when asked.
- Does not use gestures such as waving or shaking the head.

Schedule your next visit. You will probably need to come back at 15 or 18 months.



#### Sleep

At this time, some children start giving up their morning nap and take just 1 afternoon nap each day.

#### Nutrition

By 12 months, your baby is ready to stop drinking formula. Now, he should drink up to 16 to 24 ounces of whole milk a day. Also, put milk or water in a cup instead of a bottle.

At 12 months, your child might not eat a lot at each meal. Give her 5 or 6 small healthy meals a day instead of 3 larger ones. Cut foods into small pieces to avoid the risk of choking.

#### Do not give your child:

- Raw vegetables
- Hot dogs
- Popcorn
- Candy
- Nuts
- Whole grapes

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12 to 18 months

## Nurturing your child

- Language** Read, sing, and talk to your baby all the time.
- Ask questions as you look at pictures and read stories.
  - Provide board books on topics of interest to your child, like animals or babies.
  - Teach new songs and use hand movements, such as *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

**Tip**

No matter how angry you are, never spank or hit your child.

- Behavior** For safety, now is the time to set a few limits. Make simple and clear rules and use the same rules over and over again. You can also try to:
- Distract your child from unsafe objects or activities.
  - Save “no” for safety issues. If your child hears “no” too often, she will start to tune it out.
  - Give a stern or firm look for little things and move to a safer activity.

- Play** Use play to teach your child to imagine, invent, and solve problems.
- Plan time for her to play with friends as well as alone.
  - Play inside using different objects and toys, like stacking boxes or cups, and play outside when possible.

## Your child's safety

- Around the House**
- Use safety latches on drawers, cabinets, and toilets.
  - Keep hot liquids out of reach.
  - Never leave your child alone near water, open windows, or fireplaces.
  - Cover sharp edges and electrical outlets and put gates on stairs.
  - Call poison control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous: 1-800-222-1222.

- In the Car** All infants and toddlers should ride in a Rear-Facing Car Seat until they are at least 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat's manufacturer. Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for his convertible car seat should use a Forward-Facing Car Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

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## 18 to 24 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

Your child is becoming his own person. Watch him as he starts to walk, run, and climb with ease.



### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** Your child will get vaccinations at 18 months and will have a well visit again at 24 months.

Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Cannot walk on his own.
- Walks only on his toes.
- Does not speak at least 15 words.
- Does not know how to use common objects like a brush, telephone, fork, or spoon.

**Nutrition** By 18 months, your child should:

- Eat most foods cut up into small pieces.
- Be drinking from a cup rather than a bottle.

**Sleep** Your child should sleep about 14 hours a day. She may now take only one nap a day, usually from about 1 to 3 pm. She should go to bed between 6 and 8 pm.

### Nurturing your child

**Behavior** Your child is starting to understand rules and consequences. So, it is time to teach your child the right way to behave.

- Praise good behavior. If you point out the good things your child does, he will want to do more of them.
- Ignore small things.
- Never spank. If you are angry, count to 10 before reacting.
- Limit your use of the word "no."
- Be consistent with your rules.

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## 18 to 24 months

### Nurturing your child, continued

- Attachment** Your child is excited about being independent. But he will not go too far from you. To help your child move away from you:
- Say goodbye when you leave. If you do not say goodbye, he will fear that you may slip out at any time.
  - Make sure your child is busy with an activity when you are about to leave.

- Language** Help your toddler learn. Talk and read with her throughout the day.
- Add to what your child says. If she says “kitty,” you can say, “Yes, the kitty is little and soft.”
  - Ask questions about “where,” “what” and “when.” It doesn’t matter if your child can’t speak yet.
  - Sing lots of songs and rhymes, such as *Rock-a-Bye Baby*, at bedtime.
  - Help your child scribble, draw, or pretend to write.



- Play** Your child now likes pretend play and doing things for himself. You can help him play along.
- Practice naming objects. Place three familiar objects in front of your child and say, “Please give me the ...”
  - Set up play dates. It is time to learn to play with other children. But do not expect your child to share well.

### Your child’s safety

- Around the House** Always put your child’s safety first.
- Block off dangerous rooms and objects. Put gates on stairs. Put latches on cabinets, toilets, and drawers. Cover sharp edges.
  - Keep hot liquids out of reach.
  - Call poison control right away if you think your child has swallowed poison: 1-800-222-1222.

- In the Car** All infants and toddlers should ride in a Rear-Facing Car Seat until they are at least 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat’s manufacturer. Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for his convertible car seat should use a Forward-Facing Car Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

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## 24 to 36 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

By 36 months, your child will probably be able to say about 900 words and use short sentences.

### Your child's health

#### The Well Visit

By 2, your child should have received most of his vaccinations. Use this visit to catch up on any missed shots. Your doctor may do a blood test.

Let your doctor know if your child:

- Does not follow easy directions.
- Does not copy actions or words.
- Walks only on toes.
- Does not use 2-word sentences.

#### Nutrition

Children this age may be fussy eaters and lose interest in food. Give her healthy choices, if possible. If she doesn't want it today, try it again next week. Avoid junk food.

#### Sleep

It may be time to leave the crib and move to a bed.

- Make the change exciting. Talk about the big bed. Talk about what might go in it, like a favorite stuffed animal.
- Keep the same bedtime and routines. Teach your child to stay in bed after he's been kissed good night. Your child may get out of bed. Quietly take him back until he learns to stay there.

#### Toilet Training

Your child may begin to show signs that she is ready to potty train. Does she:

- Pull her pants up and down?
- Show interest in the potty?
- Dislike wearing a dirty diaper?
- Have long dry periods?

#### *Starting the Process*

- Buy a potty seat or attachment for the toilet. Let your child practice sitting on it.
- Teach her to sit and wipe.



#### Remember

Accidents happen; do not punish your child for them.

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## 24 to 36 months

### Your child's health, continued

- Toilet Training, continued**     *Remember*
- Encourage your child. Be patient.
  - Take it slowly. Learning may take time.

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### Nurturing your child

- Behavior**     *The Testing Twos*
- Your child will test his independence. He may have temper tantrums and use the word “no” a lot.

#### *Tips for Surviving Tantrums*

- Try to stay calm, instead of getting angry.
- Do not spank. Instead, give consequences that relate to the bad behavior. For example, take your child out of the store if he acts up.
- Stay in control. Do not allow your child to be the boss. Don't buy him treats just to stop a tantrum.
- Avoid situations that may cause problems. Does your child have a fit when he is hungry? Remember to carry healthy snacks with you.

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- Early Learning**     Read, write, and create with your child every day.
- Read together every day. Point to words and ask questions when you read.
  - Give her paper and a crayon to color, draw, or pretend to write.
  - Help her use her imagination. Use blocks as flying cars or zoo animals.
  - Limit TV and computer time. You are a better teacher than any TV or computer program.

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### Your child's safety

- In the Car**     Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for his convertible car seat should use a Forward-Facing Car Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.



# your child @<sup>™</sup>

## 3 years

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

Your “little baby” is off to preschool. Her world will get so much bigger. She'll need you to guide her.

### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** Take your child to the doctor for check-ups and blood pressure readings when he turns 3 and again when he turns 4. Ask your doctor about shots that your child may need before starting school. And catch up on any missed vaccinations.

Let your doctor know if your child cannot:

- Jump in place.
- Scribble holding a crayon between his thumb and fingers.
- Use sentences with more than 3 words.
- Socially connect with other children.

### Dental Health

Let your child brush her teeth. Then help her to make sure her teeth get cleaned. She should:

- Brush teeth twice a day (especially at night).
- Use a child-size toothbrush with a pea-size bit of fluoride toothpaste.
- Visit the dentist every six months.

### Nutrition

At this age, offer your child the same foods, at the same times, as you eat.

Choking is still a hazard, so avoid things like candy and cherries with pits.

Be careful with:

- Grapes (cut them in half).
- Hot dogs (slice in half the short and the long way).
- Raw vegetables like carrots and celery.
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter, especially crunchy.



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# your child @<sup>™</sup>

## 3 years

### Your child's health, continued

**Sleep** *Goodbye Nap time.* Between 3 and 4 years, children often give up their afternoon naps. On days when your child doesn't nap, be prepared for some fussiness. You may have to put him to bed earlier that night.

*Hello Bedtime Battles.* Your child may begin to fight going to bed. To help:

- Try to stick to the bedtime routine and set limits such as how many books you will read each night.
- Give your child choices. Let him pick out his pajamas and books to read.
- Help him feel safe. Use night-lights, security blankets, or stuffed animals.

#### Remember

Accidents happen. Don't get angry or make a big deal about them.

**Toilet Training** At this age, some toddlers are toilet trained. Some are not. Either way, help her have success:

- Dress her in clothes that are easy for her to pull up and down.
- Use the potty right before bed. And make sure she can get to the potty at night.

### Nurturing your child

- Sharing**
- *Show How to Share.* Give your child a toy in return for one of his toys. And let him see you share with others.
  - *Choose Toys to Share.* Before a friend comes over to play, put away toys that your child does not want to share.
  - *Practice.* Play indoor and outdoor games where you take turns, like board games or hide-and-seek.

**Media Time** Limit media watching (TV, computer, video games, etc.). 1 hour per day is more than enough.

### Your child's safety

- In the Car**
- Any child who has outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for his convertible car seat should use a Forward-Facing Car Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Then use a belt-positioning booster.
  - Visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) for more information.

# your child @<sup>™</sup>

## 4 years

highlights of what's  
happening at this stage of  
your child's development ...

At the end of this year, your child will finish preschool and prepare for kindergarten. Get ready for him to learn new things.

### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** Take your child to the doctor for a check-up when she turns 4. Ask your doctor about shots that your child may need before starting school. And catch up on any missed vaccinations.

Let your doctor know if your child:

- Is very afraid, shy, or aggressive.
- Does not want to play with other children.
- Is unhappy or sad a lot of the time.
- Has trouble eating, sleeping, or using the toilet.



**Sleep** Your child probably sleeps between 10 to 12 hours per night and does not nap.

Nighttime troubles may be:

- Bad dreams. If your child has a bad dream, comfort him until he is able to go back to sleep.
- Night terrors. If your child suddenly sits up in bed and cries, screams, or kicks, do not wake him. Stay with him until the terror ends and he is calm.
- Bed-wetting. Reward your child for dry nights. Do not punish for wet nights. Tell your doctor if the problem lasts.

**Nutrition** Encourage good eating habits:

- Offer 3 healthy meals each day, plus 2 small snacks.
- Talk about how eating the right foods (fruits, vegetables, low-fat meats, and whole grains) helps the body grow.
- Let your child help plan and prepare meals with you.
- Be a good example. Eat foods that are good for you.

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# your child @<sup>™</sup>

## 4 years

### Nurturing your child

#### Behavior

Here are some ways to help your child behave:

- Try not to say “no” all the time. Use positive words. Say, “Let’s jump off the pillows instead of off the bed.”
- Give choices. Let your child choose between 2 or 3 things. “Would you like to do a puzzle or read a book?”
- Make rules clear. Set up rules that are easy to understand and use them again and again. For example, tell your child that he can play outside when he cleans up his toys.
- Know your child’s limits and try not to push him too far. For example, if he is tired, don’t bring him shopping.
- If your child falls apart, stay calm instead of getting angry. Gently take him away from the situation.

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#### Toilet Training

Talk to your doctor if you have general concerns about toilet training, or if your child:

- Stays dry at night for a while, but then begins to wet at night again and must go back to wearing training pants.
- Is 5 and still consistently wets the bed.
- Is completely toilet trained for at least 6 months but suddenly begins to have many accidents during the day and night.

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### Your child’s safety

#### Around the House

- Never leave your child alone near water, even if he can swim.
- Put cleaning supplies, medicines, and vitamins out of your child’s reach.

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#### Street Safety

- Be sure your child wears a bike helmet while riding a scooter or bicycle.
- Teach your child to look and listen for cars before he crosses a street or a parking lot.

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#### In the Car

All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car seat should use a Belt-Positioning Booster Seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age.

# your child @<sup>TM</sup>

## 5 years

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

5 is a big year! It brings the start of kindergarten, new friends, new skills, and independence.

### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** Take your child to the doctor for a check-up when he turns 5. Ask your doctor about shots that your child will need before school starts. And catch up on any missed vaccinations. Your doctor may also test your child's hearing and sight.

**Nutrition** The start of school means that your child will eat at least 1 meal per day outside of your home. To get her ready:

- Talk about and model good eating habits. Explain that it is OK to eat a treat, but only after eating healthy foods.
- Make sure that she knows about any food allergies that she has, and that she knows to tell others about them.

**Sleep** Fighting going to or staying asleep? Try this:

- What is the reason? Does your child need attention? Is he scared of something? Talk with him to understand the problem. Then make changes such as changing the bedtime or turning on a night-light.
- Add choices into his bedtime routine. For example, let him pick the book to read.
- Keep the same bedtime rules each night. Don't give in to his requests or demands.

### Nurturing your child

**Behavior** *Handling Back Talk, Lies, and Acting Out*  
Ideas to help you guide your child's new independence:

- Respect your child and praise good behavior.
- Pick your battles. Try to let the little things go.
- Avoid situations that might cause your child to act out, such as taking her shopping when she is tired.

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## 5 years

### Nurturing your child, continued

#### **Behavior, continued** *Talking Back or Tantrums*

These can be a sign of anger, frustration, or fear. Here's what to do:

- Stay cool. Speak quietly and calmly. Do not yell.
- Offer support. Tell him you see that something is bothering him. But also tell him that he cannot act that way.
- Have rules. Teach him that when he yells, you will ignore him or walk away. Tell him that if he speaks nicely, you will listen.



#### *Preparing for Kindergarten*

Going to kindergarten is a big deal. Before he goes, help him understand what to expect:

- Talk about what he will do during the day, how many kids will be in his class, what his teacher's name is.
- Take your child through his new routine. Drive or walk to school and back. Walk through the school. Show him his classroom and the bathroom.
- Be supportive. Listen to your child's concerns. Answer questions. Read books about starting school. And be patient if he has a rough start.
- Keep it calm at home. Stick to your regular routines. Be sure he is eating and sleeping well.

### Your child's safety

**Strangers** Teach your child to be careful around strangers. Tell her that she should always walk away from a stranger who:

- Asks her for help or to take her picture.
- Tells her that there is a family emergency.
- Calls her by name even though she doesn't know him.

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