

California Parent Guide

- Having a healthy pregnancy
- Helping your baby feel secure
- Helping your baby's brain develop in the first 3 months
- Getting help and support



www.first5california.com

Dear California Families:

Congratulations! Bringing a new baby into your family is the start of a great adventure filled with joy, laughter, and love. It also presents many questions and challenges. Whether you are a new parent or already have children, you can use a current, state-of-the-art resource with timely information and answers to questions. First 5 California is pleased to provide this *Parent Guide* to add to your parenting toolbox.

As your child's first and most important teacher, you build the foundation for who your child will become. You are vital to your baby's growth and development—both physically and emotionally—from the first moments of life. From the minute your baby is born, that precious new brain is making important connections that will affect learning and thinking. Early experiences shape your baby's life. As a parent, your role in helping that development is clear. For example, by talking, reading, singing, and playing with your baby from birth, you help your child learn to communicate, feel confident, become ready for school, and have a greater chance of success in life.

In this *Parent Guide*, you'll get up-to-date advice about pregnancy, birth, early physical growth and brain development, and child-rearing. The guide covers the important first months of life through the fifth year. You will find tips on keeping your child healthy, handling emotional and behavioral challenges, finding quality child care, and much more. You also will find contact information for groups and agencies you can contact when you need extra help or support.

First 5 California supports young children and their families through programs and services that help California kids grow up healthy and thrive. As parents, we want our children to grow up to be happy, caring, loving adults. Getting the right start can make all the difference. We hope the *Parent Guide* can help you with that great start and support you on this wonderful and fascinating journey.

For more information about children's development and activities, please visit our parent website at **www.first5california.com**.

And remember:

Talk. Read. Sing. It changes everything!®



Camille Maben
Executive Director, First 5 California





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About Pregnancy

When you are pregnant, taking good care of yourself becomes more important than ever. Start getting healthcare as soon as you can.

Accept help from family and friends. The more you are cared for during pregnancy, the better you can care for your newborn.

Physical Activity

Your body changes a lot during pregnancy, but you still need exercise to stay healthy. Gentle exercise can help relieve back pain, and it may make your delivery easier. Here are some tips for staying active:

- Ask your doctor what types of exercise are right for you.
- Try walking and swimming. These are ideal forms of exercise for pregnant women.
- Avoid activities with jumping or jarring movements.
- Ride a stationary bike. It is safer than a regular bicycle when you are pregnant.
- Look for a yoga class for pregnant women, if you enjoy yoga. These classes are called “prenatal yoga.”

Get Enough Rest

You may feel tired, especially during the first and third trimesters of pregnancy. Try to get enough sleep. Rest during the day if you need to. If being very tired worries you, talk to your doctor.

Emotional Pressures


Pregnancy often brings joy, but it can also bring mood swings, sadness, and worries. It may cause strain in a relationship. If you want help with problems at home or depression that doesn’t go away, ask your doctor for a referral.



Smoking, Drinking, and Street Drugs

Everything that you put into your body also goes into your baby’s body. Some substances can cause serious health problems for your developing baby, even in very small amounts. Talk to your doctor about everything you take. Harmful substances include:

- Anything you smoke, including e-cigarettes, vape pens, and marijuana
- Any kind of tobacco, including chewing tobacco
- Alcoholic drinks
- Street drugs
- Some medicines, both prescribed and over-the-counter
- Some vitamins and herbal supplements

 **Things You Can Do**

Plan Ahead

- **Plan your pregnancy leave.** By law, you can have time off from your job to care for a new child. In California, you may be able to get partial pay for some of that time. Ask your employer about California Paid Family Leave and federal Family Medical Leave. Or contact the California Employment Development Department.
- **Find a doctor for your baby.** Babies need regular checkups starting in their first month. To find a doctor for your baby (a **pediatrician**), ask your prenatal doctor or other parents.

When Your Partner Is Pregnant

If your partner is an expecting mother, you may not be sure of your role. You can do a lot to get ready for your baby’s arrival. You can help by giving your partner emotional support. Ask her what else she needs. Here are some ideas.

- **Help around the house.** Household chores are tiring, and some, such as cooking, may make your pregnant partner nauseated. Try to do the heavy lifting, such as laundry baskets and grocery bags. If you have a cat, take over cleaning the litter box.
- **Go to appointments.** Going to prenatal doctor visits will keep you informed about how your baby is doing.

Take Childbirth Classes

Classes can help you and your partner get ready for labor and delivery.

 **Where to Find Help**

California Employment Development Department
Information on paid time off to care for a new baby or other family members
www.edd.ca.gov/disability/paid_family_leave.htm

Find a Pediatrician
Search tool to find children’s doctors
www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/find-pediatrician

National Alcohol & Drug Information
Information and referrals for substance abuse and mental health treatment
1-800-662-4357 www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Office of Women’s Health
Information on women’s health, including a national health line
1-800-994-9662 www.womenshealth.gov

A photograph of a pregnant woman with dark hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, sitting on a couch and looking at a laptop. She is smiling and appears to be working or browsing.

While you are pregnant, you can plan for things you’ll need when your baby arrives.

Staying Healthy During Pregnancy

You can do a lot to have a healthy pregnancy. Start getting medical and dental checkups as soon as you think you are pregnant. This is called “prenatal care.”



It's important to see a doctor regularly while you are pregnant.

You can see a family practice doctor, a doctor who specializes in women's reproductive health and childbirth, a nurse midwife, or a nurse practitioner. If you do not have health insurance, you can get help paying for your healthcare.

About Prenatal Care

- At each visit, your doctor will check your health, weight, blood pressure, and urine. She will also check your baby's heartbeat and growth.
- Your doctor will test your blood for low iron, hepatitis B, diabetes, and other problems. She can also test for HIV, TB, and certain rare birth defects. Many of these problems can be treated.
- If you have a low income and you need health insurance, contact Covered California.

Oral Health Is Important

- Take extra care of your gums and teeth when you are pregnant. Gum disease can cause your baby to be born too early and too small.
- Try to see a dentist early in your pregnancy. Tell the dentist that you are pregnant, and ask what dental care you should have.
- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, and floss every day.

WIC for Food and Nutrition

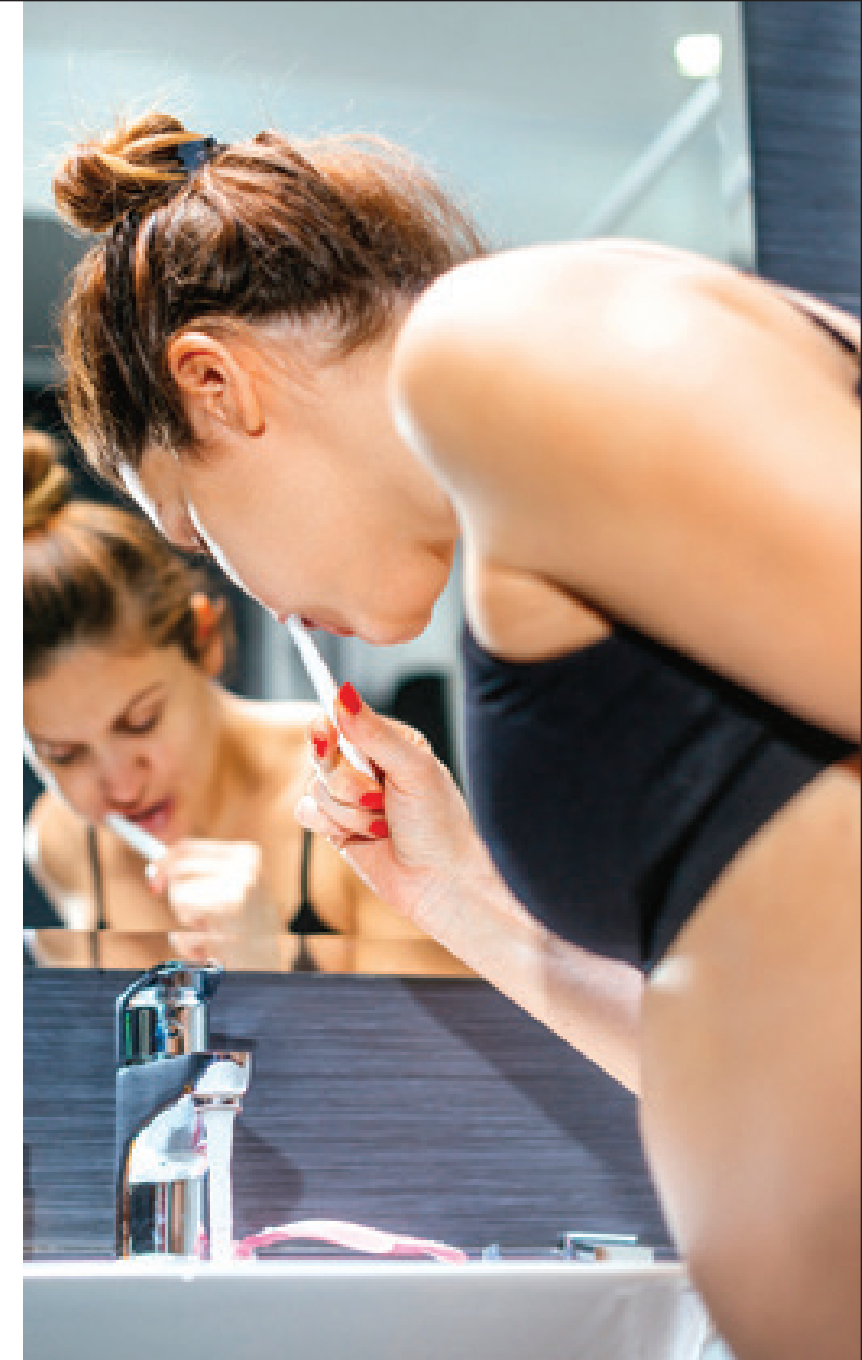
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) offers free classes on breastfeeding and healthy eating. It also gives vouchers or checks to help you get healthy food. WIC is for women with low to middle incomes. Contact California WIC for more information.

Healthy Eating During Pregnancy

It can be easier than you think to eat healthy foods for you and your baby. Try to eat a variety of healthy foods every day. Here are some basic guidelines:

- 2 to 3 servings of protein foods. A protein serving is about 3 ounces—about the size of a deck of cards. This can be cooked lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, tofu, or nuts. Eat fish at least 2 times a week.
- 6 to 8 servings of grains. A serving is a slice of bread, 1 ounce of cereal, or ½ cup of cooked pasta, rice, or cereal. Choose whole grains for at least half of these servings.
- 3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit. Eat some food that has vitamin C every day, like oranges or broccoli.
- 2 cups of low-fat or nonfat dairy. This can be pasteurized milk, yogurt, or cottage cheese.
- Avoid foods that can have harmful bacteria, such as raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, fish, and meat as well as soft cheeses, raw sprouts, and unpasteurized milk.

CalFresh is California's food stamp (SNAP) program. Most families who qualify get \$200 per month to buy food.



Taking care of your teeth and gums helps you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Staying Healthy During Pregnancy



Prenatal Vitamins

Prenatal vitamins have folic acid, calcium, iron, and other vitamins and minerals you need for a healthy pregnancy. You should get at least 400 micrograms (0.4 mg) a day of folic acid before and during pregnancy. This can reduce your risk of having a baby with brain or spinal problems.

Healthy Pregnancy Weight

It's important to gain a healthy amount of weight during pregnancy. Too much weight gain increases high blood pressure, diabetes, early births, and cesarean deliveries. It is hard to lose the extra weight after the birth, and your baby is more likely to be overweight. Gaining too little weight can also affect your baby's health and birth weight.

If you had a healthy weight before becoming pregnant, you should gain between 25 and 35 pounds. Overweight women should gain less, and underweight women should gain more. Talk to your doctor about how much weight to gain.



Where to Find Help

CalFresh
California's SNAP/food stamps program
1-877-847-3663 www.cdss.ca.gov

California WIC
Food coupons and free classes on breastfeeding and healthy eating
1-800-852-5770 m.wic.ca.gov

Choose My Plate
Customized information on healthy eating and pregnancy weight gain
www.choosemyplate.gov/moms-pregnancy-breastfeeding

Covered California
Help with buying private health insurance or enrolling in Medi-Cal
1-800-300-1506 www.coveredca.com



Things You Can Do

Self-Care in Your First Trimester (Weeks 1 to 13)

Your baby's heart, lungs, arms, and legs are developing.

- It is common to feel very tired, so rest when you can.
- If you have morning sickness, eat something before you get up. Drink broth, herb tea, or water with lemon. Eat small meals throughout the day.
- If you vomit from morning sickness, rinse your mouth with fluoride mouthwash. Vomit softens the outer layer of your teeth. Wait 30 minutes before you brush, to avoid damaging your teeth.
- If you bleed or spot from your vagina or have strong cramps, call your doctor right away.

Self-Care in Your Second Trimester (Weeks 14 to 26)

Your baby's senses are developing, and she sleeps and wakes. You will start to feel your baby move. You will have more energy now, and you will enjoy being active.

- Wear flat shoes with good support. Try not to lift anything heavy.
- For comfort, sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees.

Self-Care in Your Third Trimester (Weeks 27 to Birth)

Your baby should move every day.

- To increase blood flow to your baby, lie on your left side.
- If you have varicose veins, keep your legs up as much as you can and wear support hose.
- Call your doctor if you suddenly gain a lot of weight or have swelling or strong headaches.
- Call your doctor right away if you are less than 37 weeks pregnant and have any of these signs of early labor:
 - Your uterus tightens.
 - You feel pressure in your pelvis.
 - You bleed or leak fluid from your vagina.



Try to eat a variety of healthy foods every day.

Birth

Childbirth can be wonderful, and also difficult and tiring. Each labor is different, and every woman copes in her own way. It helps if someone you trust can be with you.



Get Ready for Birth

- Learn about positions for labor and birth, and ways to manage pain. A childbirth class can help.
- Natural childbirth can help you and your baby be more alert and start breastfeeding. But find out about pain medicines, just in case you need them.
- Plan to have a partner, relative, or friend stay with you during labor and birth.

About C-Sections

Some women need to deliver by C-section (cesarean section). If you are told that you will need a C-section, ask your doctor to tell you why. You may want to get a second opinion. If you have had a C-section before, you may still be able to have a vaginal birth.

Right After Delivery

- Holding your baby skin-to-skin right after birth helps you both feel safe and calm. It also helps your baby start breastfeeding.
- Ask to breastfeed your baby within an hour after birth.
- It is best if your baby can sleep in the same room with you at the hospital.
- If your baby is in intensive care, be with him as much as you can. Ask if you can breastfeed or pump your milk to feed him.
- Begin talking, reading, and singing to your baby from his very first hours.

Newborn Healthcare

- Newborns should get their first hepatitis B shot in the hospital. See the “About Vaccines” chapter or visit www.healthychildren.org.
- All babies in California are tested at birth for hearing problems and certain medical conditions. If your baby has a problem, your doctor will help you find treatment.
- If your baby is born with a disability or health problem, get help early. See the chapter “Your Baby from 6 to 12 Months.”



Where to Find Help

- Healthy Children**
Information on children’s health, safety, and shots
www.healthychildren.org
- KidsHealth**
Information on pregnancy and childbirth
www.kidshealth.org
- Newborn Screening Program**
Information on newborn health tests
cdph.ca.gov/nbs



Ask to have your baby sleep in the same room with you in the hospital.



Things You Can Do

Decide Where to Give Birth

- Most babies are born in a hospital. Try to visit the labor and delivery rooms. Ask if there’s a birthing center.
- If you are in labor, you can go to any hospital emergency room. You cannot be turned away, even if you do not have insurance.
- If you want to have your baby at home, find out if your health insurance will pay for a home birth. Then talk to a midwife or doctor.

Get Ready to Feed Your Baby

- Ask your doctor or hospital about help starting to breastfeed. Many hospitals have breastfeeding consultants.
- Ask if your baby will need extra vitamin D while you are breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding is best for most babies and mothers. But it isn’t always possible. Your doctor can advise you if you should use formula.

Get Ready to Go Home

California law says you must have a car seat to take your baby home from the hospital. See the “Car Safety” chapter.

At Home with Your Newborn

Your newborn has finally arrived, and you are at home with him. This can be both exciting and scary. You are the center of your baby’s world. He depends on you for everything.

Take as much time as possible to be with your baby. Talk, cuddle, and play with him from his very first hours. You help his brain grow when you talk, read, and sing to him.



Growing close with your baby is more important than doing chores.

A Baby and Your Relationship

When you have a baby, your relationship as a couple changes. You have less time for each other. Both of you may be tired and cranky. Be patient with each other as you learn to be parents. It takes time to get used to a new routine. Soon you will adjust and feel more confident. And remember to show your love and affection for each other.

Both Parents Have Important Roles

Babies need to have a close relationship with both parents. If you are not the mother, you can be involved by holding your baby and taking care of him. You are part of a parenting team. Here are some ways you can be involved:

- Apply for family leave. Both parents can take time off work to care for a new baby.
- Share baby-care tasks. Research shows that when both parents care for their children, the children do better in school.
- If mothers have their partners’ support for breastfeeding, they are more likely to stay with it. Do what you can to give emotional and practical support, especially in the first few weeks.

Postpartum Depression

It’s normal for mothers to feel sad, afraid, or anxious shortly after giving birth. Postpartum depression is when these feelings last more than a few weeks. Postpartum depression can start any time in the first year after the birth. To learn more, see the “Emotional Health” chapter.



Get Help at Home

You may be able to have home visits from a person trained to give practical advice and help to new parents. For example, you can get help with feeding, or with making your home safe and supportive for your baby. Contact your county’s First 5 commission or your baby’s doctor to learn more.



Where to Find Help

- | |
|---|
| Family PACT
Referrals to state-funded clinics for family planning services
1-800-942-1054 www.familypact.org |
| First 5 California
Find your local First 5 Commission for referrals to family services
www.ccfc.ca.gov/family/family.html |
| Postpartum Support International
24-hour support for new mothers with depression
1-800-944-4773 www.postpartum.net |
| Zero to Three
Information on early childhood
1-800-899-4301 www.zerotothree.org |



Things You Can Do

Talk About How to Care for Your Baby

- Children do best when parents agree on how to raise them.
- Agree on routines for your baby.
 - Talk about how to handle crying and other issues.
 - If you argue, try to stick to the main problem. Listen carefully and try not to blame each other.

Share Responsibilities

- Share tasks and talk about who does what.
- Give each other little breaks—like time for a bath or a book.
- Share housework, but try not to be too fussy. Spending time with your baby is more important than having a perfect house.

If You Have Other Children

- Try to spend some time alone with each child, so each one feels loved.
- Try to keep routines like meals and bedtime.
- Try not to change child care or start toilet learning for an older child right after your baby is born. Do it while you are pregnant. Or wait a few months after the birth.

Sex After the Birth

- Talk to your doctor about when you can start having sex. A new mother’s body needs time to heal. Many new parents are tired and stressed, so they are not in a hurry to start having sex again. Tell your partner how you feel and what you need.
- You can get pregnant again soon after giving birth. Breastfeeding does not prevent pregnancy. Ask your doctor which kinds of birth control can be used safely while you breastfeed. Contact Family PACT for information.

Giving Your Baby the Best Start

Your baby's brain grows faster in the first year than at any other time. What your baby sees, hears, and

feels during this period will affect what she learns and how she feels about the world. As a parent, you can encourage your baby's development.



Try to take parental leave. It is a great time to talk, sing, and read with your baby.

The First 3 Months

New studies show that the first 3 months are a very important time to create a bond with your baby. Picking her up and caring for her needs makes her feel secure. Smiling at your baby and answering when she babbles encourage her to interact with you and other people.

Talk, Read, Sing

Most brain development happens in the first 3 years. Talk, read, and sing to your baby from her first hours. This helps you grow close and helps her brain develop. It also starts to build the skills that children need to do well in school and in life.

Stress and Your Child

A child's emotional and physical health can be harmed by ongoing problems like abuse, an addicted parent, or homelessness. The harm can last for many years.

Here are some ways to help reduce the harmful effects of ongoing serious stress:

- To help your baby feel more secure, hold her, look at her face, and talk and smile at her.
- Reduce or get rid of the causes of family stress if you can. Use this guide to look for resources that can help.
- You may be able to get home visits from someone trained to help you with parenting challenges. This is usually a nurse or other trained professional. Ask your doctor or your baby's doctor if your county offers home visits.



Things You Can Do

Build Your Baby's Brain with Play

Here are some ideas for playing with your baby.

- When you feed your baby, use words to describe what the food is called, and what it tastes, feels, and looks like. "The sweet potato is orange and soft!"
- Point to the pictures, letters, and numbers in books. Ask questions as you go through the book together. "What's the bear doing?"
- Sing during everyday activities like bath time or getting dressed. You can make up simple songs to describe the activity you are doing. "We're going for a ride ... we're going to the store."

Healthy Habits that Help with Stress

Serious stressful events do happen in most people's lives. You can give your children skills and abilities that will help them bounce back from problems when they happen.

- **Make a daily routine.** Having naps, meals, a story, and bedtime at the same time every day helps children feel secure.
- **Build strong relationships.** Friends and a close, loving family can give you and your baby support when times are tough.



Looking at your baby's face makes her feel more secure. She will learn to look at your face too.



Where to Find Help

First 5 California

Ideas and help for boosting your baby's brain power
www.first5california.com

Healthy Families America

Home visits for new parents
www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/site-finder

National Parent Helpline

Support for parents and caregivers
1-855-427-2736
www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support/state-resources/california-resources

Nurse-Family Partnership

Home visits for new parents
1-844-637-6667 www.nursefamilypartnership.org

Talking Is Teaching

Information, videos, and tips for talking, reading, and singing with your child
talkingisteaching.org

Zero to Three

Information on early development, including brain development
www.zerotothree.org/early-development

Parenting with Extra Challenges

All parents have challenges. But some parents have more because of their life situations. These include single and teen parents, as well as parents with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, and parents who

adopt. Many parents succeed even with these challenges. You can do it too. The key is to get the help and support you need.



Help for Parents with Disabilities

- There are techniques, baby clothes, and equipment that can make baby care easier. For tips and information, contact Through the Looking Glass.
- If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or cannot use most phones, you can get a free phone or adaptive device that works for you. Contact the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program.
- For legal advice and referrals to other types of assistance, contact Disability Rights California or the independent living center in your county.

If Your Baby Has a Special Need

Some babies have health problems that will need ongoing care. For example, babies can be born prematurely, or with a condition such as Down syndrome. If your baby has a special need, learn as much as you can from your baby’s doctor. Also contact your local Early Start Family Resource Center for information and support.

Resources for Grandparents

If you are raising your grandchildren, you can get support and financial assistance. To learn more, contact the California Kinship Navigator Program.

Teen Parents

Ask your school about teen parent programs that will help you finish high school and learn parenting skills. You can also get your GED or high school diploma at your community college.

Some counties have programs that help teen parents identify goals and work toward them. Ask your doctor or the local public health department if your county has an adolescent family life program.

You may be able to get home visits from someone trained to help you with parenting challenges. Ask your doctor or your child’s doctor about the California Home Visiting Program.

If You Have a New Foster or Adopted Child

- Even if you have been waiting a long time for your child, you will still need time to adjust when she arrives. Spend as much time together as you can, so you can get to know each other.
- You may not know a lot about your child’s health or family history. Talk with your child’s doctor about tests and vaccines she needs.
- If your child was neglected or abused before joining your family, it will take time for her to heal. Provide loving support, and look for services to help her. Your placement agency should be able to help with this.
- It is normal for older children to miss their previous caregiver when they join a new family. Let your child express these feelings and comfort her.



Things You Can Do

For Single Parents

- If you are stressed, ask for help. Call a friend or relative for support.
- Routines, like regular meals and bedtimes, can help you manage a busy schedule. And they help your children feel more secure.
- If you are new to parenting, take a parenting class.
- Join or start a play group where you can visit with other parents while your children play.
- Join a support group for single parents. There are lots of groups for single parents listed in the “Parents & Family” section of www.meetup.com/topics.



Where to Find Help

California Independent Living Centers
Community-based help for people with disabilities
1-916-558-5775 www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/ils

California Kinship Navigator Program
Help for people who care for the child of a relative, like grandparents raising grandchildren
1-800-546-0047 www.cakinship.org

Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)
Free relay services and phone equipment for deaf and disabled Californians
1-800-806-1191 ddtp.cpuc.ca.gov

Disability Rights California
Help with legal issues and getting services for people with disabilities
1-800-776-5746 www.disabilityrightsca.org

Early Start Family Resource Centers
Support for families of children with disabilities
1-916-993-7781 www.frcnca.org

National Council for Adoption
Information and support for adoptive families
1-703-299-6633 www.adoptioncouncil.org

Through the Looking Glass
Information for parents with disabilities
1-800-644-2666 www.lookingglass.org

For Teen Moms

- If you are living with your family, try to talk openly about feelings and your changing role as a parent.
- Try to get some exercise every day.
- Try to take a break every day. Ask someone you trust to care for your baby.
- If you are feeling alone or overwhelmed, you can get help. See the “Emotional Health” chapter.

Your Baby's First 6 Months

Your baby depends on you for everything. He needs you to feed and change him, cuddle and kiss him, play with him, and comfort him. When you respond quickly to his needs, he will cry less. He feels safe and learns to trust.

Your Baby Is Developing

From birth to 3 months, your baby will begin to:

- Grow quiet when he hears familiar voices and sounds.
- React to loud noises.
- Make soft sounds.
- Start to smile.

From 3 to 6 months, he will:

- Hold up his head.
- Turn toward sounds.
- Begin to make sounds like “ga,” “ooh,” and “ba.”
- React to a change in your tone of voice.

Tune in to Your Baby's Moods

When your baby is awake and alert, he is ready to play. When he looks away, he needs to rest. When he is fussy, he wants comfort. As you get to know your baby, you will learn what he needs.

Between 1 and 3 months, your baby will start to communicate with you, without words. He will find out that when he smiles, you will smile back. He will gurgle or coo so that you will make noises back. These “conversations” help him grow close to you. They are part of his brain growth.

Your baby's brain is growing faster now than at any other time. Your loving care helps him develop. Talk, read, and sing to him as much as you can.



Your baby will look at you and make sounds and faces. When he looks away, he needs a rest.

Comfort Your Baby When He Cries

When your baby cries, pick him up right away. See if he is wet, hungry, or in pain. Take him into a dark, quiet room. Try different ways to comfort him until you find something that works. Here are some ideas:

- Wrap him snugly in a blanket.
- Walk with him in a carrier on your chest.
- Hold him close to your chest with skin-to-skin contact.
- Gently rock him up and down or in a rocking chair.
- Hum, sing, or speak softly.
- Lay him on his tummy across your knees and gently rub his back.

If Your Baby Can't Stop Crying

Colic is when a baby cries hard without stopping, even though he does not need to be fed or changed, and he is not in pain. Colic can happen between 3 weeks and 3 months of age. Most babies with colic are healthy. Ask your doctor to be sure.

To help prevent colic, try not to tire your baby, especially in the late afternoon and evening. Sometimes nothing helps. This does not mean you are a bad parent. You just have to be patient.

Never Shake a Baby

Never hit or shake your baby—this can cause blindness, brain damage, or even death. If you start to lose your temper, put your baby in his crib, walk into the next room, and count to 10. If you cannot calm down, get help. Ask a friend or relative to give you a break. Or call the National Parent Helpline.



Where to Find Help

Childhelp

Advice about caring for children and preventing child abuse

1-800-422-4453

www.childhelp.org

Healthy Children

The American Academy of Pediatrics website on children's health, safety, and well-being

www.healthychildren.org

National Parent Helpline

Emotional support and problem-solving help for parents

1-855-427-2736

www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support/state-resources/california-resources



Things You Can Do

Give Your Baby Loving Care

- Hug, cuddle, and kiss your baby.
- Chat or sing to him.
- Talk to him in a soothing voice.
- Make routines for feeding, changing, napping, and bathing. Routines help babies feel safe and secure.
- Respond to your baby's cries right away. This will not spoil him.

Avoid Secondhand Smoke

Your baby's lungs are still developing. Ask people not to smoke or vape around your baby, or in your house or car. Breathing smoke can make him more likely to get ear infections, asthma, or sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Protect Your Baby

- All babies need regular checkups and vaccines.
- Put your baby to sleep on his back. See the “Baby Sleep Safety” chapter.
- Protect him from the sun. See the “Children's Health” chapter.
- In your baby's first month, try to avoid crowded places. Ask people to wash their hands before they hold him.

Help Your Baby Get to Sleep

Newborns may wake up several times at night. They take longer to go into a sound sleep than older babies. To help your baby sleep, put him in his crib when you see signs that he is sleepy, such as yawning or fussing.

Feeding Your Baby

Breastmilk is the best food for babies. It helps them grow and protects them from colds, infections, allergies, asthma, obesity, and diabetes. It is best for moms, too. It helps your body recover from birth.

It lowers your risk of breast cancer. And it helps you form a close bond with your newborn. With patience and practice, almost every mother can breastfeed.

Tips for Breastfeeding

- Make sure your baby’s head, shoulders, and hips are all facing you.
- Your baby’s mouth should cover the areola, the dark area around the nipple.
- Feed on one breast until it is empty—about 10 to 20 minutes. Then burp your baby and switch breasts.
- If your breasts are swollen and tender, or they leak, try to breastfeed more often.
- If you still have sore nipples after the first few weeks, your baby may not be latching on right. Talk to your doctor or a breastfeeding expert.

Breastfeeding Positions

Laid Back

Lie back with good back support. Your baby faces you, tummy-to-tummy, and her mouth is on top of your breast. This is a good position for babies learning to breastfeed.



Cradle Hold

Hold your baby across your stomach, with her head in the bend of your elbow. You and your baby are tummy to tummy. You can also support your baby with your other arm.



Side Hold

Place your baby on a pillow at your side and use one hand to bring her head to your breast. This position is good for small babies or mothers who have had a C-section.



How Often Should I Feed My Newborn?

Feed her when she is hungry, not on a schedule. Watch for signals that she is hungry. She may suck her hand or try to breastfeed. She may start to cry. Most newborns need to be fed every 1 to 3 hours during the day and at night.

Is My Baby Getting Enough Milk?

Keep track of your baby’s diapers. If your baby wets 4 to 6 disposable or 6 to 8 cloth diapers and has 3 to 4 poopy diapers in 24 hours, that usually means she is getting enough breastmilk.

If You Bottle-Feed

If you need to bottle-feed your baby, do not feed anything except formula or breastmilk in her bottle. Follow the instructions on the package carefully when you mix and warm up formula. Formula spoils quickly. Don’t mix more than your baby will drink at one time. Throw away any formula left in the bottle. Newborns usually drink 1.5 to 3 ounces per feeding. As she grows, this amount will slowly increase.

Where to Find Help

Breastfeeding Helpline
Telephone support from La Leche League
1-877-452-5324

California WIC
Breastfeeding help, healthy eating advice, and vouchers for food and formula
1-800-852-5770 m.wic.ca.gov

First 5 California
Ideas and help for boosting your baby’s brain power
www.first5california.com

Healthychildren.org
Breastfeeding information from the American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org/breastfeeding



Things You Can Do

Prepare for Breastfeeding

- Many hospitals have breastfeeding experts who can help you get started.
- Have your baby lie skin-to-skin on your chest after the birth.
- Try breastfeeding within an hour after birth.
- Your first milk, called colostrum, is extra rich.
- Avoid offering a bottle or pacifier. This makes it harder for a baby to learn to breastfeed.

While You Are Breastfeeding

- Do not smoke or vape while you are breastfeeding. Your baby will get nicotine and other harmful substances from your breastmilk.
- Alcohol passes into breastmilk. If you have an occasional alcoholic drink, wait 2 to 3 hours before breastfeeding.
- If you take any medicine, ask your doctor if it is safe to take while you are breastfeeding.
- If you think something you eat is upsetting your baby, try not to eat it for a while. If the problem does not go away, talk to your doctor.

Breastfeeding Tips for Working Moms

- Breastfeed through your maternity leave. Then breastfeed before and after work.
- You can use a breast pump or express your milk by hand. Your workplace should have a private room that you can use.
- You can refrigerate breastmilk for up to 72 hours.
- You can freeze breastmilk for 3 to 6 months. Thaw it in the refrigerator.
- Breast pumps are covered by insurance.

If You Need Help to Breastfeed or Get Formula

For advice and classes on breastfeeding, call La Leche League or WIC. You can get WIC vouchers (“checks”) for formula.

Baby Sleep Safety

Giving your baby a safe place to sleep is important. Safe sleep practices lower the risk of injury, breathing problems, and possible death.

Sleep Safety ABC's

Have your baby sleep in a crib or bassinet next to your bed. Do not put him in your bed. He could roll out, or you could roll on top of him. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies sleep:

- **Alone**, in a crib or bassinet, in your room.
- On their **Backs**.
- In safe **Cribs**.

Make Sure Your Baby's Crib Is Safe

- Use a new crib that meets current safety standards. If you are using an old crib, make sure it was made after 2011. That is when crib safety standards were strengthened.
- Do not use a crib with a drop rail or decorative cutouts on the headboard or footboard.
- A crib's bars are too far apart if a soda can will fit between them. Your baby could get his head, hand, or foot stuck in the space.
- Use a firm, tight-fitting mattress with a fitted crib sheet. There should be no space between the mattress and the crib sides.
- Do not put loose blankets, comforters, pillows, bumper pads, or stuffed animals in the crib.
- Keep cords from curtains, blinds, bedding, and toys away from the crib. Your baby could get caught in a cord and strangle.



Babies should sleep on their backs, in a crib with only a tight-fitting sheet. Keep your baby warm with clothing like a onesie.

When You Travel

When you are away from home, use a portable crib or bassinet. Chairs and sofas are too soft for sleeping. Your baby could roll off, or he could suffocate in the cushions.

Put Your Baby to Sleep on His Back

For the first 12 months, always put your baby to sleep on his back, not on his side or stomach. When babies sleep on their backs, they are less likely to die of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). SIDS can happen when a baby cannot breathe easily. If your baby falls asleep in an baby carrier, car seat, or sling, move him to a crib with a firm mattress as soon as possible.



Since your baby will sleep on his back, he needs some tummy time every day. Give him tummy time when he is awake and you are watching him. A few short sessions of tummy playtime a day help make his neck, back, and shoulders strong.



Things You Can Do

More Sleep Safety Tips

- Your baby should not sleep in your bed. Put him in a crib or bassinet in your bedroom, so he is near you.
- Use a sleep sack or fitted onesie to keep your baby warm while sleeping. Swaddling with a blanket has some risks.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke or vape around your baby or in your home. It increases the risk of SIDS.

Pacifier Safety

- A pacifier at nap or bedtime may help prevent SIDS.
- Try not to use a pacifier until breastfeeding has become a habit. This is usually at 2 to 3 weeks old.
- Buy a one-piece, dishwasher-safe pacifier. The hard plastic shield should be at least 1½ inches across.
- Never tie a pacifier to your baby's body, clothes, or crib. He can get tangled in the string.
- Replace pacifiers when the rubber nipple gets torn or discolored.
- Use the pacifier size recommended for your child's age.



Where to Find Help

Healthy Children

Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on children's health and safety
www.healthychildren.org

Safe Kids California

Information on home safety
www.safekidscalifornia.org/home-safety/infant-safe-sleep

Car Safety

Whenever your child is in a car, she must be in a car seat. This is to protect her in a sudden stop or crash. You need a car seat to bring your newborn home from the hospital.

It's important to install your car seat correctly, and to buckle your child in the right way. As your child gets older, she will outgrow her first car seat and need a different type.

Choosing a Car Seat

- Keep your child in a **rear-facing seat** until she is 2 years old, or weighs over 40 pounds, or is over 40 inches tall.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should ride in a **forward-facing car seat**. Some seats convert from rear-facing to forward-facing, so you can use them longer.
- When your child is bigger than the maximum height and weight for a forward-facing car seat, she should get a **booster car seat**. This positions her so that the seat belt works correctly. Children should ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or are 4 feet, 9 inches tall.

Beware of Used Car Seats

You don't have to buy the most expensive model, but buy a new car seat. A new car seat will have the newest safety features. A used car seat may have been in a crash or have worn or damaged parts. Don't use a car seat after its expiration date.

If You Need a Car Seat

Many hospitals and counties have programs to help people get a car seat. If you need help paying for a car seat, ask your prenatal doctor or hospital.

Install It Right

Car seats must be installed securely to protect your child. It's not easy to install a car seat correctly, but you can get help. Tips and videos on installation are available at www.safercar.gov. You can also search for an inspection station near you. Many fire departments are car seat inspection stations.



Many fire departments can check whether your car seat is installed correctly.

Photo courtesy of the Hoover, Alabama, Fire Department.

Never Leave Your Child Alone In a Car

Even if you're just stepping out for a minute, and even if your child is asleep, never leave her by herself in the car. Here are the reasons why.

- A parked car quickly heats up to dangerous temperatures.
- Power windows can injure or strangle a small child.
- Your child can accidentally put the car in motion.
- The car can be stolen with your child in it, or your child can be taken from the car.

Here are two ways to remember that your young child is in the car.

- Leave something you need, like your purse or cell phone, on the back seat.
- Ask your child care provider to call you if your child does not arrive at daycare when she should.



Things You Can Do

- All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat, and children under 8 should be in the right size car seat. Air bags can cause serious injuries or death.
- All the adults in a car should wear seat belts. This is the law, and it sets a good example for children.
- Make sure your family arrives at your destination safely. Avoid distractions, including texting.



Car seats for babies and small children should face backward.



Where to Find Help

Child Safety Seats

Information from the highway patrol on how to secure your child in a car seat; includes child safety videos

1-800-835-5247

www.chp.ca.gov; click Programs & Services, then Child Safety Seats

Kids and Cars

Information about keeping children safe around vehicles

1-913-732-2792

www.kidsandcars.org

Safe Kids California

Information on child safety

www.safekidscalifornia.org

Seat Check

Where to get your car seat checked, and information on choosing and using a car seat

1-866-732-8243

www.seatcheck.org

Vehicle Safety Hotline

Information on car and highway safety from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

1-888-327-4236

www.nhtsa.gov

Your Baby from 6 to 12 Months

How can you help your baby learn? More than anything, your consistent, loving care will help him feel secure. A secure baby is ready to learn. Babies learn by exploring with their mouths, eyes, ears, and hands. Your baby needs things to touch, grab, push, throw, and safely put in his

Your Baby's Personality

Find ways to support your baby's personality. Give an active baby lots of time for play. Give a shy baby time to get used to new places and people. And give all babies lots of attention. You cannot spoil a child under 1 year of age.

Playing Is the Way to Teach

Your baby's brain develops faster in his first year than at any other time. He learns by seeing, touching, hearing, tasting, smelling, and moving. He learns through stories, songs, rhymes, and games, like peekaboo and patty-cake. Encourage him to interact with you by answering when he babbles. When he looks away or fusses, it is time to stop playing.

Story Time

Babies love the sounds of words and the sound of your voice. They love books with simple stories and pictures of things they know. They like to wave their arms and bat the pages. As they get older, they join in and help tell the story. The *Kit for New Parents* includes a book for babies. To get more books for your baby, visit your local library.

mouth. He needs you to play with him as much as you can. Your baby learns more from playing and being with you than from anything else.



Playing games with your baby is a good way to help him learn and grow.

Your Baby Learns His First Words

Between 6 and 12 months, your baby understands and says simple words.

Between 6 and 9 months, he will:

- Respond to his name and look when you call him.
- Understand simple words like "no," "bye-bye," and "bottle."
- Babble words like "da da da" and "ma ma ma."

Between 9 and 12 months, he will:

- Repeat single words and copy animal sounds.
- Point to toys or foods when asked.
- Respond to both soft and loud sounds.



Get Help Early

If you have any worries about how your baby is growing, trust your feelings. Talk to your baby's doctor as soon as you notice possible problems.

If your baby has a problem, there are programs to help. Getting help early can make a big difference in your baby's future.



Where to Find Help

California Early Start

Services for babies and toddlers at risk of disability or who have a disability
1-800-515-2229 www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

Centers for Disease Control

Information for parents on developmental milestones by age
www.cdc.gov/parents/infants/milestones.html

Pathways

Information on early childhood development
1-800-955-2445 www.pathways.org

Zero to Three

Information on early childhood
1-800-899-4301 www.zerotothree.org



Things You Can Do

Help Your Baby Learn

- Set aside time when you can sit on the floor and do what your baby wants to do.
- Make a calm, safe place to play so your baby can explore freely.
- Copy your baby and let him copy you.
- Talk, read, sing, and play with him. Children who know a lot of words by age 3 do better in school.
- Let him discover things on his own. Try not to stop him as long as he is safe.
- When he does something you do not like, gently move him or remove the object from his path. This is all the discipline he needs right now.

Help Your Baby Sleep Easily

Most babies can go back to sleep by themselves by 6 months old. To help:

- Make sure he eats enough during the day and before bedtime.
- Put your baby to bed when he is drowsy but before he is overtired.
- Have a bedtime ritual such as a bath, brushing teeth, a book, and a kiss before you turn the lights off.
- If he wakes at night, check on him and help him go back to sleep by himself.

When Your Baby Gets His First Teeth

The first teeth usually start coming in around 6 months of age.

Brush your baby's teeth twice a day with a smear of fluoride toothpaste. Take him for his first visit with a dentist by his first birthday.

Starting Solid Food

Breastmilk or formula is your baby’s only food until she is about 6 months old. After that, it is still her main food, but you can start to give her soft cereal or mashed food too.



Feed your baby with small spoonfuls of mashed food to prevent choking.

Your Baby Shows She Is Ready

You can try solid food when your baby is 6 months old and:

- Can hold her head steady by herself.
- Can sit up with support.
- Can close her mouth around a spoon.
- Can swallow food, not spit it out.
- Shows she doesn’t want food by turning her head.

When your baby is hungry and you feed her quickly and lovingly, she feels secure. When she has had enough to eat, she will turn away, fuss, or push the spoon away. When your baby gives these signals, don’t force her to eat more.

Your Baby’s First Solid Food (6 to 8 months)

When your baby is ready, start with small spoonfuls of baby cereal or pureed vegetables, fruit, or meat. You can mix cereal with water, breastmilk, or formula. Your baby still needs breastmilk or formula several times a day.

About Allergies

Try one new food at a time. Try it for a few days, and watch for allergic reactions. Some common allergic reactions are skin rashes, gas, diarrhea, or trouble breathing. If one of these happens, stop feeding the new food, and talk with your baby’s doctor.

Finger Foods, Cups, and Spoons (9 to 12 months)

Your baby can begin to eat finely chopped meat, fish, tofu, cheese, cooked vegetables, and fruit. Do not add salt, sugar, or spices. Over time, offer her lots of different kinds of foods.

She still needs breastmilk or formula. But do not give her more than 3 bottles or cups (24 ounces) a day. More can take away her appetite for solid food.

Be patient as your baby learns to feed herself. Have her at the table with the family, and understand that she will be messy.

Weaning

Switching your baby from breastmilk or formula to other foods is known as “weaning.” Here is how to do it:

From breastfeeding: Try to breastfeed for at least a year. There are benefits to breastfeeding longer, up to 2 years and more. When you wean your baby, go slowly. Drop midday feedings first. Then drop morning feedings. Drop evening feedings last.

From the bottle: Start weaning at 12 to 18 months. To help her be ready, start to give her formula, breastmilk, or water from a sippy cup at 6 to 9 months.



Things You Can Do

Feeding Your Baby Safely

- Always wash your hands before filling a bottle or giving your baby food.
- Wash your baby’s hands before she eats.
- Be sure to test how hot the food or liquid is before you give it to your baby. Do not heat formula or food in the microwave.
- Wash fruits and vegetables.
- Do not put cereal in a baby bottle.
- Do not give your baby honey before she is 1 year old. It can poison her.
- Do not use cow’s or goat’s milk instead of breastmilk or formula. They do not have the nutrition your baby needs.

To Prevent Choking

- Watch her the whole time that she is eating. If she chokes, she cannot make noise to let you know.
- Cut food into small pieces. Remove bones, seeds, and pits.
- Avoid tough foods like large dried fruit or pieces of meat.
- Avoid hard foods like raw carrots, nuts, and popcorn.
- Take a first aid class so you know what to do if your child is choking.



Where to Find Help

CalFresh
California’s SNAP/food stamps program; food aid for people with low incomes
1-877-847-3663 www.cdss.ca.gov

California 2-1-1
Information and referral to services, including food assistance
2-1-1 www.211ca.org

California WIC
Advice and classes on breastfeeding and healthy eating; food coupons for women with low incomes
1-800-852-5770 m.wic.ca.gov

La Leche League
Information on breastfeeding and weaning
1-800-525-3243 www.llli.org/get-help

To Help with Diaper Rash

Diaper rash is common between 8 and 10 months, when your baby starts to eat more solid food.

- Change her diaper often to keep her as dry as possible.
- Clean her bottom with warm water and a soft cloth, and pat it dry.
- Leave her diaper off for short periods to let her skin dry.
- To protect her skin, apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or zinc oxide.
- If she has blisters or open sores, or if the rash doesn’t clear up in 2 or 3 days, call the doctor.

Avoid Juices

Don’t give your child any juice before she is a year old. After she is a year old, give her no more than ¼ cup a day. Juice drinks have added sugar, so they are not a healthy drink.

Baby Safety

Babies are naturally curious. Between 6 and 12 months they start to get into everything. Anything they find may go in their mouth. They can also pull chairs over, fall down stairs, and



If your baby does something dangerous, gently move him or give him something else to do. Babies don't need any other correction.

Always Watch Your Baby

Babies and toddlers can choke, fall, or drown very quickly. Injuries are more likely to happen when you are tired or busy.

open cabinets and drawers. They can get into danger in a few seconds. Most injuries can be prevented if you watch your baby carefully and childproof your home. Look at every room from your baby's point of view. Make sure it is safe for your baby to explore and learn.

Make Your Home Safe for Your Baby

When your baby starts to crawl, it is time to childproof your house.

- Your baby can choke on anything small enough to fit through a toilet paper roll. Keep jewelry, coins, plastic bags, and other small objects out of reach.
- Keep all medicines out of reach and in childproof containers.
- Put covers on electric outlets.
- Tape electric cords to the floor or wall.
- Make sure heaters and vents cannot burn your baby.
- Tie up cords from window shades and curtains.
- Put safety latches on low cabinets and drawers.
- Keep the bathroom door closed.
- Put gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Put gates or railings on windows and protective rails on balconies.
- Fasten dressers, bookcases, and TVs to walls.



Always stay with your baby while you give him a bath.

Take Special Care in the Bathroom And Kitchen

- Put a childproof knob on the bathroom door.
- Always stay with your baby when you give him a bath. A baby can drown in a few inches of water.
- When you are cooking, do not hold your baby or let him play near the stove.

About Lead Poisoning

Houses built before 1978 can have lead paint. Eating or breathing lead chips or dust can cause brain damage. Make sure that old paint is painted over and does not chip. Clay pots and dishware from other countries may contain lead.

E-Cigarette Liquid Can Be Deadly

The liquid used to refill e-cigarettes contains nicotine, which is very poisonous. A small amount is enough to seriously harm a child. It is harmful whether it gets in the mouth or on the skin. Make sure to keep e-cigarette liquid (or "vape juice") out of your child's reach. If your child gets e-cigarette liquid into his mouth or on his skin, call the Poison Control Hotline at 800-222-1222 right away.



Things You Can Do

In Case of Poisoning

- Call Poison Control at 800-222-1222 right away.
- If your baby is having trouble breathing, is shaking uncontrollably (having a seizure), or is unconscious, call 9-1-1.
- If your baby puts medicine or poison in his mouth, try to get it out.
- If poison gets on his skin or in his eyes, rinse it with water.
- Never make your baby vomit unless Poison Control tells you to.

Pool and Water Safety

Drowning is a major cause of death in young children.

- Never leave your child alone near water.
- Make sure pools are fenced on all sides and the gates are locked.
- Keep buckets empty and upside down.



Where to Find Help

Lead Hotline

Help to prevent lead poisoning
1-800-424-5323 www.epa.gov/lead

Poison Control

Emergency help for victims of poisoning
1-800-222-1222 www.calpoison.org

Safe Kids California

How to prevent childhood injuries
www.safekidscalifornia.org

Child Care for Babies

Studies show that babies do best when they have the same caregivers over time. This means your baby needs a close, caring relationship with just 1 or 2 caregivers besides parents. Make sure the caregiver you choose will pay careful, loving attention to your baby. Talk with her often

about how your baby is doing. And remember, you can visit at any time. It is a good idea to drop in now and then when you are not expected.



Checklist for Babies’ Child Care

- ☐ Will your baby have the same caregiver most of the time? Do the babies seem happy?
- ☐ Is there 1 licensed caregiver for every 4 babies?
- ☐ Is the place clean and safe?
- ☐ Does it have books to read to babies?
- ☐ Is the place for changing diapers away from the places for napping and eating?
- ☐ Will the caregiver always put your baby to sleep on her back in a safe crib?
- ☐ Will she hold your baby during feeding?
- ☐ Are you sure the caregiver will never hit or shake your child?
- ☐ Will she hug, rock, cuddle, and talk and sing to her?
- ☐ Is she trained or experienced in baby care? Is the center or caregiver licensed or certified?
- ☐ Is the caregiver trained in first aid and CPR?
- ☐ If your baby will be at the caregiver’s home, is it childproof and smoke-free? Ask if there are guns in the home.

Different Kinds of Child Care

Home child care is when a licensed child care provider looks after other people’s children in her home. Home child care providers can care for 14 children at most. Many home child care providers care for 8 or fewer children. This is different from having a relative or a nanny care for your child.

Child care centers usually have several licensed child care providers. Child care centers can look after larger numbers of children than home child care providers. Often children of different ages are in separate groups.

California Child Care Resource and Referral can help you find qualified child care. TrustLine lists child care providers who have passed a criminal background check.

Being Apart Can Be Hard

Try to spend some time with your baby and the caregiver the first few days your baby is at child care. If you can, start with half-days the first week.

Helping Your Baby Learn

Make sure your caregiver helps your baby learn. She should talk, sing, and play with your baby. She should read picture books and nursery rhymes. And there should be many books and toys that are safe for babies to play with.



Your baby’s caregiver should help her learn.



Things You Can Do

Make Sure Your Caregiver Knows:

- How to safely help your baby stop crying. Ask her to call you if your baby cannot stop crying.
- To put your baby to sleep on her back in a safe crib.
- When to call Emergency Services (9-1-1).
- When to call Poison Control.
- How to prevent choking and what to do if your child chokes.

When Your Baby Is Sick

Keep your baby home from child care when she is sick. If you get paid sick leave at your job, you should be able to use it to care for your sick baby. Or ask a relative or friend to stay with your baby when she is sick.

If You Suspect Bad Treatment

Your baby cannot tell you if she is being mistreated or ignored. If you are concerned about bruises, or your baby seems hungry or dirty, call the Child Protective Services number for your county, or call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline.



Where to Find Help

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Help finding child care
1-800-543-7793
www.rrnetwork.org/find_child_care

CalWorks Child Care
Financial assistance with child care
www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKs-Child-Care

Childhelp
Advice about child care, discipline, and preventing child abuse
1-800-422-4453 www.childhelp.org

TrustLine
Background checks of in-home child care providers
1-800-822-8490 www.trustline.org

Your Toddler from 1 to 2 Years

Starting around age 1, your baby becomes a toddler. He begins to explore his independence. He has strong likes and dislikes. He will often say “No!” and “Mine!” One moment

he may want to get away from you, and the next moment he may cling to you. He needs your gentle guidance to help him learn and feel secure.



Children Learn Languages Easily

No matter what language you speak most comfortably, talk, read, and sing to your toddler all the time. Your child can learn a second language very quickly. Children who learn 2 languages often do better in school.



Ask your child questions and encourage him to answer in words.

Make Your House Safe

Toddlers do not understand why it is bad or dangerous to do something. Try to make your home safe for your child to play freely. Look around each room. Remove things that could hurt him or get broken. That way you will not have to say “no” all the time. Even though you will spend a lot of time teaching your child what not to do, remember to praise his good behavior often.

Toddlers Learn with Active Play

Your toddler learns by moving, climbing, fitting into spaces, and carrying and dumping things. His waking moments are filled with discoveries. He needs safe and interesting places to explore and learn. Pots and pans, boxes, blocks, and plastic buckets and shovels make good toys for toddlers.

Learning Words and Phrases

Between ages 1 and 2, children learn many new words and start to use phrases. Your child will:

- Use 20 or more words.
- Know the names of familiar people.
- Follow simple directions, like “Get the ball.”
- Combine 2 or more words, like “What is that?” or “More milk.”
- Point to people, toys, and body parts when asked.
- Understand simple stories and songs.



Things You Can Do

Spend Time with Your Child

- Sit close to your child and give him your full attention every day. Watching your face as you talk to him helps him learn to talk.
- Play and be active with him. Play finger games. Pour sand from one container to another. Bang on pots or stones. Run and play tag.
- Hug your child often. This helps him feel loved and secure.

Help Your Child Learn to Talk

- Talk, read, and sing to your child whenever you are together.
- Ask questions, like “Where’s the ball?” or “What does the kitty say?” Encourage your child to answer in words.
- Read to him every day. Read his favorite books again and again.
- Use the names for everyday objects like toys, clothes, and animals.
- If your child is not speaking with words at 16 months or phrases at 2 years, talk to your doctor. Your child may have a problem. Or he may need more help to learn language. The California Early Start program can help.



Where to Find Help

California Early Start

Services for babies and toddlers at risk of disability or who have a disability
1-800-515-2229 www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

Centers for Disease Control

Information for parents on developmental milestones and delays
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly

Healthy Children

Information on children’s health and safety from the American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

My Child Without Limits

Information and support for parents of children with disabilities
www.mychildwithoutlimits.org

Have a Bedtime Routine

Most toddlers do not want to go to bed. Try these tips:

- Sometime between 1 and 2 years, toddlers stop needing 2 naps a day. When your child seems ready, gradually drop to 1 naptime a day.
- Watch to see when he gets sleepy. Then make that time his bedtime.
- Have a bedtime routine, such as a bath, brushing teeth, a story, and a kiss. Then leave the room.
- If he cries, comfort him, but try not to turn on the light or pick him up.

Limit Videos, Video Games, and TV

Babies and toddlers who play with smart phones and tablets may start to talk later. Read to your child instead. Doctors advise that children younger than 18 months should not use phones or tablets, or watch TV.

Your Toddler from 2 to 3 Years

Between ages 2 and 3, your toddler is able to do many new things. She runs and jumps and likes to be active. She talks in phrases and has conversations with you. She tests her

limits—and yours. She may break into tears or have tantrums because she cannot do everything for herself. She still needs your guidance to learn self-control. And she needs your help to understand what others need.



Simple, active games like “follow the leader” are good for toddlers.

Your Toddler Talks to You

- Your toddler uses 4- and 5-word sentences.
- She follows 2-step directions, like “Get the ball and put it on the table.”
- At 2 years, other people can understand her speech some of the time. At 3 years, people can understand her most of the time.

Children Develop Differently

Toddlers are learning many new skills. Each child develops and learns at her own pace. Try not to compare your child with other children. If you think there may be a problem or if your child loses skills she once had, talk to your child’s doctor.

Play with Your Toddler

- Toss or roll a soft ball back and forth. Practice kicking a ball.
- Fit plastic bowls into each other.
- Build towers with blocks.
- Draw together.
- Work on simple puzzles together.
- Play simple, active games with your toddler. “Follow the leader” is a good game. Remember to keep games short, and be flexible about the rules.
- “Let’s pretend” games help a child’s imagination. Tea parties or playing “zoo” with stuffed animals are good pretending games.



Your 2-year-old should not spend more than 1 hour a day with a phone, tablet, or TV.



Where to Find Help

California Early Start

Services for babies and toddlers at risk of disability or who have a disability

1-800-515-2229

www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

KidsHealth

Game ideas for toddlers

www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/toddler-games.html

First 5 California

Ideas and help for boosting your toddler’s brain power

www.first5california.com



Things You Can Do

Help Your Toddler Learn

- Make sure your toddler gets to play with other children.
- Make sure your child gets time for active play outdoors.
- Talk, read, sing, and tell stories together. Your child learns best when she is next to you and can see your face.
- Explain in simple words how things work.
- Ask questions that require more than “yes” or “no” answers. This helps your toddler learn to talk.
- Let your toddler work through problems before you offer help. Then give only the help she needs to safely continue on her own.

Read to Your Child

- Go to the library for story time and pick out some books.
- Act out stories, with a voice for each character.
- Make up your own story to go with the pictures.

Take Care of Your Toddler’s Teeth

Brush your toddler’s teeth twice a day. Use a soft child’s toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride. Ask her to spit out the toothpaste. For more information, see the “Oral Health” chapter.

Feeding Toddlers

Toddlers are gaining independence—and eating is part of that. Your child will want to feed himself. He will also want to choose what he eats, and how much. Giving your child limited choices about eating is a good way to prevent overeating

What Foods Does Your Toddler Need?

Your toddler needs a balanced diet. Most days, a toddler should have:

- 6 servings of grains, such as bread, cereal, or pasta. A serving is ¼ to ½ slice of bread; 4 tablespoons of cereal, rice, or pasta; or 1 to 2 crackers.
- 2 to 3 servings of dairy food, such as milk. A serving is ½ cup of milk or a 1-inch cube of cheese. Between ages 1 and 2, your child needs whole milk to help his brain develop. After that, low-fat milk is healthier.
- 2 to 3 servings of fruit. A serving is half a piece of fruit, or ¼ cup. Whole fruit is healthier than juice.
- 2 to 3 servings of cooked vegetables. A serving is 1 tablespoon for each year of age.
- 2 to 4 servings of protein, such as meat, poultry, eggs, tofu, or beans. A serving is 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or tofu; ½ an egg; or 2 tablespoons of beans.

Avoid giving your child foods that are high in sugar, salt, or fat. This includes packaged snacks such as chips and cookies. They lack the nutrition your child needs to be healthy. They can cause tooth decay and can make your child overweight.

later in life. Offer healthy foods for all meals and snacks. Over time, your child will learn to enjoy many new foods and learn good eating habits.



Toddlers should have 2 to 3 servings of fruit a day.

Iron Is Important

Your child needs iron to grow and to have energy to play, learn, and fight off illness. Offer your toddler foods that have a lot of iron. These include:

- Breads made from whole grains or with added vitamins and minerals
- Cereals with added iron
- Broccoli, spinach, and other leafy green vegetables
- Peas, beans, and tofu
- Meat, fish, and poultry

How Much Food Does Your Toddler Need?

Your toddler may seem less interested in food after his first birthday. This is because his growth has slowed down. Give your child at least 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks a day. Serve small amounts. Then let him have more if he is still hungry. Children usually eat what they need, as long as they are offered healthy choices.

Encourage your toddler to eat, but do not force him. Your child may eat a lot one day and less the next. This is normal. If you think your child is eating too much or too little, do not put him on a diet. Talk to your doctor or a counselor at WIC.



Things You Can Do

Understand Picky Eating

It's common for toddlers to refuse to eat, or to eat the same kind of food over and over. This can worry parents, but it's often not serious. Toddlers usually get enough nutrition even when they are going through a picky phase. Here are some ways to handle picky eating.

- Set a good example. Your children will copy what you eat and how you eat.
- You may need to serve a new food many times before your toddler will eat it.
- Offer a new food along with foods that he already likes.
- Try to avoid battles over food, and try not to use food as a punishment or a reward.



Where to Find Help

CalFresh
California's SNAP/food stamps program; food aid for people with low incomes
1-877-847-3663 www.cdss.ca.gov

California 2-1-1
Information and referral to services, including food assistance
2-1-1 www.211ca.org

Choose My Plate
Information on healthy eating
www.choosemyplate.gov

Healthy Children
Advice on feeding from the American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org; **click Toddler, then Nutrition in the left-hand column**

Prevent Choking

Like babies, toddlers can easily choke. They still need to be supervised while eating.

- Have your child sit down to eat. Use a high chair or booster seat.
- Watch him while he eats. If he chokes, he cannot make noise to let you know.
- Cut food into small pieces. Remove bones, seeds, and pits.
- Avoid tough foods like large pieces of meat or dried fruit.
- Avoid hard foods like raw carrots, nuts, and popcorn.
- Take a first aid class so you know what to do if your child chokes. Contact your local Red Cross or American Heart Association.

Guiding Toddlers

Next to love, guidance is one of the biggest gifts you can give your child. A good time to start giving guidance is after the first year. By 15 months, children begin to understand what is



OK and what is not. Start with a few simple guidelines, such as holding hands when walking across the street, treating people and animals kindly, and not breaking things. Set a good example and praise good behavior.

Temper Tantrums Are Normal

A tantrum is your child’s way of asking for help. She is upset and does not know how to help herself. She needs you to help her learn self-control and find ways to solve problems. You may be able to figure out what triggers tantrums and prevent some of them. For example, being hungry and overtired are two common triggers.

When Your Child Has a Tantrum

When your toddler has a tantrum, she needs your help to calm down. You may need to pick her up and take her away from the problem. You can also try to distract her with something else to do. After your toddler has calmed down, talk about what happened. Help her find other ways to express her feelings.

Give Children Limited Choices

When children have choices, they feel more in control and get less frustrated. Let your child choose between wearing her blue or green socks, or eating an apple or a banana for a snack. Offer only 2 or 3 choices. Too many choices can confuse young children.



Things You Can Do

Setting Limits: Guidance and Discipline

- Be patient. It takes toddlers a long time to learn self-control.
- Be consistent. For example, always hold your child’s hand when you cross the street.
- What you expect should fit your child’s age. For example, most toddlers cannot sit still for long.
- Tell and show your child what you want her to do.
- Be specific. “Draw on the paper, not on the wall” is better than “Stop that.”
- Praise and hug your child for good behavior.
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. “Do not run into the street. You could get hurt!” is better than “You are a bad girl!”
- Save the “no’s” for important limits, like safety issues.
- Help your child express her feelings in words. Let her talk about what has made her frustrated or upset.
- Don’t allow hitting, kicking, biting, or throwing. When one of these happens, remove your child, and tell her that the action is not allowed.

If You Feel You Are Going to Lose Your Temper

- Do not hit or yell at your child. This can cause permanent harm.
- If you are too angry to talk, wait until you have calmed down. If another adult can watch your child for a while, take a break.
- If you are having trouble dealing with a difficult behavior, you can call Childhelp.
- Ask other parents what works for them. Or look for a parenting class.



Where to Find Help

Childhelp

Help with discipline problems and parent stress; child abuse prevention
1-800-422-4453 www.childhelp.org/hotline

Zero to Three

Information on child development and parenting
1-800-899-4301 www.zerotothree.org



Enrique loves to help his dad. Teaching children to help takes time, but this is how they learn to be responsible.

Starting to Use the Toilet

Teaching your child to use the toilet is a big step. It is important to wait until he is ready. Most children are ready between ages 2 and 3. Encourage your child, but do not force him. It may take 3 to 6 months before your child

learns to use the toilet during the day. Staying dry all night can take longer. Be patient. Remember, over time your child will have fewer accidents.

Look for Signs That Your Child Is Ready

- His diapers are dry for at least 2 hours or dry after his naps.
- His bowel movements are regular.
- His face or posture shows when he is ready to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- He fusses or asks to be changed when his diaper is wet or dirty.
- He can walk to the bathroom, help undress himself, and follow simple directions.
- He asks to use the potty or wear “big kid” underwear.

Expect Accidents

Have extra underwear, pants, socks, shoes, wipes, and plastic bags on hand at child care and on outings. If your child has an accident, do not punish him. You can say, “That’s OK. Next time, try to let me know when you have to go so we can use the toilet.”



Some children feel safer on a low potty chair with their feet on the floor. You can also buy a small seat that fits inside the toilet seat and have your toddler use a step stool.

Choose the Right Time To Start

Try not to start teaching your child to use the toilet when there are big changes in his life. Moving, the birth of a sibling, changes in child care, divorce, or a family trip can be stressful. Wait until your routines are more normal before you start.

At Night

Many children still need a diaper at night, even when they use the toilet during the day. Some children wet at night until age 6 or 7 or even older. If a parent wet the bed as a child, the child may also. Do not make your child feel ashamed.

To help prevent accidents at night, limit how much your child drinks after dinner. And make sure your toddler uses the toilet just before bedtime. If you are worried, talk to his doctor.



Where to Find Help

Healthy Children
Information on children’s health and well-being
www.healthychildren.org

KidsHealth
Information on children’s health and well-being
www.kidshealth.org

Zero to Three
Information on child development and parenting
1-800-899-4301 www.zerotothree.org



Things You Can Do

Start Slowly

- Start by having your child sit on the potty at the same time each day.
- Try several times a day and at bedtime.
- Try when he shows signs that he needs to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Let him sit for several minutes.
- Let him get up when he is ready.
- Do not expect him to use the toilet right away. Reward him with praise and hugs when he does.

Tips for Helping Your Child Learn

- Dress your child in loose pants that are easy to pull down and up. Or use pull-up diapers or training pants.
- Get a children’s book about learning to use the toilet and read it with your toddler.
- It is helpful for mothers or sisters to show little girls, and fathers or brothers to show little boys.
- Teach girls to wipe from front to back to prevent infections.
- Decide what words you will use for your child’s body parts, urine, and stool. It is best to use common terms, like “pee” and “poop.”

Toilet Training and Child Care

Some child care programs want children to be able to use the toilet. Do not rush your child’s toilet training to get him into child care. Find another program or wait a few months.

Child Safety

You can help keep your child from getting hurt by watching her carefully and making your home safe for her to

play and explore. Make sure relatives and others who care for your child also follow these safety tips.



Put safety latches on cupboards and drawers that contain anything that could hurt your child, like knives or cleaning products. Put only safe things, like pots and measuring cups, in drawers that your child can open.

Never Leave Small Children Alone In the Kitchen

- Turn pot handles to the back of the stove.
- Keep your child away from the stove when you cook.
- Keep knives and other sharp utensils away from the edge of the counter.
- Be careful with ironing boards and irons. Children can tip them over and get burned.
- Put cleaning supplies, chemicals, and appliances in cabinets with safety latches.
- Empty buckets right away. A child can drown in a few inches of water.

Never Leave Small Children Alone In the Bathroom

- Keep a childproof knob on the door.
- Keep medicines, razors, and personal care products in cabinets with safety latches. Keep medicines in their childproof packages.
- To prevent burns, set the water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Test the water temperature with the inside of your wrist or a thermometer.
- Use slip-proof mats inside and outside the tub.
- Always drain the tub. Keep the toilet lid closed.
- Unplug appliances and keep them out of reach, so your child cannot pull them into the water.

Safety for Preschoolers and Older Children

- Know your child’s friends and the places and homes she visits.
- Do not put your child’s name on the outside of her clothes or backpack.
- Between ages 4 and 5, teach your child her full name, address, and phone number.
- Teach her never to get in a car with a stranger.
- Tell your child to say “no” if anyone tries to touch her or treats her in a way that scares or upsets her. Tell her to get away quickly and tell you or another trusted adult.

Safety in Your Neighborhood

Make sure you know where your child is at all times. Do not let your child play alone outside or in an unfenced yard. To protect her from injury, look for play equipment that has sand, wood chips, or rubber mats underneath.



Things You Can Do

Keep Your Home Safe

- Put in smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and test them once a month. Change the batteries in these alarms twice a year. It’s easy to remember if you change the batteries on the same day that you set your clocks forward or back.
- Teach your toddler not to touch things that can be hot, like stoves, fireplaces, barbecues, and matches.
- Keep small objects, sharp tools, balloons, and plastic bags out of your child’s reach.
- Keep houseplants out of reach—many are poisonous.

Gun Safety

- The safest home is one without a gun. If you have one, lock the unloaded gun in one place, and lock away the ammunition somewhere else.
- Use a child-resistant lock on the gun. Teach your child never to play with guns.
- Ask about guns in other homes where your child spends time. Ask a responsible adult if guns in the home are stored securely.
- Teach children never to touch a gun and to tell an adult right away if they see one.



Where to Find Help

California Poison Control Hotline
Free, confidential help and advice about poisons 24 hours a day
1-800-222-1222 www.calpoison.org

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Help when a child goes missing
1-800-843-5678 www.missingkids.com

Safe Kids California
Information on child safety
www.safekidscalifornia.org

Child Care for Toddlers

Like child care for babies, toddler child care should be based on a close, caring relationship between your child and 1 or 2 caregivers. Close relationships help children feel secure.



Checklist for Toddler Child Care

- ☐ Does each child get the attention he needs?
- ☐ Is there 1 licensed caregiver for every 6 toddlers?
- ☐ Does the caregiver hold and cuddle the children?
- ☐ Are there toys, books, puzzles, art projects, and games? Are they suited to your child's age?
- ☐ Is the place clean, safe, and uncluttered? Is it reasonably quiet and orderly?
- ☐ Is the food healthy? Is it prepared safely?
- ☐ Is there sand, wood chips, or rubber under the play equipment?
- ☐ Is there a safe indoor play area?
- ☐ Is the caregiver trained in toddler care?
- ☐ Is the caregiver trained in first aid and CPR?
- ☐ Is the center or caregiver licensed?

Look for a caregiver who will encourage your child's interest and social skills. The caregiver should also help your child learn to talk. Look for small groups of children with each caregiver and a daily routine with lots of activities for toddlers.

Helping Your Toddler Learn

Your toddler's caregiver should provide lots of ways to learn through play. This includes active games and group activities, as well as puzzles, toys, and books.

Children with Disabilities

Make sure the caregiver has the training, equipment, and resources needed to care properly for your child. The right care can make a big difference in your child's future.

Early Head Start and Head Start

Head Start helps young children get ready for school. It is mostly for 3- and 4-year-olds. **Early Head Start** is for children from birth to age 3, along with their parents. Children get help with language skills, getting along with peers, and handling their emotions. Adults get help with parenting challenges. It is free for families who qualify. Call your school district, or see the online Head Start Locator in "Where to Find Help."



Where to Find Help

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Help finding child care
1-800-543-7793 www.rrnetwork.org

CalWorks Child Care
Financial assistance with child care
www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKs-Child-Care

Childhelp
Advice about child care, discipline, and preventing child abuse
1-800-422-4453 www.childhelp.org

Head Start/Early Head Start online locator
eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Information on quality child care, help finding child care
1-800-424-2460
families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care

What to Do If Your Child Gets Sick
Book about common childhood health problems, included in *Kit for New Parents*
www.first5california.com



Things You Can Do

Make Time to Find the Right Caregiver

- There may be a waiting list. Start looking early.
- Ask other parents about programs or caregivers they like.
- Visit several centers or homes.

For Your Child's Health and Safety

- Do not take a sick child to child care. Have a plan for when your child is sick.
- Ask your child about each day. Listen to what he says.
- If your child says he is being treated badly or ignored at child care, take it seriously. Or if he comes home hungry or dirty, or has unexplained bruises, do not ignore it. Call the Child Protective Services number for your county, or call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline.

If a Relative Cares for Your Child

- Talk about ways to help your child learn, such as reading stories, playing games, and making things together.
- If your child is learning to use the toilet, discuss this with your relative. Make sure your child is not being shamed or forced to give up diapers before he is ready.
- Explain how you set limits and use consequences with your child. Talk about how you want guidance to be given.
- Ask who else may be visiting the home, to ensure your child's safety.

Your Preschooler from 3 to 5 Years

Children ages 3 to 5 are learning many new skills. They play games, pretend, and tell stories. They run and climb. They start to learn letters and numbers. But they can have a hard time seeing things from

someone else's point of view. And they often think that make-believe TV and stories are real. Although your child may seem more grown-up now, she still needs your help and guidance.



Preschoolers are more interested in playing with each other than toddlers are. They learn how to get along by playing together.

Encourage Creativity

- Make a place for your child to play with chalk, crayons, markers, paints, and paper. Choose a place where she can make a mess.
- Give her washable markers, chalk, or big crayons that are easy for her to hold.
- Let her play dress-up with some of your old clothes. Look for sharp edges or choking risks on clothes, jewelry, belts, and purses. Watch your child while she plays with these adult things.

Learning Social Skills

During play, children explore new feelings, ideas, and skills. They create make-believe stories and games. They are learning how to play with each other, how to relate to adults, and how to handle their anger and fears. You can help your child learn to get along well with others. You can do this by talking to her about what has happened during her day.

Your Child's Fears

Children may be afraid of strangers or being away from you. They may be afraid of dogs, loud noises, or the dark. They are more likely to be fearful when there is change or stress in their lives. They may have scary dreams. This is all normal. Let your child know that everyone is afraid at times, and you will help keep her safe. Hold her and read to her.



Preschoolers like to use their hands and play pretend.

Feeding Preschoolers

Preschoolers should be eating the same meals as the rest of the family. Keep offering your child a variety of healthy foods. She may still have strong food likes and dislikes, and she may eat a lot one day and very little the next.

Portion sizes for preschoolers should be about half the size of adult portions. Start with a small helping and give her more if she asks.



Where to Find Help

First 5 California

Information on child development and activity ideas
www.first5california.com

KidsHealth

Information on children's health
www.kidshealth.org



Things You Can Do

Let Your Child Learn by Doing

- Encourage hands-on learning rather than watching TV. Include your child in everyday tasks like cooking and cleaning.
- Take her to interesting places, like museums and zoos.
- Help her learn responsibility. For example, she can help pick up her toys, set the table, or sort the laundry.

Do Not Leave Young Children Home Alone

Most children are not safe by themselves until they are 11 or 12 years old. Even then, it depends on how long the child will be alone and how mature she is.

Get Ready for Preschool

- Answer her questions with simple explanations.
- Use blocks, big puzzles, and other toys to teach letters and numbers.
- Sing alphabet and counting songs together.
- Read and talk about stories with her.
- Join in playing pretend when your child asks you to.
- Make sure your child has time to play with other children.
- Ask a librarian or bookstore clerk to help you and your child choose books.
- Use books to talk about difficult topics, like anger or sharing.

Guiding Preschoolers

Your preschooler will test your limits. He may talk back or break rules on purpose. This is part of how he learns your rules and values. On the other hand, now he understands what you want and follows directions more

easily. Set reasonable limits, and praise him for good behavior. Try to set a good example. If you show that you can disagree without getting angry or violent, your child learns to respond that way, too.

Help Your Children Get Along

- It is natural for children to argue. Give them a chance to work things out. Make sure no one gets hurt.
- Children often compete for a parent’s love and attention. Try not to compare your children or favor one child over another.
- Let your children know that they are each special and loved.
- Try to spend some time alone with each child.



Kenny and Adam have become good friends. Learning to get along is an important part of their growth.

Prepare for Kindergarten

Children need many social skills to be ready for kindergarten. Help your child learn to wait, take turns, listen, share, make friends, and follow simple directions.

Set Reasonable Limits

- Be consistent in what you expect.
- Give simple, short reasons for saying “no.”
- Make sure that your child is able to do what you ask. For example, most 4-year-olds can wait quietly, but not for very long.
- Make it easy for your child to do the right thing, and harder to do the wrong thing. For example, if playing with your smart phone is not allowed, do not leave it where he can easily pick it up.
- Tell your child clearly what you want him to do. “Remember to say please when you ask for a snack” is better than “Don’t be rude.”
- Criticize the behavior, not the child. “Do not throw the ball in the house. You could break something” is better than “You are always bad!”
- When your child is old enough, decide together what will happen if he breaks a rule. Make sure the penalty is reasonable. A reasonable penalty might be losing the use of a toy for a short while.



When Paul and Kay start to fight, their dad helps them solve their problems peacefully.

Whining, Interrupting, and Tantrums

Your child wants your attention, whether it’s positive or negative. He may whine, interrupt, or even have a tantrum to get your attention. You can remove your attention from your child by ignoring the behavior. This may help stop the behavior.

Do not ignore dangerous behavior. If your child is about to hurt himself or someone else, remove him from the situation.



Where to Find Help

Centers for Disease Control
Advice on guiding toddlers and preschoolers
www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/index.html

Childhelp
Advice about discipline and preventing child abuse
1-800-422-4453 www.childhelp.org

National Parent Helpline
Support for parents and caregivers
1-855-427-2736
www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support/state-resources/california-resources



Things You Can Do

Encourage Good Behavior

- Set a good example. Show the behavior you want from him.
- Help your child express his feelings with words, rather than hitting.
- Teach responsibility in small steps. Start with simple things, like picking up toys.

Discipline Your Child with Care

- Talk to your child in a serious but loving voice.
- In simple terms, explain what is OK for him to do and what is not. Tell him why. Tell him what will happen if he keeps doing it.
- Avoid spanking, hitting, and yelling. These actions can hurt him physically and emotionally. They also set a bad example.
- If you feel you are losing your temper and may hit your child, you can get help. You can talk to someone who can help you calm down. You do not have to give your name. Call Childhelp or the National Parent Helpline.

Be Smart About Screen Time

- TV shows and movies that show violence can scare a young child. They can also cause nightmares and aggression.
- Many movies, TV shows, music videos, and video games have violence and adult language or activities.
- Preschoolers should spend no more than 1 hour a day with smart phones, tablets, TV, or other screens.
- When your child is watching a video or using an app, do it with him. Talk with him about what he is seeing or doing.

About Preschool

Children who go to preschool are more likely to do better in school. Look for a preschool program that will help your child develop the skills she will need in school and life.

Preschool should not look or feel like school. There should be organized activities, but there should also be plenty of free time for your child to explore and learn on her own.



Some schools have family learning programs, so you can learn along with your child.

Checklist for Choosing a Preschool

- ☐ Does each child get the attention she needs?
- ☐ Is there 1 caregiver for every 12 children?
- ☐ Is the facility licensed? Are the teachers trained and certified?
- ☐ Do they have conversations with the children and ask them questions?
- ☐ Do they read to the children and encourage them to read if they can?
- ☐ Do they give kind, clear, and consistent messages to the children about behavior?
- ☐ Is there a large play space where children can build and move things, and run and jump?
- ☐ Is there sand, wood chips, or rubber under the play equipment, instead of grass or cement?
- ☐ Is there a place where children can do arts and crafts and play quiet games?
- ☐ Are there many kinds of toys, games, and art supplies? Are they suited to your child's age?
- ☐ Is there a quiet place for resting and reading?
- ☐ Are chairs, tables, and equipment child-sized?
- ☐ Is the food healthy? Is it prepared safely?
- ☐ Are the teachers trained in first aid and CPR?

Skills That Will Help in School

Preschool lets your child practice skills she will need in school. These include taking part in group activities and taking turns. Your child will play number games and practice using crayons, pencils, and other art supplies.

Go to School Together

Some schools let the family learn together. There may be classes you can take with your child, or separate adult classes at your child's school. You can improve your reading, learn to use a computer, learn English, or gain other skills. Ask your school district if there is a family learning program.

Paying for Preschool

Many public school districts and some towns offer preschool. This can be less expensive than private preschool. You may be able to get financial assistance from the state, or you may qualify for Head Start.



Where to Find Help

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Help finding child care
1-800-543-7793 www.rnnetwork.org/find_child_care

CalWorks Child Care
Help paying for child care or preschool
www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKs-Child-Care

Head Start/Early Head Start online locator
eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Help finding a preschool
1-800-424-2460
families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care



Things You Can Do

Find Out How Your Child Is Doing

- Ask your child and her teacher about each day.
- Plan to meet with the teacher every few months. Ask about issues like how well your child gets along with others and follows rules, as well as new things she is learning.
- Drop in from time to time to make sure all is well.

Keep Your Child Home If She Is Sick

- If you get paid sick leave at your job, you should be able to use it to care for your child or take her to the doctor.
- Make sure the preschool has phone numbers where they can reach you if your child gets sick.
- The book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* has information on common child health problems. It is available in the *Kit for New Parents* from First 5 California.

Your Child's Safety

If your child says she is being treated badly or ignored at child care, take it seriously. Or if she comes home hungry or dirty, or has unexplained bruises, do not ignore it. Call the Child Protective Services number for your county, or call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline.

Starting School

All parents want their children to do well in school—to learn, to think for themselves, and to get along with others. A child who is ready for school can express his feelings. He cares about the feelings and needs

of others. He is eager, curious, and able to pay attention. And he can give and receive help. If your child is not ready to start school, you may want to let him start a little later.

When to Start School

Most children start kindergarten when they are 5. Children who turn 5 between September 1 and December 2 may be smaller and less mature than those who turn 5 earlier in the year. This difference can make starting school hard for the younger children.

In California, younger 5-year-olds can go to **transitional kindergarten** (or **TK**) for 1 year, then go to kindergarten the next year. This gives them extra time to grow and mature, so they are more like their classmates.

Transitional kindergarten is part of the elementary school system. In some school districts, transitional kindergarten is open to a wider age range. Ask your school district whether your child can go to transitional kindergarten.

Is Your Child Ready for School?

Your child is more likely to have a good first school year if he can:

- Play well with other children.
- Pay attention while a story is being read.
- Use the toilet by himself.
- Ask questions and interact with teachers and classmates.
- Play on his own.

Questions to Ask About School

- Find out which public school your child will go to, and plan a visit before school begins.
- Ask when you should enroll your child.
- Ask how many hours a day your child will be in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten.
- Ask about the skills your child should learn before going to first grade.
- Ask about shots your child must have before he starts school.

Bullying and Teasing

Children who are bullied or teased may grow up feeling depressed or angry. They may also bully others. Bullying is not the same as a fight. It is when one child picks on another over and over again.

If your child tells you someone is picking on him, take the problem seriously. Try to work it out with his teacher or principal, and the parents of the other child. Make sure the bullying stops, even if you have to put your child in a different class.

If your child is bullying other children, tell him it is not OK to act that way, and take action to stop it. Try to find out what makes your child want to pick on other children. Counseling may help.



Ask your child about her school day, and show interest in what she is learning and doing.



Things You Can Do

Help Your Child Do Well in School

- Make sure your child has a good night's sleep. Most young children need 10 hours of sleep every night.
- Make sure your child eats breakfast.
- Ask questions about his day that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Set limits on screen time. Read with your child instead.
- Know who your child's friends are and invite them over.
- Keep your child out of school when he is sick.
- Use your library. Public libraries are free. Many libraries have story time, tutoring, ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, and computers.

Take an Active Part in School

- Get to know your child's teacher and his friends' parents.
- Go to back-to-school nights and parent meetings.
- If you do not speak English, make sure the school staff talk with you directly or through an interpreter, not through your child.



Where to Find Help

California School Directory

Online search tool; information about schools
www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory

Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions

Information about starting school in California
www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kindergartenfaq.asp

National Center for Learning Disabilities

Information on learning disabilities
1-888-575-7373 www.ncld.org

If Your Child Has a Disability

Your child needs love and nurturing just like any other child. She needs the chance to play and learn. And she needs your support to develop

self-esteem and take part in school and social activities. You may need to do research and ask questions to find the services your child needs. Parents of other children with disabilities are often good sources of information and support. But there are also agencies that can help you.



Support for Families

Family Resource Centers offer parent-to-parent support. This is available for families of children with any type of disability. These centers also help families find and use services.

California Department of Developmental Services Regional Centers help children with developmental disabilities get the services they need.

Support Your Growing Child

- As your child grows, help her find ways to do things on her own or with little help.
- Allow her to make mistakes and be creative.
- Help her practice making choices. She will need this skill as she grows up.
- Look for older children or adults who have your child's disability. They can be role models and mentors.
- Ask your school district about services for preschoolers with disabilities, such as Early Start.



Things You Can Do

Find Tools to Help Your Child

There are special tools to help children talk, write, learn, and play. For example, a special grip on a pencil can help a child write. Ask about adaptive tools when you are creating your child's IEP.

Find Healthcare and Financial Help

Your child may qualify for Social Security or Medi-Cal even if your family does not. A child cannot be turned down for health insurance coverage just because she has a disability. Contact your county social services office. See www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices for contact information.

Learn More About Your Child's Disability

Go to your local library and find out all you can. Or search for the condition at www.kidshealth.org.

About Education Plans

An **individualized education program** (or **IEP**) is a written agreement about special education services for your child. You will work with your child's teachers and other experts to come up with an IEP for your child. If your child should have an IEP, ask your child's teacher or doctor how to get started. You are an important part of the IEP team.

A **504 plan** is a written agreement about services or adjustments your child needs to succeed in child care, a classroom, or other activities. For example, she might need more time to complete work, or a seat close to the teacher so she can hear more easily.



Where to Find Help

California Department of Developmental Services Regional Centers
1-916-654-1690 www.dds.ca.gov/RC/index.cfm

Disability Rights California
Help with legal issues and getting services for people with disabilities
1-800-776-5746 www.disabilityrightsca.org

Early Start
Services for babies and toddlers at risk of disability or with a disability
1-800-515-2229 www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

Family Resource Centers Network of California
Find a Family Resource Center near you
1-916-993-7781 www.frcnca.org

Organizations for parents
List of California agencies providing resources for families of children with disabilities
www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/caprntorg.asp

Help Your Child Do Well in School

The school district must evaluate your child if you think she may have a disability. This service is free. If she needs help to take part in school, the school must work with you to develop an individualized education program (IEP).

Children with disabilities should be included in all school activities and sports. Public schools must provide services and adaptive equipment if your child needs them.

Finding and Using Healthcare

Children need frequent checkups, but they also need care for common illnesses and minor injuries.



There are ways to get low-cost health insurance. To get the best healthcare for yourself and your family, ask your doctor questions and talk about your concerns. Look for a doctor you like and who takes your concerns seriously.

Community Clinics

Community health clinics offer low-cost healthcare. Services can include family planning, prenatal care, shots and vaccines, dental care, mental healthcare, and testing and treatment for many diseases. Check with your county health department or social services department to find a nearby community clinic.

If English Is Not Your First Language

You can ask for doctors or office staff who speak your preferred language, or ask for a certified interpreter. Your children should not interpret for you, even if they speak English well.

Get Care in an Emergency

If someone’s life is in danger, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. You cannot be turned away, even if you have no insurance or money, or you are undocumented.

If someone swallows, breathes in, or touches anything poisonous, or is bitten by a poisonous animal, call the Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

Free or Low-Cost Healthcare

Health insurance for your family may seem expensive, but it will probably save you money over time. Medi-Cal is health insurance for families and individuals with low incomes. It is very low cost. Covered California is a program that lets you buy health insurance at reduced cost, if you do not qualify for Medi-Cal. You can apply for both programs on the Covered California website.

Understand Your Treatment

When a doctor suggests a treatment for you or your child, make sure you understand what it does and why it’s important. Ask the doctor about risks and side effects. You can ask if there are other treatments, and what would happen if you didn’t have any treatment.

Usually you need to sign a consent form before treatment. This form says you agree to the treatment. Make sure you don’t have any more questions or worries before you sign the consent form.



Don’t be afraid to ask questions when you visit the doctor.



Where to Find Help

California Department of Insurance

Help filing an appeal with your health insurance company
1-800-927-4357
www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/101-help

California Department of Managed Health Care

Information about and help with health insurance
1-888-466-2219 www.dmhc.ca.gov

California Health+

Network of community health centers
1-855-899-7587 www.californiahealthplus.org

Covered California

Help with buying private health insurance or enrolling in Medi-Cal
1-800-300-1506 www.coveredca.com

Family PACT

Referrals to state-funded clinics for family planning services
1-800-942-1054 www.familypact.org

Medi-Cal

Information on how to sign up for health insurance if your income is low
www.coveredca.com/medi-cal



Things You Can Do

Know Your Rights

- You have a right to choose your doctor, and to change doctors.
- You have a right to get a second opinion about a serious condition or a major treatment.
- You have a right to see and get copies of your medical records.
- If you have a disability, you have a right to get the tests and exams you need. For example, you may need to go to a clinic that has an accessible exam table and scales.
- If you have a problem getting a treatment, or if your insurance will not pay for it, you can ask for the decision to be reconsidered. Contact the California Department of Insurance or California Department of Managed Health Care.

Children's Health

The tips on this page can help you keep your child healthy. But all children get sick from time to time. It's important to notice when your child is not well, and take him to his doctor.

Is My Baby Sick?

Look for changes in your baby's normal behavior. You will soon know his regular sleeping, eating, and bowel habits. You will know his normal level of activity and fussiness. If he does not act or look normal, call your doctor. The book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* can also help you decide when to call the doctor. The book is part of the *Kit for New Parents*.

When Your Child Is Sick

At your baby's first doctor visit, ask when you should call the doctor and when you should call 9-1-1.

- Call the doctor if your baby is younger than 3 months and has a fever.
- Call the doctor if your baby has repeated diarrhea or vomiting. Make sure he gets plenty of liquids.
- For fever, ask your doctor if you should give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or another medicine. Do not give aspirin. It can cause a rare but serious disease called Reye's Syndrome. And do not use ibuprofen before 6 months.



If you stay calm during doctor visits, your child is more likely to stay calm, too. During most of a visit you can hold him. You may also want to bring a pacifier, a familiar blanket, or a stuffed toy.

About Ear Infections

Ear infections are common in young children. Your baby may be fussy or cry more than usual when he has an ear infection, or he may pull on his ear. If your child says his ears hurt, or he seems to have an ear infection, call his doctor.

Protect Your Child from the Sun

Too much sun can cause sunburn and overheating.

- Use baby-safe sunscreen and a hat with a brim. Cover as much skin as possible with clothing.
- Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight.
- It's best to be outside with your child in the morning, when the sunlight is less strong than at other times.
- Call 9-1-1 if your child seems to be overheating. Watch for weakness, nausea, headache, heavy sweating, rapid heartbeat, confusion, muscle cramps, or dry skin with no sweating.

Protect Your Child from Dust and Air Pollution

Children's lungs are more easily damaged than adults' lungs. To protect them:

- Do not let anyone smoke or vape around your children.
- If the air quality is poor, keep children inside.
- Vacuum often.

Dental Care Is Healthcare

Having a healthy mouth and teeth is important for overall health. Your child should see a dentist when his first tooth comes in, or by the time he is a year old.



About Asthma

Asthma is an ongoing condition that causes breathing problems. When air passages in the lungs are irritated, they can swell and get narrow. This can cause coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath.

Your child's doctor will recommend a plan to prevent asthma flare-ups. This may include prescription medicine and making changes in your home. It's important to learn what triggers your child's asthma symptoms. Then you can take steps to avoid the triggers.



Things You Can Do

Get Hearing and Eye Checks

Parents are often the first to notice a hearing or vision problem. It's important to correct hearing and vision problems because they can make it hard to succeed in school. If you think your child needs a hearing or vision test, talk to his doctor.



Where to Find Help

California 2-1-1

Information and referral to services, including healthcare
2-1-1 www.211ca.org

Environmental Protection Agency

Tips on protecting children
www.epa.gov/children; click "What you can do to protect children"

KidsHealth Asthma Center

Information on living with asthma
www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/center/asthma-center.html

About Children's Checkups

Babies see their doctors often. In well-baby visits, the doctor sees how your baby is developing. Your baby gets the vaccines she needs. These visits also give you a chance to ask questions and talk about any worries you have.

As children get older they need fewer checkups, but it is still important to go to scheduled appointments. This is because regular checkups and vaccines can prevent many childhood health problems.

What Happens at a Child's Checkup

At each well-baby or well-child visit, the doctor will check your child's height, weight, vision, hearing, and development. Other tests may also be done, like tests for lead poisoning, low iron in the blood, and tuberculosis (TB). Your doctor will also check your child's teeth and refer you to a dentist.

The doctor will watch what your baby can do and ask you questions about her progress. You can ask questions and talk about your worries. The doctor will test your baby for physical, learning, and growth problems. The doctor will also talk and play with your baby to see how she plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves.

Help for Ongoing Illnesses

If your child has an ongoing health problem, like asthma or diabetes, checkups help you make sure she is getting the right treatments and is staying as healthy as possible. Checkups can help prevent visits to the emergency room.



At well-child visits, the doctor will measure your child's height.

Example Checkup Schedule

The doctor can make a check mark next to the ages when your child should come in. The doctor can also tell you what to expect at visits.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between birth and 5 days | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> By 1 month | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 months | |



Where to Find Help

Healthychildren.org
Information on children's health from the American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org



Things You Can Do

- Bring a list of questions and a list of all medicines your child takes.
- Try to take your child to the same doctor or health center for all checkups. The doctor will get to know you and your child, and her records will be in one place. You will probably feel more comfortable talking about your concerns.
- Ask for a schedule for your child's checkups.
- Make sure your child's shots are up-to-date. Bring her vaccine card with you. See the "About Vaccines" chapter for more information.
- If your child has been to the hospital or seen a specialist, bring the records. Or have the records sent to your child's doctor.
- If you need more time to talk, tell the doctor. Ask for a name and phone number to call if you have more questions.

About Vaccines

Vaccines are medicines that prevent serious diseases, such as measles, whooping cough, and polio. Vaccines work by teaching the body to fight specific diseases. It is important to give vaccines to babies and young children because their bodies aren't ready to

fight these diseases on their own. Vaccines are very safe to give. Having your child vaccinated on schedule is one of the best ways to keep him healthy.



Children need to have certain vaccines before they can go to child care or school.

Vaccines Protect Your Family and Your Community

Vaccines are given for diseases that spread easily from person to person. For example, the measles vaccine can prevent your child from catching measles from a schoolmate. And if your child doesn't get sick, he won't make anyone else sick. The more people who are vaccinated, the less chance an infection has to spread. This helps everyone in a community.

Don't Be Afraid to Vaccinate

Some parents have questions and worries about vaccines. One common worry is that vaccines or their ingredients can cause autism, which can affect a child's social skills, speech, or behavior. Studies have shown that there is not a link between vaccines and autism.

Parents may also worry about how many vaccines babies and toddlers get. This is done to guard against 14 different diseases while their bodies need protection the most. Vaccines given on schedule will not overwhelm your baby's ability to fight infection.

Shots Before Starting School

Children must have certain vaccines before they can go to child care, preschool, or elementary school. Teachers and caregivers also must have certain vaccines. California laws require this. It helps make sure that everyone is protected from serious diseases.

When Are Vaccines Given?

Vaccines are given during well-child visits. Some vaccines are given more than once to make sure the body's defenses against the disease are strong enough. Your child's doctor will tell you when to come in for vaccines. If you have any concerns, discuss them with the doctor.

Where to Get Low-Cost Vaccines

If your family's income is low, your children may be eligible to get vaccines and other healthcare through Medi-Cal. Your local health department or community health center may also give vaccines at reduced or no cost.



The whole family should have vaccine shots.



Things You Can Do

- Make sure your whole family is up-to-date on vaccinations. This keeps you, your family, and your community safe.
- Keep track of your child's vaccinations. This lets you show proof of all the needed vaccinations when he starts child care, preschool, or school.
- When your child gets his first vaccination, the doctor should give you an immunization record. It will probably be a yellow card. You can use it to keep track of all of his vaccinations.
- Sometimes vaccines can cause mild side effects. This can be a sore arm or a slight fever. Call the doctor if side effects from a vaccine don't get better in a few days.



Where to Find Help

California Immunization Registry
Help with finding immunization records
cairweb.org/parents-and-general-public

For Parents: Vaccines for Your Children
Background information on vaccines from the Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov/vaccines; click **Parents (Birth–18 Yrs)**

Immunization Branch
Information about vaccines from the California Department of Public Health
www.cdph.ca.gov/immunize

Shots for School
List of vaccines needed before starting school in California
www.shotsforschool.org

Oral Health

Between about 6 months and 3 years, children get 20 baby teeth. Baby teeth help your child eat healthy foods and learn to talk and smile normally. They help the jawbone and face muscles develop.



Help your child brush her teeth until she can do a good job by herself.

Even though baby teeth eventually fall out, taking care of them is important. Start good dental care from birth so your baby's gums are healthy and her first teeth do not have decay. Healthy teeth and gums are important to the health of the whole body.

Prevent Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is caused by bacteria and sugar in the mouth. To help prevent tooth decay, avoid giving your child foods that are sticky, chewy, or have a lot of sugar. Between meals, offer your child water to drink rather than milk, juice, or sugary drinks. Do not put your child to bed with a bottle or food. And brush her teeth twice a day.

Good Dental Habits Last a Lifetime

Help your child learn good dental habits. When your child's teeth come in, you will need to brush them at first. Then you will need to help until she can do it herself. This is usually not until ages 6 to 8. Remember, brushing before bedtime helps prevent cavities.



Everyone Needs Dental Checkups

Both adults and children should see a dentist every 6 months. Make your child's first appointment when her first tooth comes in, or by her first birthday.

To find a dentist for your child, talk to your own dentist. Many dentists treat patients of all ages.

See the Dentist for These Tooth Problems

The most common tooth problem for children is decay (cavities). It can cause pain and infections. It can also lead to serious problems with eating, speaking, sleeping, and learning. Call the dentist if your child:

- Has brown or black spots on her teeth. These can be signs of decay.
- Has tooth pain.
- Has a cracked or broken tooth, or other injury to the teeth or gums.



Where to Find Help

California Dental Association

Help finding low-cost dental services

1-800-232-7645

www.cda.org/public-resources/low-cost-dental-services

Find a Dentist

Search tool for finding dentists who see children and accept Medi-Cal dental insurance

www.insurekidsnow.gov/coverage/find-a-dentist



Things You Can Do

Caring for Your Baby's Teeth

- Starting from birth, wipe your baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth or gauze pad every day.
- When your baby has her first tooth, start to brush 2 times a day with a small smear of fluoride toothpaste. Increase to a pea-sized amount of toothpaste when your child turns 3.
- Ask your baby's doctor about fluoride supplements or varnishes, starting at 6 months.
- The bacteria that cause tooth decay can spread from mouth to mouth. Do not pass food, toothbrushes, pacifiers, or spoons from your mouth to your baby's mouth.

Teething

If your baby has teething pain, gently rub her gums with a clean finger or damp cloth. Or let her chew on a chilled teething ring or clean washcloth, or use a pacifier. Teething may cause a mild temperature (101° F or lower). If your baby's temperature is higher, take her to a doctor.

Eating Well

Making healthy food choices is one of the most important ways you can help your family stay healthy. Eating well helps you feel good.

What Are Healthy Foods?

- **Fruits and vegetables** are healthy in all forms—fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. Try to give your family at least 5 servings a day. Try to eat orange or dark-green vegetables every day.
- **Whole grains** are in foods like whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal. These have more nutrition and fiber than white bread or white rice. Adults should have 6 to 8 servings of grain foods a day.
- **Protein and dairy foods** help the body grow and repair cells. Good choices include beans, eggs, and low-fat milk products. Protein foods with less fat include chicken or turkey without the skin, tofu, or lean red meat. Nuts have protein and healthy fats. Adults should have between 5 and 6 ounces of protein a day.
- **Vegetable oils** that are liquid at room temperature are the healthiest choices. When you cook, choose corn, peanut, canola, or olive oil. Solid fats like butter, shortening, and lard contribute to heart disease. Adults should not have more than 6 to 7 teaspoons of fat per day. Choose foods that don't have trans fats.

For information about how much to feed children, see the “Feeding Toddlers” and “Your Preschooler from 3 to 5 Years” chapters.

It also lets you set a good example and encourages your children to eat well throughout their lives.

Foods to Eat with Care

- **Juice** is the least healthy form of fruit. It has a lot of calories, and it doesn't have the fiber you need.
- **Deli meats**, bacon, sausage, and other cured or processed meats have a lot of salt, and often a lot of fat.
- **Potatoes**, corn, and peas are starchy vegetables. They are part of a healthy diet, but they should be counted as grain servings.
- **Fish** is a healthy protein food, but some types have too much mercury. Young children and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish. Choose trout, salmon, catfish, shrimp, or sardines. Eat fish about twice a week.

Children Need Lots of Calcium

Calcium helps children's bones and teeth grow. It keeps bones strong throughout life. Give your child plenty of foods that are rich in calcium, such as milk products, beans, tofu, broccoli, and dark-green leafy vegetables.

If You Need Food

- CalFresh can help you buy food if you have a low income.
- Ask your child care center or school about free lunch and breakfast programs.
- You can find a food bank near you at the California Food Bank Finder.
- WIC offers food vouchers or checks.



Things You Can Do

Eat Well at Restaurants

- Order foods steamed, grilled, or baked instead of fried.
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side, so you can control how much you use.
- Limit drinks that are high in sugar. This includes sodas and alcoholic drinks.



Feed your family lots of fruits and vegetables. Offer children a variety of healthy foods.

Prevent Food Poisoning When You Cook

- Wash your hands before and after you handle food.
- Foods like milk, formula, meat, and eggs spoil quickly. Keep them refrigerated at 40 degrees or below.
- Make sure meat, fish, poultry, and eggs are cooked through.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables.
- When you use utensils or cutting boards for raw meat, fish, or poultry, wash them with hot water and soap before you use them again.



Where to Find Help

CalFresh
California's SNAP/food stamps program; food aid for people with low incomes
1-877-847-3663 www.cdss.ca.gov

California WIC
Healthy eating advice; food and formula vouchers
1-800-852-5770 m.wic.ca.gov

Fast, Fresh, and Fun
Healthy-eating cookbook from First 5 California
www.first5california.com; **click Free Resources**

Food Bank Finder
Search for a California food bank
1-866-321-4435
www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-bank

Foodsafety.gov
Information on how to keep and prepare food safely, as well as food recalls
www.foodsafety.gov

Staying Active

Being active helps both children and adults in lots of ways. It helps your body stay healthy and can put you in a better mood. And active play is a good way to spend time with others and learn social skills. Encourage your

child to be active from an early age. This makes it more likely that she will stay active throughout her life.



Tips for Being Active with Your Child

Physical activity does not have to be expensive or take a lot of time. You can take your child for walks or dance with her even when she's a baby. Her brain needs exercise, too. Reading is a good activity to share with her. Here are some ideas for helping your young child to be active.

Being Active with Babies

For babies, physical activity is all about learning to move and control their bodies. You help your baby learn what she can do with her eyes, head, arms, and legs when you talk or sing to her or play with her.

- Put your baby on her back, hold a soft toy near her feet, and let her kick it.
- Put her on her tummy. Put a toy in front of her, just out of reach, and let her crawl to get it.
- Sit on the floor with your baby in front of you. Hold a toy near your side and encourage her to reach and grab it.

Being Active with Toddlers

When your child is old enough to walk, make sure she spends enough time being active every day. Between 1 and 3 years old, children should spend at least 30 minutes each day in an adult-led activity, and at least another hour in active play. Here are some things you can do with your toddler:

- Talk about what a rabbit looks like and what it does. Show your child how a bunny hops, then do it together.
- Play "follow the leader." Run and jump and let her follow. Then let her be the leader.
- Make a safe place for your child to climb while you watch her.

Being Active with Preschoolers

As your child grows, help her gain more physical skills. Increase the time she spends in active play. Between 4 and 5 years old, children should spend at least an hour each day in an adult-led activity, and at least another hour in active play. Here are some things you can do with your preschooler.

- Bend at the waist and try to touch your toes.
- Put a jump rope on the ground or draw a line. Let your child run and jump over it.
- Practice standing on one foot, then hopping on one foot.

Safety During Active Play

Watching your toddler play is the way to keep her safe. Check toys and play areas for hard surfaces and sharp edges. When your older child starts to ride a bike, have her wear a helmet. Add knee and elbow pads for roller-skating or riding a scooter or skateboard.

Be Active as a Family

- Being outdoors together is great family time. You can head to a local park or hang out in your own yard. If she enjoys it, let your child help you with gardening.
- Look for parks and recreation programs in your area. Often you can find low-cost exercise classes, swimming lessons, and other activities.
- If you or your child has a chronic illness or a disability, you can get help with being active. See the listings in "Where to Find Help" to learn more.



Things You Can Do

Helping Your Child Stay Active

- Help your child learn to use playground equipment.
- Never force your child to do something that scares her. Active play should be exciting and challenging. But if it's not fun, she won't want to stick with it.
- Make a play area in your house or yard. Ask your child what to include to make it fun.

Being Active After Childbirth

Going back to exercise after childbirth can increase your energy level. It may also ease postpartum depression. And it helps strengthen muscles in your abdomen (belly).

- Ask your doctor when you can begin exercises to strengthen your pelvic and abdominal muscles after the birth.
- If you had a C-section, you will need to wait longer before exercising. Ask your doctor when you can begin.



Where to Find Help

First 5 California

Ideas for active play with young children
www.first5california.com/activity-center.aspx

My Child Without Limits

Advice and resources for parents of children with disabilities
www.mychildwithoutlimits.org

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability

Fitness and sports for people with disabilities
1-800-900-8086 www.nchpad.org

Children and Technology

It is hard to imagine life without TV, computers, tablets, and smart phones. Children are interested in these “toys” at a very early age. How can you help your child use them safely and wisely?



Video-chatting apps can let children see and talk to distant family members.

Be a Role Model

If your child sees you watching TV or playing on your phone, he will want to do the same. Be a good role model for your child and limit your own technology use. What you do now will teach your child how to use technology throughout his life.

Try to protect babies and toddlers from screen time. They don't learn well from screens. They learn from real-life play, face-to-face conversations, and hearing stories read to them. These help brain growth and help young children feel secure.

Set Limits on Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you:

- Keep children ages 18 months and younger away from TV, apps, and other entertainment media. They learn best when you talk, read, and sing with them.
- Between 18 months and 5 years, keep screen time to 1 hour a day. Make it an activity you do with your child.
- Keep TVs, computers, phones, and tablets out of your child's bedroom at night.
- Turn the TV off during dinner and when you're not watching it. Background TV can interfere with your child's play and learning.
- Try to make some times and places in your home “screen-free zones.”

Use Your Library

Go to the library with your child. Help him pick out books and ask about story hour. Also ask the librarian about apps and websites that are suitable for your child. If you don't have Internet access at home, you can get online at the library.



Librarians can help your family use computers.

Avoid Screens Before Bed

Screen time before bed can make it hard to get enough sleep. Scary programs can cause nightmares. Looking at a screen can make it hard to get sleepy and go to sleep. And children don't want to go to bed if they can watch TV or play video games instead. Put away phones, tablets, and computers 2 hours before bedtime.



Where to Find Help

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

Information on how advertising works and sensible media use

www.commercialfreechildhood.org

Common Sense Media

Reviews of apps, games, websites, and movies; privacy advice

www.commonsensemedia.org



Things You Can Do

Know What Your Child Is Watching

- Don't rely on the advertising of a show or app. Review it yourself and ask, “What will my child learn from this?”
- Talk about the ads. Help your child learn to say “no” to advertising.

Get Involved

- Find apps or programs that have your child do more than just watch. Look for games and apps that encourage moving around.
- Sit with your child as he explores a new app or program.
- Look for apps that make him think, ask questions, and discover new information.
- Do activities together, like calling grandparents with FaceTime or Skype, looking at digital photos, and reading e-books.

Use the Ratings

- Use a show's ratings to learn if it is suitable for your child's age. Violence in TV shows, movies, and games can lead to nightmares and aggressive behavior. Children under 6 don't always know the difference between fantasy and reality.
- Find ratings and reviews of apps, games, and websites at www.commonsensemedia.org.

Your Child's Privacy

- Most websites and apps are connected to the Internet, and most ask for more personal information than they need. Be careful about sharing personal information about you or your child.
- Smart phones and tablets make it very easy for children to get to the Internet. Always watch what your young child is doing with a mobile device.

Emotional Health

We all feel stressed or upset sometimes. It may help to share your feelings with a family member or friend. This is one way that the people close to you can support

you as a new parent. You may also want to think about the causes of your stress or unhappiness, and see if you can figure out ways to manage them.

If You Feel Depressed After Your Baby Is Born

New moms are often exhausted in the early weeks after a baby’s birth. It’s normal to feel stressed or overwhelmed, or have mood swings, including sadness and worry. These feelings usually last about 2 weeks and are not serious. But if you have strong feelings of anxiety or depression, or you have been depressed in the past, get help right away. You could have postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression is very serious. If it is not treated, it can last for months or even years. It can keep you from caring for and enjoying your baby. Counseling, support groups, and medicines can help. There are medicines that are safe to take while you are breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor, or contact Postpartum Support International. Getting treatment will help you feel better and enjoy your family. Don’t wait to get help if you need it.

What Is Depression?

If you are depressed, you may feel bad about yourself. You may lack energy or have no interest in your relationships or work. You may have trouble sleeping or eating, or have frequent head or stomach aches. Counseling and medicine can help. If a medicine does not help or you have too many side effects, tell your doctor. Support groups and exercise may help, too.

About Counseling

Counseling can help you deal with relationship problems, depression, low self-esteem, stress, and grieving. Find a counselor you trust. Health plans cover some treatments. Ask what mental health services are covered by your health plan. For more information and to find a counseling program, visit www.mentalhealthamerica.net.

Children Feel Stress Too

Like adults, children can feel anxious and upset. Problems like fighting in the family and school difficulties can cause these feelings. Divorce and moving can also be hard. If you are worried about your child, talk to her. Children feel better when their parents hold them and talk to them in a loving way.

Help Your Child Manage Stress

After a long or difficult day, your child may need help to calm down. Try to keep regular routines for meals and bedtime. Give her a warm bath, hold her and read a storybook, or listen to music together. For more about the effects of long-term stress on children, see the chapter “Giving Your Baby the Best Start.”



Take a Breathing Break

To lower your stress level, think about your breathing for a minute or 2. Focus on taking in a slow, deep breath, then letting it out twice as slowly. See if you feel calmer after taking 5 breaths like this.



Where to Find Help

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Education and support for people with mental illness and their families
1-800-950-6264 www.nami.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
24-hour phone access to trained counselors and local crisis centers
1-800-273-8255 suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Postpartum Support International
24-hour support for new mothers with depression
1-800-944-4773 www.postpartum.net

SAMHSA National Helpline
24-hour confidential treatment referral and information service
1-800-662-4357 www.samhsa.gov/find-help



Things You Can Do

Tips to Help You Manage Your Stress

- Make a list of things that cause you stress. Choose a few to change.
- Do not try to change everything at once. Start with something that seems doable. When you succeed at that, keep going.
- Talk over problems with friends or relatives.
- Focus on what is going well in your life.
- Make some time for yourself every day.
- Get extra support during holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays.
- Try to avoid getting into debt. If you have debt, visit www.credit.org to learn about credit counseling and other types of financial advice.

Tips to Help Children Manage Their Stress

- Reassure your children and hug them often.
- Hold them and read to them.
- Try to keep regular routines. Children feel more secure when they know what to expect.
- Let children ask questions and talk about distressing events. Tell them it is OK to feel scared, angry, worried, or sad.

To Prevent Suicide

If you feel you might take your life, or if someone you know threatens to kill herself, call 9-1-1 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Or visit www.imalive.org to chat online with a trained volunteer.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

Frequent use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or even some prescription medicines can lead to health problems for you and your family.



“My drinking was hurting my relationship with my family. With help, I was able to stop.”

If you are pregnant, it can cause serious problems for your baby. If you smoke, vape, drink, or use drugs, get help. Do it for your family’s sake and for yours.

Signs of an Alcohol or Drug Problem

Check each “yes” answer.

- ☐ Do you feel you need it every day?
- ☐ Do you use more now than before?
- ☐ Do you use more than you want to?
- ☐ Do others say you use too much?
- ☐ Do you lie about how much you use?
- ☐ Does it cause you money problems?
- ☐ Does it cause problems with your job?
- ☐ Does it hurt the people around you?
- ☐ Does it cause you health problems?
- ☐ Do you want to stop but can’t?

Even one “yes” answer means you could have a problem and may need help.

Protect Your Developing Baby

Your unborn baby can be harmed by vaping and smoking. Breathing other people’s smoke or e-cigarette vapor is also harmful. Drinking alcohol or taking drugs or some medicines can also harm your baby. Talk with your doctor about ways to quit.

Keep Children Away from Smoke

- Secondhand smoke can cause colds, ear infections, asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia in children. It can also cause sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Smoke left on surfaces, clothes, and hair can also harm children.
- The vapor from e-cigarettes and vaping devices contains harmful chemicals and particles. It is not healthy for you or your child to breathe.
- If you cannot stop smoking or vaping right now, do it outdoors.
- Do not let anyone smoke or vape in your home or car. In California it is against the law to smoke in a car with a child present.

How to Stop Smoking

- Quitting is hard. But you can do it—for your own sake and your family’s. These tips can help.
- Set a quit date and tell your family and friends.
 - Get rid of all smoking products, including tobacco, marijuana, and e-cigarettes.
 - When you feel the urge to smoke, do something else. Suck on a hard candy or chew some sugarless gum.
 - Ask your doctor about treatments that can help you quit. These include medicines and nicotine patches or gum. You may qualify for free nicotine patches. Contact the California Smokers’ Helpline to find out more.
 - Join a quit-smoking program. To find a program, contact the California Smokers’ Helpline.
 - You can get free telephone counseling in your language. Call the California Smokers’ Helpline.



Things You Can Do

Do You Think You Could Have a Problem?

- Admitting you have a problem is the first step. Getting help is the second.
- You can go right away to a free support group like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA). What you say is confidential.
- If you are feeling stressed, talk to a counselor. See the “Emotional Health” chapter for more information.

If Someone in Your Family Has a Problem

- For help talking with your children about drugs and alcohol, call National Alcohol and Drug Information.
- If someone in your family has a drug or alcohol problem, you can get free support at an Al-Anon meeting.



Where to Find Help

- Al-Anon**
Free support groups for family and friends of people who abuse drugs or alcohol
1-888-425-2666 www.al-anon.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous**
Help to stop drinking
www.aa.org
- American Lung Association**
Help to stop smoking
1-800-586-4872 www.lung.org/stop-smoking/ahaheart
- California Smokers’ Helpline**
Free help in multiple languages to stop smoking
1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887) www.nobutts.org
- Narcotics Anonymous**
Help to stop taking drugs
www.na.org
- National Alcohol and Drug Information**
Treatment information and referrals
1-800-662-4357 www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse are serious problems. Young children, and even babies, are affected when they see or hear violence. Abuse can be physical, when someone hurts your body. It can also be verbal or emotional, like yelling, cruel words,

or a threat. Abuse can happen to men or women. No one, not even a family member, has the right to be violent or abusive. The law protects the rights of anyone who is being abused. Do not be afraid to get help for yourself or your children.

If You Suspect Child Abuse

If you suspect abuse or have questions about abuse and neglect, call the Child Protective Services number for your county, or call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline. Your call is private. If it is an emergency, call 9-1-1.

Signs of possible child abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises or marks
- Unexplained pain, swelling, or bleeding in the mouth, genitals, or anus
- Acting unusually sad, withdrawn, or frightened
- Acting unusually violent or aggressive
- Copying adult sexual behavior
- Trouble sleeping
- No interest in school or other activities

About Sexual Assault and Rape

Sexual assault is any sexual activity that you do not agree to, but it is done to you anyway. Rape is one type of sexual assault. If you have been sexually assaulted, do not blame yourself. Get help. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline or National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline.

If You Are Being Hurt

Do not blame yourself. It is not your fault. Help is available. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Abusing or Neglecting a Child Is Against the Law

Abuse includes hitting, yelling, or having sexual contact with a child. Neglect means not giving a child needed care, such as food and shelter, or leaving young children alone.

Most abuse happens at home, and most abusers are someone the child knows. Teach your children to tell you if they are being harmed or sexually abused. Take it seriously and report it. Call the Child Protective Services number for your county, or call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline.

Young children and babies cannot be left alone. Most children are not mature enough to come home to an empty house until they are about 11 or 12 years old. Children under 12 should usually not be left to care for younger children. Even at 12, it depends on how mature they are.

Signs of Violence and Abuse At Home

If someone close to you does any of these things, it could be a sign of abuse.

- ☐ Shoves or hits you, pulls your hair, or uses any other physical force against you
- ☐ Is very jealous
- ☐ Expects you to be perfect
- ☐ Keeps you from family and friends
- ☐ Uses physical force during sex
- ☐ Has sudden mood changes
- ☐ Abuses alcohol or drugs
- ☐ Threatens to report you to ICE
- ☐ Does not let you learn English
- ☐ Does not let you get a job
- ☐ Takes your money



Things You Can Do

Protect Yourself and Your Children

- In an emergency, call 9-1-1.
- If you are scared, talk to the police now. Set aside clothes and money for yourself and your children. You may need to leave in a hurry.
- Many areas have shelters where women and children can live safely. The shelter will help you get legal help and make plans for the future. To find a shelter, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
- If you no longer live with a partner who abused you, you can get a restraining order. This is a legal document that says the person cannot follow or bother you or your children. Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline to learn more.



Where to Find Help

California Child Abuse Reporting
24-hour hotlines for reporting child abuse or neglect in each county
www.cdss.ca.gov/complaints; click **Report Abuse**

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
Advice and help with child abuse
1-800-422-4453 www.childhelp.org/hotline

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Help for victims of domestic violence
1-800-799-7233 www.thehotline.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline
Support and referrals to local resources
1-800-656-4673 www.rainn.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
Support, information, resources, and live chat
1-866-331-9474 www.loveisrespect.org

Help Prevent Violence and Abuse

- Solve problems peacefully at home. Children who see or hear shouting and violence at home are more likely to be depressed and anxious.
- Abuse and neglect are more likely to happen when one or more family members are under extreme stress. This can include alcohol or drug problems, a violent relationship, or money problems. If your family is under this kind of pressure, use this guide to find help.

Disasters and Emergencies

After a disaster like an earthquake or flood, you might not get help for several days. You may not have electricity or phone service. Be ready

to help your family and those around you. You can be ready by planning ahead and following the tips on these pages.

Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Keep first aid kits in your home and car.
- Keep enough food, water, and medicine to last for 3 days.
- Know how to turn off your gas, water, and electricity.
- If you use medical equipment, such as a respirator, call your utility company and fire department. Ask about emergency backup services.
- Make disaster plans with your family and child care provider.
- Learn the disaster plans for your child's school.

When and How to Call 9-1-1

- Call 9-1-1 when you or someone close to you needs urgent help from the fire or police departments. Also call if someone needs an ambulance or medical help.
- Wait for someone to answer. Do not hang up. Stay calm.
- Say exactly where you are. Give the street address, the cross street, and the floor or apartment number.
- Use a regular phone, not a cell phone, if you can. That way the operator can trace where you are.
- Teach your children when to call 9-1-1.

When to Call Poison Control

Call the Poison Control Hotline anytime someone has been exposed to a harmful substance by:

- Swallowing it
- Breathing it in
- Getting it on the skin or in the eyes

1-800-222-1222 is the Poison Control Hotline number. It is answered 24 hours a day, every day.

What Is a Disaster Plan?

A disaster plan is an agreement with your family and loved ones about how you will stay safe and how you will stay in touch if a disaster happens. Here are the most important parts of a disaster plan:

- Talk to your family about disasters that could happen and what to do.
- Pick two places to meet after a disaster. The first should be your home, or right outside your home. The other place should be away from your neighborhood. Everyone in your family should know the address and phone number of both places.
- Choose a friend or family member who lives outside your area to be your "family contact." All family members should call this person and tell him where they are.



Where to Find Help

American Heart Association

Information and classes on first aid and CPR
1-888-CPR-LINE (277-5463) www.heart.org

American Red Cross

Information on preparing for disasters and help after a disaster
1-800-733-2767 www.redcross.org

Be Prepared California

Help with disaster preparedness
www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov

California 2-1-1

Nonemergency information and referrals, including in disasters
211 www.211ca.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Help after a disaster
1-800-525-0321 www.fema.gov

Help Prevent Fires

- Ask your fire department to make a safety inspection of your home.
- If you live in a wildfire area, ask how to make your house and land safe. Ask how you will be notified if there is a fire.
- Put in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. Check that they are working once a month. Change the batteries twice a year, when you change your clocks.
- Keep at least one ABC-type fire extinguisher on each floor. These put out oil, electrical, paper, and wood fires. Learn how to use your fire extinguisher.



Things You Can Do

After Any Disaster

- Check for injuries and give first aid.
- Listen to the radio for instructions.
- If you need food, shelter, clothing, or money for basic needs, call your local Red Cross.
- Call the Federal Emergency Management Agency or California 2-1-1.

In Case of Fire

- Get everyone out of the building. Then call 9-1-1.
- Stay close to the floor to get underneath smoke. Crawl out of the burning area.
- Do not open a door if the door or doorknob feels warm. Find another way out, or stay put and call 9-1-1.
- If your clothes catch fire, roll on the floor to put the fire out.
- If your child's clothes catch fire, smother the flames with a blanket.

In Case of an Earthquake

- Remember this rule: Drop, cover, and hold on. Look for a way to protect your head and body from falling items without moving around too much. If you are in bed, stay there and protect your head with a pillow.
- If you smell gas, get everyone outside and move away from the building. Otherwise, stay indoors until the shaking stops.
- If you are outdoors, stay away from buildings, power lines, trees, and street lights.



Home Safety Checklist

Go through your home with this checklist. Make a check mark in the box next to each item you can answer “yes” about. If there are things you cannot check, try to do them as soon as you can.

Every Room

- ☐ Are small objects out of reach?
- ☐ Are matches and lighters out of reach?
- ☐ Are there safety latches on low cabinets and drawers?
- ☐ Are electric outlets covered with safety plugs?
- ☐ Are electric cords out of reach?
- ☐ Are heaters and hot-air vents covered?
- ☐ Are cords on shades and curtains out of reach?
- ☐ Are houseplants out of reach?
- ☐ Is tall furniture fastened to the wall?
- ☐ Are there smoke and carbon monoxide alarms?
- ☐ Are there safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs?
- ☐ Do windows have guards or locks, to prevent falls?
- ☐ If windows have bars, are they quick-release?
- ☐ Do balconies have safety rails?
- ☐ If you have a gun, is it locked up?

In the Kitchen

- ☐ Are knives and sharp utensils out of reach?
- ☐ Do drawers and cabinets have safety latches?
- ☐ Are cleaning supplies in locked cabinets?

Outside

- ☐ Are the car doors locked, even in the garage?
- ☐ Is your yard fenced?
- ☐ If you have a pool, is it fenced?
- ☐ Is the pool gate always locked?

In the Bathroom

- ☐ Is there a childproof handle on the door?
- ☐ Are medicines in childproof containers?
- ☐ Are medicines, razors, and cosmetics locked up?
- ☐ Do you keep the toilet lid down?
- ☐ Are there slip-proof mats inside and outside of the tub?
- ☐ Are electric appliances unplugged and out of reach?
- ☐ Is the water heater set at 120° F to prevent burns?

Emergencies

- ☐ Are phone numbers for your doctor and Poison Control posted near your phone?
- ☐ Do you have an escape plan in case of fire?
- ☐ Are these emergency/first aid supplies in one place?
 - ☐ First aid kit
 - ☐ A portable radio with batteries
 - ☐ Food and water for 3 days
 - ☐ Flashlights and extra batteries
 - ☐ Warm clothes for the whole family
 - ☐ Blankets
 - ☐ Medicines that anyone in your family needs to take
 - ☐ Extra cash

List other safety changes you want to make:



Sources of Help and Information for Parents

The following is a list of phone numbers and websites. If a phone number has changed, call **1-800-555-1212** for the new number.

If you are deaf or have a speech disability, you can use the relay service, **7-1-1**. To learn more, visit ddtp.cpuc.ca.gov. Spanish information available unless otherwise noted.

Resource	Description	Phone number	Website
Pregnancy, Childhood, and Child Care			
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Help finding child care	1-800-543-7793	www.rnnetwork.org/find_child_care (Spanish not available)
California Department of Social Services	Contact information for county social services offices		www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices
California Kinship Navigator Program	Help for people who care for the child of a relative, like grandparents raising grandchildren	1-800-546-0047	www.cakinship.org
CalWorks Child Care	Help paying for child care or preschool		www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKs-Child-Care
First 5 California	Ideas and activities for boosting the brain power of children 0 to 5		www.first5california.com
Head Start/Early Head Start online locator	Search tool for Head Start centers nationwide		eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator
Healthy Families America	Home visits for new parents		www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/site-finder (Spanish not available)
La Leche League	Information and advice on breastfeeding	1-800-525-3243	www.llli.org
La Leche League Breastfeeding Helpline		1-877-452-5324	
March of Dimes	Information on prenatal care	1-888-663-4637 Spanish: 1-800-925-1855	www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy
National Council for Adoption	Information and support for adoptive families	1-703-299-6633 (Spanish not available)	www.adoptioncouncil.org (Spanish not available)
National Women's Health and Breastfeeding Helpline	Telephone support from the Federal Office on Women's Health	1-800-994-9662	www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning-breastfeed/finding-breastfeeding-support-and-information
Nurse-Family Partnership	Home visits for new parents	1-844-637-6667	www.nursefamilypartnership.org (Spanish not available)
Pathways	Information on early childhood development, parent hotline	1-800-955-2445	pathways.org
TrustLine	Background checks of in-home child care providers	1-800-822-8490	www.trustline.org

Food and Nutrition

CalFresh	California's SNAP/food stamps program; food aid for people with low incomes	1-877-847-3663	www.cdss.ca.gov/food-nutrition/calfresh
California 2-1-1	Information and referral to services, including food assistance and disaster help	2-1-1 (Spanish not available)	www.211ca.org (Spanish not available)

Resource	Description	Phone number	Website
California WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)	Advice and classes on breastfeeding and healthy eating; food coupons for women with low incomes	1-800-852-5770	m.wic.ca.gov
Choose My Plate	Information on healthy eating		www.choosemyplate.gov
Fast, Fresh, and Fun	Healthy-eating cookbook from First 5 California		www.first5california.com ; click Free Resources
Food Bank Finder	Search for a California food bank	1-866-321-4435	www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-bank
Foodsafety.gov	Information on how to keep and prepare food safely, as well as food recalls	1-888-723-3366	www.foodsafety.gov/risk/children
Nutrition.gov	Information on healthy eating		www.nutrition.gov

Health and Insurance

California Children's Services	Health care for children with certain diseases or health problems		www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs
California Dental Association	Help finding low-cost dental services	1-800-232-7645	www.cda.org/public-resources/low-cost-dental-services (Spanish not available)
California Department of Insurance	Help filing an appeal with your health insurance company	1-800-927-4357	www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/101-help
California Department of Managed Health Care	Information about and help with health insurance	1-888-466-2219	www.dmhca.ca.gov
California Department of Social Services	Contact information for county social services offices		www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices
California Employment Development Department	Information on State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Paid Family Leave: These provide time off to care for a new baby or other family members		www.edd.ca.gov/disability
California Health+	Network of community health centers	1-855-899-7587	www.californiahealthplus.org
California Immunization Registry	Help with finding immunization records		cairweb.org/parents-and-general-public
Centers for Disease Control	Information for parents on child development, vaccines, food safety, and more		www.cdc.gov/healthyliving
Covered California (California's Affordable Care Act Program)	Help with buying private health insurance or enrolling in Medi-Cal	1-800-300-1506	www.coveredca.com
Environmental Protection Agency	Tips on protecting children		www.epa.gov/children/what-you-can-do-protect-children-environmental-risks
Family PACT	Referrals to state-funded clinics for family planning services	1-800-942-1054	www.familypact.org
Find a Dentist	Search tool for finding dentists who see children and accept Medi-Cal dental insurance		www.insurekidsnow.gov/coverage/find-a-dentist/index.html
Find a Pediatrician	Search tool to find children's doctors		www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/find-pediatrician/Pages/Pediatrician-Referral-Service.aspx
Healthfinder.gov	Easy-to-use health information website		www.healthfinder.gov
Healthy Children	Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on children's health, safety, and well-being		www.healthychildren.org
Immunization Branch	Information about vaccines from the California Department of Public Health		www.cdph.ca.gov/immunize
KidsHealth	Information on children's health		www.kidshealth.org

Resource	Description	Phone number	Website
Medi-Cal	Health insurance if your income is low		www.coveredca.com/medi-cal
Medi-Cal Access Program	Low-cost health insurance for middle-income pregnant women	1-800-433-2611	mcap.dhcs.ca.gov
Newborn Hearing Screening	Local referrals for newborn hearing tests	1-877-388-5301	www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/nhsp
Newborn Screening Program	Information on newborn health tests		www.cdph.ca.gov/nbs
Office of Women’s Health	Information on women’s health, including a national health line	1-800-994-9662	www.womenshealth.gov
Planned Parenthood	Local referrals for birth control, prenatal care, and sexual health	1-800-230-7526	www.plannedparenthood.org
Shots for School	List of vaccines needed before starting school in California		www.shotsforschool.org
Social Security Administration	Information on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	1-800-772-1213	www.ssa.gov

Disability

California Department of Developmental Services Regional Centers	Help finding services for children with developmental disabilities	1-916-654-1690	www.dds.ca.gov/RC/index.cfm
California Department of Social Services	Contact information for county social services offices		www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices
California Early Start	Services for babies and toddlers at risk of disability or who have a disability	1-800-515-2229	www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart
California Employment Development Department	Information on State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Paid Family Leave: Time off to care for a new baby or other family members		www.edd.ca.gov/disability
California Independent Living Centers	Community-based help for people with disabilities	1-916-558-5775	www.rehab.cahwnet.gov/ils
Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)	Free relay services and phone equipment for deaf and disabled Californians	1-800-806-1191	ddtp.cpuc.ca.gov
Disability Rights California	Help with legal issues and getting services for people with disabilities	Voice: 1-800-776-5746 TTY: 1-800-719-5798	www.disabilityrightsca.org (Spanish not available)
Early Start Family Resource Centers	Support for families of children with disabilities	1-916-993-7781 (Spanish not available)	www.frcnca.org (Spanish not available)
My Child Without Limits	Information and support for parents of children with disabilities		www.mychildwithoutlimits.org
National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability	Fitness and sports for people with disabilities	1-800-900-8086	www.nchpad.org
Organizations for parents	List of California agencies providing resources for families of children with disabilities		www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/caprintorg.asp
Social Security Administration	Information on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	1-800-772-1213	www.ssa.gov
Through the Looking Glass	Information for parents with disabilities	1-800-644-2666	www.lookingglass.org (Spanish not available)

Resource	Description	Phone number	Website
Emotional Health and Violence Prevention			
California Child Abuse Reporting	24-hour hotlines for reporting child abuse or neglect in each county		www.cdss.ca.gov/Reporting/Report-Abuse/Child-Protective-Services/Report-Child-Abuse
California Department of Social Services	Contact information for county social services offices		www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices
Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline	Help with discipline problems and parent stress; child abuse prevention	1-800-422-4453	www.childhelp.org/hotline (Spanish not available)
IMAlive	Suicide prevention and mental health support provided by volunteers via online chat		www.imalive.org
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	Education and support for people with mental illness and their families	1-800-950-6264	www.nami.org
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	Information and resources for missing and exploited children	1-800-843-5678	www.missingkids.com
National Domestic Violence Hotline	Help for victims of domestic violence	1-800-799-7233	www.thehotline.org
National Parent Helpline	Emotional and practical support for parents and caregivers	1-855-427-2736	www.nationalparenthelpline.org/find-support/state-resources/california-resources
National Sexual Assault Hotline	Support and referrals to local resources	1-800-656-4673	www.rainn.org
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	24-hour phone access to trained counselors and local crisis centers	1-800-273-8255	suicidepreventionlifeline.org
National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline	Support, information, resources, and live chat	1-866-331-9474	www.loveisrespect.org
Postpartum Support International	24-hour support for new mothers with depression	1-800-944-4773	www.postpartum.net

Learning and Technology

California School Directory	Online search tool; information about schools		www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory
Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood	Information on how advertising works and sensible media use		www.commercialfreechildhood.org
Common Sense Media	Reviews and ratings for kids' shows, websites, and programs		www.common sense media.org
Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions	Information about starting school in California		www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/em/kindergartenfaq.asp
National Association for the Education of Young Children	Information on quality child care, help finding child care	1-800-424-2460 (Spanish not available)	families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care (Spanish not available)
National Center for Learning Disabilities	Information on learning disabilities	1-888-575-7373 (Spanish not available)	www.ncld.org (Spanish not available)
Talking Is Teaching	Information, videos, and tips for talking, reading, and singing with your child		talkingisteaching.org
Zero to Three	Information on early childhood	1-800-899-4301 (Spanish not available)	www.zerotothree.org

Resource	Description	Phone number	Website
Safety and Emergencies			
American Heart Association	Information and classes on first aid and CPR	1-888-CPR-LINE (277-5463)	www.heart.org
American Red Cross	Information on preparing for disasters and help after a disaster	1-800-733-2767	www.redcross.org
Be Prepared California	Help with disaster preparedness		www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov
Child Safety Seats	Information from the highway patrol on how to secure your child in a car seat; includes child safety videos	1-800-835-5247	www.chp.ca.gov/Programs-Services/Programs/Child-Safety-Seats
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	How to prepare for and deal with disasters	1-800-525-0321	www.fema.gov
Kids and Cars	Information about keeping children safe around vehicles	1-913-732-2792	www.kidsandcars.org (Spanish not available)
Lead Hotline	Help to prevent lead poisoning	1-800-424-5323	www.epa.gov/lead
Poison Control Hotline	Emergency help for victims of poisoning	1-800-222-1222	www.calpoison.org (Spanish not available)
Safe Kids California	How to prevent childhood injuries		www.safekidscalifornia.org (Spanish not available)
Safercar.gov	Information on car safety for parents, including car seats	1-866-732-8243	www.safercar.gov/parents (Spanish not available)
Seat Check	Where to get your car seat checked, information on choosing and using a car seat	1-866-732-8243	www.seatcheck.org
Vehicle Safety Hotline	Information on car and highway safety from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	1-888-327-4236	www.nhtsa.gov (Spanish not available)

Substance Abuse

Al-Anon	Free support groups for family and friends of people who abuse alcohol or drugs	1-888-425-2666	www.al-anon.org
Alcohol and Drug Programs County Directory	Listing of alcohol and drug treatment programs by county	1-877-685-8333 (Spanish not available)	www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/DMC-CountyNumbersDirectory.aspx
Alcoholics Anonymous	Help to stop drinking		www.aa.org
American Lung Association	Help to stop smoking	1-800-586-4872	www.lung.org/stop-smoking
California Smokers’ Helpline	Free help in multiple languages to stop smoking	1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887)	www.nobutts.org
Narcotics Anonymous	Help to stop taking drugs	1-818-773-9999	www.na.org (Spanish not available)
National Alcohol & Drug Information	Information and referrals for substance abuse and mental health treatment	1-800-662-4357	www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov (Spanish not available)



First 5 California

2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95833
916-263-1050
info@ccfc.ca.gov
www.first5california.com

Camille Maben, *Executive Director*
Vernetia Syphax, *Information Officer*

First 5 California Commission Members

George Halvorson, *Chair*
Lupe Jaime, *Vice Chair*
Muntu Davis
Shana Hazan
Alejandra Campoverdi
Monica Fitzgerald
Molly Munger
Diana Dooley, *Ex Officio Member,*
Health and Human Services Agency

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The University of California, Berkeley

For more information about this and other publications, contact:
Health Research for Action
School of Public Health
University of California, Berkeley
2140 Shattuck Avenue, 10th Floor
Berkeley, CA 94704-1210
510-643-9543
healthaction@berkeley.edu
www.healthresearchforaction.org

Stefano M. Bertozzi, *MD, PhD*
Dean, School of Public Health
Linda Neuhauser, *DrPH,*
Co-Principal Investigator
S. Leonard Syme, *PhD*
Co-Principal Investigator
Anthony Eleftherion
Director of Communications
Becca Freed, *Senior Writer*
Karen Sokal-Gutierrez, *MD, MPH*
Consultant

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