



Government of Western Australia  
Child and Adolescent Health Service  
WA Country Health Service



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Your child

2-4

Years

health

family

development





## About this magazine

The **Child and Adolescent Health Service** and **WA Country Health Service** are here to support you to raise a happy and healthy child.



This magazine includes a range of information and advice for your child between the ages of 2 and 4 years. The articles are based on current 'best practice', and have been written by experienced health professionals and reviewed by a wide range of families.

The magazine has been designed to be used with your child's **Purple Book** by providing extra background information about your child's growth and health.

As this magazine covers 2 years of your child's life, we will generally use the word 'child'. However, when we're specifically referring to 2 year olds, we may use the term 'toddler'.

### Acknowledgement of country and people

The Child and Adolescent Health Service and the WA Country Health Service acknowledge Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia.

We acknowledge the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present, and pay respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

### Have your say

We also welcome your feedback to help us continue improving this magazine and how we work with families – see back cover.



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## Child health nurses

Child health nurses are specially trained in child and family health, and work in local child health centres.

- They offer health and development checks at key stages of your child's life.
- They can assist with the many aspects of parenting and family health.
- They can link you to local services and doctors in your community, as well as hospitals and other health professionals when needed.

Your child health nurse appointments are a great opportunity to discuss your child's health and development. The nurse will check that your child is growing and learning new skills as expected. The visits are also a good time to talk about how you are doing – how you're feeling and coping, and any concerns you are having looking after your child.

**We recommend you visit the child health nurse while your child is 2 years old.**

**You can also visit or contact your nurse at any other time if you are worried or have any questions.**

## Booking

If you live in the Perth metropolitan area you can make appointments by calling **1300 749 869** or register for an appointment at [health.wa.gov.au/purplebook](http://health.wa.gov.au/purplebook)

If you live outside the metro area please contact your local child health centre for a booking.

To find your local child health centre (metro and non-metro) visit [health.wa.gov.au/Services-Search](http://health.wa.gov.au/Services-Search), or Google 'child health centre'.

## Drop-in sessions

**Some centres offer drop-in sessions when you want to:**

- see the nurse for a quick question
- get parenting information and support.

You don't need an appointment – your nurse will tell you about local drop-in sessions.

★ **If you think your child is sick, you need to see a doctor. Your child health nurse cannot help when your child is sick.**



**Always bring your child's Purple Book (All about me) to your appointments.**

## Other services

If needed, the Child and Adolescent Health Service and WA Country Health Service offer families additional help in areas such as Aboriginal Health, Child Development and school health.

You can also self-refer to the Child Development Service if you have concerns about your child's development.

## School health

Children learn better when they feel healthy, safe and happy.

Our nurses provide health services to school children and their families from kindergarten right through to Year 12.

We offer all children a free health check the year they start school.

Once enrolled, your child's school will give you a School Entry Health Assessment form together with information about the health check. The form asks about your child's health and development to provide information to the nurse who will be doing the health check. You can add extra information about your child, if you want.

## Kindy talk

Kindy talks are aimed at parents with Kindy-aged children. It is offered by school health nurses in either term 4 (before your child starts Kindy) or in term 1 (the year your child starts Kindy).

The talk includes the role of nurses in schools, the School Entry Health Assessment, growth and development, nutrition and lunch boxes, and physical activity.

Your child's school will let you know if they offer a Kindy talk.



**Kids Health Matters** provides trusted advice on common child health concerns from leading WA child health experts.

Find out more at [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childhealthresources](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childhealthresources) or scan the QR code.



## Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/parentinggroups](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/parentinggroups)
- Playgroup WA

## Parenting groups

### Circle of security (up to 6 years)

This is an 8-week program with one 2-hour session each week. It's aimed at parents and carers who are interested in finding different ways to connect with their child or manage their child's behaviour.

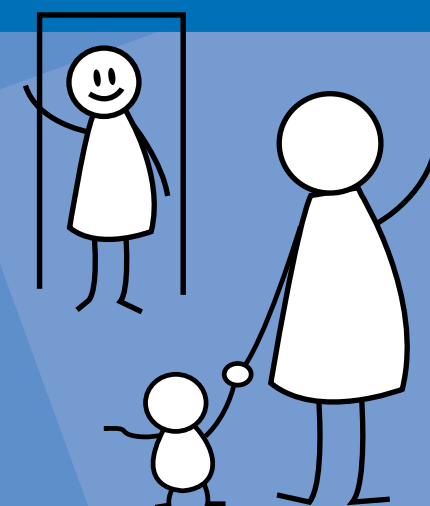
This program will help you to understand and learn to read your child's emotional needs. Through the program you'll learn to support your child to manage emotions and develop their self-esteem, to help your child feel more secure.

Talk to your child health nurse or visit [healthywa.wa.gov.au/ParentGroups](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/ParentGroups) to see if this group is suitable for you.

## Playgroups

A playgroup is a group of parents, carers and extended family who come together with their babies and children to learn together through play. Your child will benefit from the social experience, plus playgroup is a place for parents to make friends and learn from each other.

Child health nurses offer health and development checks at key stages of your child's life.







## Your child's development Relationships

You'll see a lot of change between 2 and 4 years.

Your child is becoming their own person, developing language, problem-solving and social skills. This may affect your relationship as they become more confident and independent.

### Your 2 year old:

- should talk in sentences and may sometimes seem more grown up than they really are. It's important to remember that even at this age, they're still a baby in many ways.
- can wait a little while, but not for long
- may hold strong feelings inside for a little bit, but these feelings can easily burst out in a rush of excitement, fear or frustration, which can be very frightening for them.

### Your 3 to 4 year old:

- should begin to be OK about spending time away from you
- should have a rich imagination, and love to play and be physically active
- may sometimes be scared of things or hesitate to try something new.

Loving and stable relationships are essential to your child's emotional and physical development, both now and in the future. Your child will be better able to cope with stress, have fewer behaviour problems, and have a healthy self-esteem and rewarding relationships.

It is important your child knows that they can always count on you – not only when they are happy, but also when they are upset or not feeling 'OK'.

### Changing relationships

Better language skills mean you can start having conversations, and your child can start telling you how they feel and what they're thinking. It's important to really listen, so your child knows you care about what they're saying and thinking.

Your child can say how they're feeling – happy, sad, angry – and knows that you have feelings too. It's a good time to teach them to say 'sorry' and when to say it – apologising for your own mistakes also helps them to understand about saying 'sorry'.

## How can you develop healthy parent-child relationships?

Try to consistently respond to your child with warmth and love, as this helps develop trust in you and trust in the world around them.

- **Actively listen to your child.**
  - When they are talking, stop and make eye contact – and show you're listening by saying things like 'Wow! What happened next?'
- **Spend quality time with your child.**
  - Make sure they have time to do things they enjoy – join in, even if only for a few minutes.
  - Pay full attention to your child when you're together – try to put your phone away at these times.
  - Eat meals together as a family.
- **More conversations mean more questions.**
  - Take these seriously, and try and provide real answers, so your child knows to trust what you say.
  - It's OK to say if you don't know the answer – or try and work the answer out together!
  - If the topic is difficult, like a pet dying, use simple language that your child can understand, and tell them if you're feeling sad too. It's important to encourage conversation about tough topics so your child knows they can always talk to you about anything.
- **Cuddle your child often** – but only if they want to be cuddled (see page 20).

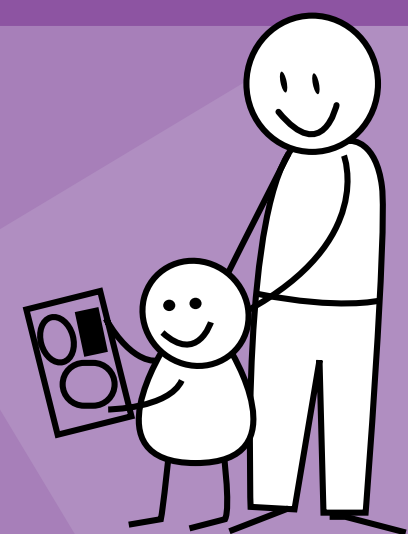
- **Read books and sing together.**
- **Help your child's growing independence.**
  - Let them take the lead in exploring and play – help them just enough when they need it. (You still need to make sure they're safe as young children aren't aware of danger.)
  - Get them to help with simple jobs like setting the table – this helps your child feel 'big' and helpful.

You can find lots more tips and ideas on the free Bright Tomorrows Parenting App.

## What if I have concerns about my relationship with my child?

Sometimes it can be hard to relate to your child the way you want to. If you have any concerns about connecting with your child, or feel you don't understand or know how to respond to their needs, talk to your child health nurse or your doctor.

Spend quality time with your child.



### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Circle of Security ([CircleOfSecurityInternational.com](http://CircleOfSecurityInternational.com))
- Bright Tomorrows Parenting App
- Raising Children Network



## Talking and communication

### 2 to 3 years

Your 2 year old's language is developing very quickly.

- You'll start to get an idea of what's going on inside their head. You're beginning to communicate through conversations, which can be very exciting.
- Your toddler's words or sentences might not always make sense to you, but the more they manage to get their message across, the more they'll want to communicate.
- By 2, your toddler will be naming lots of things – dog, ball, drink – and putting 2 words together – 'Daddy gone'.
- By 3, they'll be saying short sentences – 'Mummy, look at the dog!'
- Around 2, they can follow instructions – 'Please bring your shoes here'.
- By 3, follow more complex instructions – 'Please get your shoes from your room and bring them here'.
- Toddlers can't say all their words clearly – some sounds are hard to say.
  - If you can understand, repeat what they've said more clearly, then provide an answer. Your toddler needs to hear their words clearly. At this stage, they don't understand that their talking may not be clear.

#### ★ Contact your child health nurse or doctor if your toddler:

- isn't using short sentences when they want something or is often hard to understand
- seems to be in a 'world of their own' – not responding when other people talk to them most of the time.

### 3 to 4 years

Your 3 year old is now talking in simple sentences.

There is so much going on inside their head that often the words can't come out fast enough to describe it all!

Enjoy sharing in your child's wonderful imagination – this can include some children constantly asking questions.



- Your child can usually let you know what they want.
- They will love you reading to them – they may want the same book over and over – and over!
- Most 3 year olds speak very clearly, but may stumble over some longer words.
- **Your 3 year old:**
  - can understand 1000 words or more
  - can understand 'place' words – 'under', 'on', 'beside', 'back', 'over'
  - will ask lots of 'What', 'Who', 'Where' and 'Why' questions
  - can talk about what happened yesterday and about tomorrow.

#### ★ Contact your child health nurse or doctor if your child:

- speaks in a way that's often hard to understand
- isn't using sentences of 3 or more words.

#### Be patient

Help your child by building on what they say to you.

- Don't correct 'wrong' words – be positive and include the correct word in your answer.
- Try to slow down your child's constant questions by asking them questions instead, or suggest some 'quiet time' – at least for a few minutes!



### Books and reading

Telling stories, talking and singing are really important for many areas of your child's development.

Your child is learning about sounds, words, language and reading, and books. This not only helps with the important skill of learning to read and to enjoy reading, but helps your child learn to focus.

Reading stimulates imagination and helps your child learn new things, including feelings and social skills, and about other cultures. It's also a lovely time to share and bond with your child.

- Have a routine that includes some reading time every day. Have a bookshelf and special reading spot if you can.
- Turn off any screens (including your phone) and other distractions.
- Sit together so your child can see your face and the pages of the book.
- Choose books with lots of colour, repetition and rhythm.
- Join your local library, and let your child start choosing books – if it's too hard, pick out 3 books, and ask them to choose one.

#### For 2 year olds, reading is all about having fun with books.

- Help your toddler choose a book, hold it and turn the pages.
- Read aloud with lots of silly voices and sounds.
- Let your toddler finish sentences when you're reading familiar books.
- Ask your toddler to talk about the pictures.
- Be prepared to read the same book over and over again. Your child is learning from this repetition.

#### With 3 year olds:

- Start talking about a book before you read it – why they chose the book and what the story might be about.
- Use your finger to follow the words, or get your child to do this.
  - Point out things like capital letters and full stops, and sound out some of the words.
  - See if your child can see any letters that are in their own name.
- Talk about what might happen next or how the character might be feeling.
  - Talk about how your child might feel if something similar happened to them.
  - Ask if they liked the book and why.

Find out more about choosing books and learning to read at [better-beginnings.com.au](http://better-beginnings.com.au)





## Development: 2 to 3 years

### Social and emotional

Your 2 year old is learning about relationships.

Toddlers can sometimes notice other people's feelings, but most of the time, their own feelings are so strong that they don't have room to think about anyone else.

They can't see things from another person's point of view. This isn't selfish – they still think that everyone thinks and feels the same way as they do.

Your toddler is only just beginning to learn how to calm down, and often needs help with this. They can feel very bad if they think they've done something wrong.

Your 2 year old is still learning to see themselves as a separate person.

- They know what they want and can seem bossy.
  - They can get upset when you don't let them do something or if they can't do it themselves.
  - Tantrums are common because your toddler hasn't yet learned to manage their feelings.

- They can't understand reason or control impulses yet. Even if your toddler knows what you want them to do, it can be hard for them to do this if they want to do something else – they're not deliberately being 'naughty'.
- Your toddler may play with other children for a while but won't share. They'll do what they want, and may grab and push.
- They can find it hard to wait or make a choice.
- Your toddler loves to copy what adults do, like dressing up or digging in the garden.

### Developing understanding

The world is big and complicated – your toddler is trying to understand how it all makes sense.

- Because they can only see a little bit of how it works, your toddler fills in the rest with their imagination, so their world is a mixture of 'real' and imagined.
- Give your toddler simple explanations when they ask questions.

Be careful with adult talk around your toddler – they understand words better than they understand the world. Your toddler can easily misunderstand adult conversations, especially about themselves or people they know, which can be very worrying.

Your 2 year old doesn't yet understand:

- that their mind is separate from other people's – they think you know what they're thinking.
- what is real and what is not real, including what they see on TV. Your toddler may blame the path if they fall over, or think a cup fell because it wanted to.
- the difference between things that are alive and can think, and things that are not.

Toddlers think in 'black and white', with nothing between – things are either right or wrong, good or bad.

### Physical skills

Your toddler is physically much more confident and adventurous now, but may not always know when to stop.

Some toddlers are shy and careful, but many will test the limits of their physical abilities. There's so much to explore! Your toddler may love to run (often away from you), climb and swing, and ride on toys. Bumps and minor falls are common.

Your toddler's starting to learn to climb up and down stairs, kick a ball (but not usually in the right direction), stand on 1 leg, and jump off a step.

They're starting to undress themselves and may be able to put on some clothes.

### Helping your 2 year old develop physical skills is really important!

- Provide lots of chances to play safely outside in nature, playgrounds and parks (see page 18).

- However, don't let your toddler run too far or climb too high without bringing them back. Your toddler can't understand danger yet, so you need to keep them safe (see page 45).
- Try to limit using negative words like 'no' and 'don't'. When you need to guide your toddler's behaviour, try to suggest alternatives and explain why (the danger) as simply as you can.
- Always let your toddler know that you are there for them to return to.

### How to help your toddler develop (See page 15 for more play ideas.)

The more things you let children try, the more they'll learn.

- Talk with your toddler and ask questions about what they're doing. Answer their questions. Show a real interest in what they're doing and saying – this helps them be confident about talking.
- Enjoy their achievements with them.
- Encourage your toddler to explore, while keeping an eye on their physical and emotional safety.
- Sing simple songs together – and provide things to bang on.
- Toddlers enjoy painting and drawing, so provide big pieces of paper and pencils, crayons or paints. Talk about the story their drawing tells.
- Remember that they're still only little – offer alternatives, talk about feelings, and give your toddler some dedicated 'special' time every day.







### Be positive.

- Help your toddler believe that the world is a positive place.
- Focus on their achievements, however small, rather than mistakes to help them succeed when they try something new.
- Provide lots of love, fun, approval and encouragement. But you also need to start setting limits that you can – and are prepared to – keep.

### When to be concerned about your toddler's development

All 2 year olds are different and develop at different rates.

If you are worried about your toddler's development, or if they can't do things they used to do, it's important to see your doctor or child health nurse. Sometimes children need a little help with their development and getting in early will help – and if nothing's wrong, it's good to know that they're developing OK.

#### ★ Contact your child health nurse or doctor if your toddler:

- often has tantrums
- seems to be in a 'world of their own', and doesn't interact or play with others
- can't safely climb stairs or onto low furniture
- doesn't run as smoothly as other children of the same age
- is much more – or much less – active than other children of the same age, or gets tired very quickly
- can't feed themselves
- doesn't use short sentences or follow simple instructions.

## Development: 3 to 4 years

Your 3 year old is moving from being a toddler into childhood.

They're beginning to be OK about spending time away from you.

They have a rich imagination, and love to play and be physically active. However, this means they may be scared of things too, or hesitate to try new things.

### Social and emotional

Your 3 year old is just starting to learn how to get on with others. They can manage strong feelings a lot better now, but will probably still have some tantrums.

They're starting to understand social skills like sharing and being kind, but only when they feel safe and happy.

- Three year olds often enjoy being around and playing with other children. Your child is learning that other people are real and have feelings – and can get upset when other people are upset.
- Taking turns is a skill that they'll learn as they approach 4, but they still probably won't share if they're upset or tired.
- Your child can usually wait a short time for what they want – 'We will go out after you eat your lunch'.
- Your 3 year old is starting to accept that they can't have everything they want, and is less likely to have tantrums than when they were 2. They're eager to please you, so with your help, they might be happy to try something else or wait a few minutes.

- Your child may still be scared of monsters, noises, the dark or some animals.
- Your child now has a sense of humour, and loves to laugh at situations and repeat silly (and sometime rude) words.
- Give your child choices but keep them limited – 'You can wear your red or blue shoes'.
- It's OK if your child still needs a blanket, special toy or other comforter when tired or away from home.
- Your child is starting to take responsibility for toileting, but may still have accidents (wet pants) during the day and be wet at night (see page 38).

### Developing understanding

Your 3 year old may still find it difficult to sort out 'pretend' and 'real'. Can a witch really put a spell on you? Can children grow wings and fly like in picture books?

Three year olds don't tell 'lies' as such, but sometimes imagination and reality get mixed up. Never laugh at your child's confusion, and use simple information when explaining things.

#### Your 3 year old:

- now understands that their mind is separate from yours, and that you can't read their mind
- shows some understanding of time, and that night follows day
- understands the meaning of tall, short, big and little, but still thinks that a tall, thin glass holds more than a short fat one – so there can be mistakes with pouring
- enjoys pretend play such as dress-ups
- can say how old they are.

### Physical skills

- Your child will really start to enjoy physical activity – running, jumping, swinging, climbing, dancing and riding a tricycle or scooter.
- They might get tired and cranky if they don't have some quiet time between 'exercise'.
- You still need to make sure your child stays safe – always supervise them.

- As children are learning more complicated skills, they may become less coordinated and lose confidence – or become more frustrated – for a while between 3½ and 4, but these skills should return very quickly.

#### Your child:

- will love to splash and play with water. Always supervise children around water.
- can run fast and stop without falling over
- can walk up and down stairs by themselves
- will be able to walk along a plank because their balance is better
- can use pedals on a tricycle
- can roll and bounce a ball, and is getting better at catching
- can throw a ball with 2 hands, using shoulders and elbow
- can eat with a spoon and fork.







## SAFETY!

Toddlers and young children do **NOT** understand about danger.

You need to watch your child now they are exploring, moving faster and farther, and reaching many more places and things – even climbing on things to reach higher.

(See page 42 for more about safety and young children.)

## How to help your child develop

The more things you let your child try, the more they'll learn. Enjoy their achievements with them.

- Give your child lots of freedom for physical activities – riding a tricycle or scooter, ball games, learning to swim. Remember that 3 and 4 year olds are too young for team games.
- Where possible, allow your child lots of time to 'get things right' or to do it for themselves – be patient!
- Give your child plenty of warning before they have to finish an activity, pack up toys or get ready to leave the house.
- Provide simple games with turns and rules so they can start to learn about cooperation.
- Children of this age enjoy rhythm. Sing simple songs together – and provide things to bang on.
- Your child will enjoy painting and drawing, so provide big pieces of paper and pencils, crayons or paints. Talk about the story their drawing tells.
- Provide books with pictures that tell a story – ask questions about the pictures and talk about the story.
- At this age, it's OK to let your child watch a few appropriate TV shows (see page 19). Just like books, they may want to watch the same thing over and over again.  
Try and watch together, talk about the show, and repeat the songs and activities with your child.

- Provide lots of love, fun, approval and encouragement. But you also need to start setting limits that you can – and are prepared to – keep.



### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network
- Bright Tomorrows App
- Better Beginnings  
(better-beginnings.com.au)



## When to be concerned about your child's development

All 3 year olds are different and develop at different rates.

If you are worried about your child's development, or if they can't do things they used to do, it's important to see your doctor or child health nurse.

Sometimes children need a little help with their development and getting in early will help – and if nothing's wrong, it's good to know that they're developing normally.

### ★ Contact your child health nurse or doctor if your child:

- is difficult to understand when they talk, or if they're not using sentences of 3 or more words
- doesn't seem to understand what you say to them, or can't follow instructions
- doesn't talk often during play
- doesn't play pretend or make-believe, or plays the same way over and over again
- isn't interested in using the toilet or is frightened to use it
- stays scared of things for a long time
- doesn't play with other children or adults, or is often aggressive with other children
- can't jump with both feet off the ground.

## Play with your child

Play is important for your child's learning, development, growth and health.

- Your child's brain develops faster in the first 5 years than at any other time. This is when the foundations for development, learning and health are all being laid down.
- You are your child's first teacher and playmate. Children learn best when they are actively involved and having fun with you during everyday activities, so spend time each day playing, learning and having fun with your child.
- Through play, children learn skills like moving, thinking, speaking, socialising, and how to manage emotions.

### When it comes to play, 2 year olds:

- need lots of active play – climbing, jumping, walking, running (see page 18)
- like playing with things - push and pull-along toys, blocks, hammering, sit-and-ride toys, simple puzzles, putting objects in and out of containers, sand and water, balls and bats
- enjoy talking about play – 'all gone', 'more cars', 'big ball'
- are still learning how to share
- may start to play further away from you, but still like to be able to see you
- love to do everything themselves – 'me do it!' There will be fewer tantrums if you let them have a go and praise their effort.



## When it comes to play, 3 year olds: What you can do:

- have high energy levels so need lots of active play – running, climbing, hopping, jumping, sliding, swinging, dancing and starting to ride a scooter or bike with trainer wheels (see page 18)
- are getting better at ball games
- enjoy drawing and painting, holding a pencil well in their preferred hand. Their drawings are easier to recognise – people, faces, houses.
- are able to listen to short stories, and begin to enjoy jokes
- ask lots of questions and want to know about everything
- are getting better at sitting still – enjoying simple card and board games that involve taking turns, memory and thinking skills
- enjoy more social play with other children – learning how to share and play together, especially pretend play.
- Be available – find lots of small amounts of time every day to do fun things together. Get down to their level, show interest – copy what they do and encourage them to copy you.
- Let your child make choices about how to play.
- Try not to rush your child when they're trying something new, and allow time for lots of repetition.
- Be ready to settle disagreements if several young children are playing together.
- Limit screen time – children learn best through doing things (see page 19).
- Join your local playgroup and toy library.

Don't expect your child to always do everything you ask, especially while they're already doing something they enjoy.

- Warn your child a few minutes before they need to stop what they're doing.
- Your child will learn that, even though they have to leave, they'll come back for another play.
- Sometimes it helps to offer something else fun, like 'we're going home to see mum'.

It might be upsetting if your child cries when it's time to leave the playground, but remember that they were having fun, so don't stay away from playgrounds. They are fun, and good places to learn skills such as climbing and running.

### Some activities to try:

- Include play in everyday activities – while driving, hanging out the washing, and during mealtime and bath time.
- Play pretend and dress-ups – children love to make up and act out stories – shopping, doctors, mums and dads, fairies and superheroes. Providing things like dolls and toy animals, toy cars and trucks, gardening and DIY tools, and cooking equipment can help.
- Get outdoors and active – simple outdoor activity is ideal for young children. Let them have fun on swings, slides and climbing frames – or balancing on logs.



- Children enjoy playing with balls – a soft ball is great to practise catching, throwing and kicking.
- As your child gets more confident, they'll enjoy challenges such as riding scooters, trikes and bikes, visiting playgrounds, playing ball games, trampolines and swimming. Make sure your child is safe – but let them try things on their own.
- As your child gets more patient, try some table top games – puzzles (around 10 pieces), dominoes, card matching or simple board games.

### Keeping your child safe

(See page 42 for more on safety.)

- Supervise your child closely all the time, especially around water, play equipment, or when they're using things like scissors, pencils, glue or paint.
- Babies, toddlers and young children can choke on small toys and objects. Keep older children's toys away from younger brothers and sisters.
- Check toys regularly to make sure they are safe. Strings on toys should be less than 20 centimetres long.
- Do regular safety checks to make sure your home is safe for your child to explore.

## Homemade toys

Homemade toys are fun, easy to make, cheap, and help to develop your child's creativity. Make toys together – involve your child in recycling boxes and containers.

- Ball – Make a ball by stuffing the end of a stocking with paper to make a softball-size ball. Or put a tennis ball in a stocking and hang from a branch.
- Car/bus/fire-engine – Use a strong box big enough for your child to sit in. Add some wheels and a steering wheel using lids and paper plates. Decorate together.
- Boxes are also great for building cubbies or setting up a shop.
- Puppets and masks – Decorate a paper plate, paper bag or old sock to make masks or puppets.
- Puzzles – Make your own using calendar pictures or photos glued onto cardboard and cut into shapes.
- Dress-ups – Make hats from plastic containers or wigs from wool or long socks plaited together and fixed to a beanie. Keep a box of old clothes – hats, scarves, shirts, dresses, handbags and shoes.
- Musical instruments – Make drums from plastic containers, cardboard tubes, saucepans or tins, and shakers from cardboard rolls filled with rice, lentils or beans, sealed at each end with tape. Make guitars from cardboard, using string or wool for the strings.

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Nature Play WA ([natureplaywa.org.au](http://natureplaywa.org.au))
- Ngala
- Playgroup WA
- Raising Children Network



## Active play

Active play gets your child moving, and should raise their heart rate.

**Young children need to be active every single day because it helps:**

- build strong bones and muscles, and maintain a healthy weight
- improve balance and coordination
- improve learning and thinking
- keep them healthy – physically, mentally and emotionally.

**Your child should get a daily total of at least 3 hours of physical activity spread across the day, including an hour of energetic play such as:**

- walking, running, climbing and jumping
- kicking and throwing
- dancing.

Try to make the activities fun to encourage your child to keep doing them, and to explore and discover new things about the world and themselves.

Active play doesn't have to be organised, or have rules or special equipment. Young children need lots of time and space to just run around and play. Backyards, school and park playgrounds, parks, and the beach are all great places for active play.



**Active play can be:**

- inside your home, such as dancing to music
- at the beach, in the bush, your garden or at the park – such as running and climbing, or ball play
- outdoors or in a shopping centre, such as walking – instead of sitting in the stroller – or playing on play equipment.

## Screen time

Screen time is the amount of time spent looking at all screens including TVs, computers, smartphones, tablets and video consoles.

For children aged between 2 and 5, limit screen time to 1 hour or less each day.

### Why limit screen time?

For healthy development, your child needs:

- face-to-face contact and social interaction with adults and other children to develop social skills
- to learn to entertain themselves without screens. This helps them learn how to experiment, think, learn and solve problems.
- to be active for at least 3 hours throughout the day. Children usually don't move during screen time.

**Screen time can affect sleep:**

- Screen time just before bed can delay how quickly your child falls asleep or the quality of sleep they get.
- Sharing a book or story together is a healthy way to calm down and prepare for sleep.

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- eSafetyparents ([esafety.gov.au/parents](https://esafety.gov.au/parents))
- Raising Children Network



### How you can help:

- Set an example with your own use of technology. Avoid checking the phone when you're with your child, such as during meals, bath time, story time and play times.
- Turn off TVs and other screens when not in use, or when you're playing, reading and talking with your child.
- Set limits around screen time and stick to them. When your child does use technology, choose content that helps them learn skills like problem solving.
- Balance screen time with physical and creative activities and other types of play.
- At times when your child can't be physically active, like a rainy day, choose other activities that help build skills such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling.
- Don't feel you need to introduce technology at this age. Your child will learn how to use technology when they are older.
- Learn about staying safe on line, and talk with your child about using technology, staying safe and making good choices.

Children need social interaction to develop social skills



### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Nature Play WA ([natureplaywa.org.au](https://natureplaywa.org.au))
- Ngala
- Playgroup WA
- Raising Children Network



## Talking about body safety

Everyone has the right to be safe and feel safe.

Even at this age, it's important to talk to your child about their body and keeping safe. Talk about:

- when they feel safe and what they feel
- when they might have felt unsafe or scared – and how they knew they felt unsafe. (Ask them to talk about how they felt, if they can.)
- early warning signs (physical sensations) like butterflies in their tummy or their heart beating really fast
- how, if they ever feel like this, it's important for them to tell someone they feel safe with. Help them choose people they can speak to if they feel unsafe – this could be a parent, family member or family friend.

Of course, your child can't make all the decisions, such as having a bath or sitting in their car restraint. If you can, try and give choices at these times, such as 'Should we use your special bubble bath?', but also explain that you need to keep them safe and healthy, and that this sometimes means doing things they don't want.

### Body parts

It's important to be comfortable and teach your child the right words for all their body parts, including 'private' parts such as nipples, vagina and penis, so they don't feel it's wrong to use these words.

Teach your child about private body parts, and which people are allowed to touch their body and more private areas and why – such as you or day care staff to help them in the toilet, or a doctor checking for medical problems.

Always tell your child what you are doing before touching them – 'I'm going to wash your back now. Are you ready?'

As they get older, talk about general consent and their body, including being seen, touched or photographed. Let your child choose if they want a cuddle or to sit on someone's knee, and respect that choice – and ask friends and family to do the same.

Teach your child that 'no' means no and 'stop' means stop, that you'll listen if they don't want to be hugged or tickled and to tell their 'safe person' if they don't feel safe.

But they also need to learn to stop when someone else says 'no' or tells them to 'stop'.

### Listen to your child

It may seem hard to believe if your child talks about sexual abuse, especially if it involved someone you trust or another child. Children do make up stories, but rarely about sexual matters.

- If your child tells you someone is hurting them, listen to them, and let them know they are right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Stay calm, and let them talk at their own pace.
- Make sure they are safe and let them know this.
- Remind them that they are not in trouble and that they are safe.
- Explain to your child that you have to tell some other people so you can keep them safe.
- **If you want help talking to your child or to know what to do next, call National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service on 1800RESPECT or 1800 737 732.**

**Child sexual abuse is always a crime.**  
If you think that your child has been abused, or if they are in immediate danger, **call 000.**

#### **i Need more information or help?**

- Child health nurse
- Perth Children's Hospital Child Protection Unit (6456 4300)
- 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- Raising Children Network



## Crying and emotions

Children generally cry less as they get older – they understand more about feelings, and have more words to say why they're upset. They may now cry with frustration, sadness or anger – whatever the reason, it helps to respond before they get too upset.

- Wait until your child calms down a bit, then ask why they're feeling upset. Repeat your child's words to show you're listening. Name their emotions to let them know you understand their feelings – 'You're upset because John's playing on the swing.'
- Offer other ways to solve the problem – 'How about going on the slide, and I'll push you on the swing later?'
- Let your child know that it's OK to cry and have feelings, such as when they get hurt, are angry, or something sad happens.
- It's OK if your child sees you cry. Crying can be a healthy way to deal with pain or sadness for us all. Seeing grown-ups cry – and laugh – can help your child learn how and when to show their feelings. It helps them understand that everyone has feelings, including grown-ups!

## Behaviour

Your child is now becoming independent and their own person.

They still need your love, and to feel safe and close to you, but also want to make choices and do things themselves.

Balancing these mixed feelings can sometimes be difficult for both of you!

Support your child by helping them understand their feelings and letting them become more independent, while keeping them safe at the same time.

### 2 and 3 year olds are:

- active and curious – they will ask lots of questions, and stop and look at things around them, like flowers and insects, while you're walking
- so busy discovering and exploring the world that they can seem distracted or not listening. Be patient – this is part of learning.
- learning to be independent – to do things for themselves – but they still need lots of praise and practice to learn these skills, especially if they can't get it right at first
- learning to understand and manage their feelings and behaviour (self-regulation). This includes getting along with others, sharing and taking turns, and also thinking





about how others may be feeling. However, they can still struggle with big feelings, especially in new or stressful situations.

- changeable – they can be interested and cooperative one minute, then refuse or say ‘no’ to everything you want them to do next. This is just part of wanting to be independent and learning the consequences of their actions.

### Your child still needs:

- understanding, love, patience and encouragement
- time to explore
- the chance to make choices
- to test their independence but know they can always come back to you for comfort
- your help to start learning how to manage big feelings and behaviour. This includes learning that feelings like jealousy, anger and even joy are normal, but also how to show these emotions without hurting others.
- you to keep them safe – they don’t yet understand danger
- routines so they know what to expect, such as a bedtime routine of bath, clean teeth, story, cuddle and bed.

## What you can do

Children can get frustrated very quickly. Just like many of us, the best way for your child to learn is in small, simple steps. They’ll probably need to do something a few times before they get it ‘right’. Your child may need your help to stay focused or finish a task. Praise the effort they make at each step – don’t wait until they complete something perfectly.

### Encourage good behaviour

Notice and encourage your child when – and while – they’re doing something well.

‘Thanks for keeping quiet while I was on the phone talking to Grandma’ works better than ‘Stop shouting. Can’t you see I’m talking to Grandma’.

Try to praise rather than complain – children may prefer getting ‘negative attention’ rather than getting no attention at all.

### Set a good example

Your child learns from you how to behave – say ‘please’ if you want your child to say ‘please’, and don’t shout at your child if you don’t want them to shout at you and others.

### Show your feelings

Letting your child know how their behaviour makes you feel helps them understand their own feelings – ‘I’m feeling sad today because you yelled at me when you spilled your milk’.

### Actively listen

Show your child you’re listening by nodding as they talk and repeating back how you think your child is feeling – ‘You seem sad that Jane won’t play with you’.

This can comfort your child, lets them know you respect their feelings, and helps them show and manage big emotions.

### Keep your promises

Your child will learn that you won’t let them down when you’ve promised something nice – but also that they can’t change your mind if you’ve told them what will happen if they do – or don’t do – something.



If you promise to go to the park if they put away all their toys, don’t go to the park if they don’t put their toys away – but you also need to keep your promise and go to the park if they pack them away.

### Is it really important?

Focus on important things like safety. Ignore things that don’t matter too much, such as a messy room. Have family rules for important things like hand washing, and using the harness in the car or stroller.

### Keep it simple and fun

Use simple and short instructions so your child can easily understand and remember what to do. Be positive – ‘Stroke the puppy gently’ rather than ‘Don’t hit the puppy’. Showing them can sometimes help.

Make everyday things fun. Turn putting toys away into a race, or see who can do the silliest dance on the way to the bathroom at bath time.

## Tantrums

Tantrums are very common in children between the ages of 1 and 3 years, though they tend to lessen as children get older and learn to understand and manage their feelings.

You can read more about tantrums and how to help you child in the **Your Toddler 1 to 2 years** magazine.

## Looking after yourself

It can be stressful looking after a child who cries a lot, or is struggling with their own behaviour and having tantrums. You may feel exhausted and helpless at not being able to comfort your child.

If you are concerned about your child’s behaviour, please talk to your child health nurse or doctor.

If your child seems ‘out of control’ or you are feeling very angry, put your child somewhere safe and take a break until you feel calmer. If you can, get your partner or a friend/family member to help.

★ If you feel unsupported, overwhelmed, frustrated or angry, contact your child health nurse, Ngala Parenting Helpline (9368 9368) or your doctor to help manage these feelings and keep your child safe.

★ If you think you may hurt your child or yourself – put your child in a safe place like their bedroom – and get help immediately by contacting Crisis Care (1800 199 008).

**If you believe that someone’s life is in immediate danger, call 000.**

★ Getting help is an important part of looking after yourself and your family.

If you just can’t cope, call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.





## Why is sleep important?

Sleep helps children grow, and to learn and remember things. It restores your child physically and mentally, and helps immunity.

A lack of sleep in young children has been linked to problems with weight, mental health, behaviour and brain development.

Sleep can be affected by many different things including your child's age and health, and events such as moving house, starting day care or Kindy, and having visitors.

Your child is learning new physical skills as well as huge amounts of new information, which can also affect their sleep.

## How much sleep does my child need?

Children are individuals (just like you) and don't have to fit into any sleeping patterns.

- Generally, 2 year olds need around 11 to 14 hours of sleep, including 1 or 2 daytime naps.
- By 3, children generally need around 10 to 13 hours of sleep, and some may still need a short daytime nap.
- As your child has fewer and shorter daytime sleeps, they may need 'rest and quiet' times instead.

## Sleep routines

Your child has probably developed their own pattern of going to sleep, and settling themselves if they wake during the night.

Your child's night bedtime can be affected by when they last slept during the day. Your child is not likely to be ready for their night sleep at 7pm, if they woke up at 5pm from their afternoon sleep.

- Have a similar bedtime and wake up time each day, including weekends and holidays.
- Avoid energetic play, as well as TV and other screen time at least an hour before bedtime.
- Have a quiet place to sleep.
- Allow plenty of time each night for a predictable and calm routine before bedtime, such as:
  - cleaning teeth
  - reading or telling a quiet story
  - saying it is time for sleep
  - having a cuddle and a goodnight kiss.
- Help your child into their cot or bed while they are awake and calm.
- Comfort your child if they're upset or doesn't want you to leave. You may need to do this several times until they fall asleep.

- If your child keeps getting out of bed, try to find out why – are they thirsty, do they need the toilet, or do they want to be with you?

Once you've met their needs, quietly tell them to go back to bed, reminding them that you're close by.

If they keep calling you, only respond if you think they really need you. Be calm, firm and consistent in how you respond until they stay in bed or stop calling you.

## Sleep issues in children

**All children can have times when it's difficult to go to sleep or stay asleep.**

- Nightmares are bad dreams where your child wakes up scared and upset. Comfort and reassure your child that it was just a dream, but that you understand that it was scary.
- Night terrors happen during deep sleep, even though your child may look awake. Don't try and wake your child – just make sure they are safe and back in their bed.
- Bed wetting is common – many children still wet the bed long after they are dry during the day. Don't worry about bedwetting until your child is around 5 years old (see page 41).

**★ Talk to your child health nurse or doctor if sleep problems don't stop, or are affecting you or your child.**



### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network
- Red Nose Australia

## Cot or bed?

There is no hurry to move your child from their cot to a bed – unless your child is climbing out of the cot and might hurt themselves.

Most parents begin to start thinking about moving their child into a bed after they're 2 years old.

**If your child is ready to move to a bed, here are some ideas:**

- Your child's first bed could be a child bed or single bed, or a mattress on the floor.
  - Make sure the bedroom is a safe environment, and the bed or mattress is away from the wall and any windows.
  - Involve your child in planning and setting up the new bed – make sure they know it will be fun.
- Encourage your child to get into their new bed and pull up the covers.
  - Say goodnight. Tell your child what you expect and what's going to happen next. Say something clear and positive like, 'It's time to go to sleep – see you in the morning'.
  - Some children may get out of bed, just because they can. If this happens, help your child back to bed straight away and repeat, 'It's time to go to bed. See you in the morning'. Then leave the room. You might have to do this several times until your child stays in bed or settles.
  - If your child gets up during the night, make sure the rest of the house is safe. You may want to use a safety gate in the doorway of your child's room or shut the door at night, though make sure you can still hear your child.

See page 43 for information on making your child's bedroom safe.





**Make healthy eating part of your family lifestyle.**

## What is healthy eating?

Healthy eating habits start early and set children up for life.

Be a role model for the healthy eating habits that you want your child to develop.

Children's appetites will vary from day to day – generally children sense how much food their bodies need and eat enough to match this. But children lose this natural ability if we try to make them over-eat or finish all the food on their plate.

**You decide WHAT your child eats, and WHEN and WHERE to offer it.**

**Your child decides IF they will eat and HOW MUCH.**

## Healthy eating ideas:

- Try to eat meals together as a family.
  - Let your child see you eating a range of foods.
  - Avoid distractions during mealtimes. Turn off the TV, and put phones, toys and pets away.
  - Try to keep mealtimes happy and relaxed.
- Find ways to reward your child that don't include food.
- Buy and offer healthy food and drink options if you can.
- Offer your child a variety of food so they're more likely to try different things
- Get your child to help plan, shop and prepare meals – they're more likely to eat food they've helped create.

## What children shouldn't eat and drink

### Help your child learn about:

- eating when they are hungry and stopping when they are full
- making healthy eating choices.

### 'Sometimes' food

Takeaways and party food are often high in sugar, salt and fat.

- Teach your child that it's OK to eat this type of food 'sometimes and in small amounts', as long as they eat healthy food on most days.

Regularly eating processed food and drinks with high levels of fat, sugar or salt can lead to health problems and tooth decay in childhood and as an adult.

### Try to avoid:

- cakes, biscuits, lollies, chocolate, ice-cream
- chips and fried foods
- sweet drinks – juice, cordial, soft drinks, flavoured milk
- sport and energy drinks, and caffeinated drinks – cola, tea, coffee.

## Drinks

The best drinks are tap water and milk.

- Switch to reduced fat cow's milk once your child is 2 years old.
- If choosing plant-based drinks such as rice, oat or soy 'milk', make sure they contain at least 100 mg of added calcium per 100 mL.

## Vegetarian and vegan diets

There are many types of vegetarian and vegan diets and if well-planned, can provide enough energy and nutrition for children. Please talk to a dietitian or your doctor if:

- you're not sure whether your child is getting enough, or the right foods to grow and develop well
- you're offering a vegan diet – children eating a vegan diet might need extra nutrients.



**You decide WHAT your child eats, and WHEN and WHERE to offer it.**  
**Your child decides IF they will eat and HOW MUCH.**





Five Food Groups

Children need a variety of healthy food from the Five Food Groups:

- vegetables and legumes/beans
- fruit
- wholegrain and/or high fibre choices like bread, cereal, rice, pasta, oats
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes/beans
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives.

How much food should I offer my child?

This guide shows the Five Food Groups and how much we should offer children every day.

How much your child will eat might be different each day. It will depend on their age, growth and how active they've been. Your child should know when they are hungry or full.

Offer 3 small meals and 2 or 3 snacks each day. They can ask for more food if they are still hungry.

Don't worry if your child doesn't eat all of these every day. If your child is healthy, growing well and has enough energy to play, learn and be active, they're probably eating enough.

Recommended number of serves

		What is a serve?				
		2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Vegetables and legumes/beans	Boys	2 1/2	4 1/2	5	5 1/2	5 1/2
	Girls	2 1/2	4 1/2	5	5	5
Fruit	Boys	1	1 1/2	2	2	2
	Girls	1	1 1/2	2	2	2
Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties	Boys	4	4	5	6	7
	Girls	4	4	4	5	7
Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes/beans	Boys	1	1 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2
	Girls	1	1 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2
Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat	Boys	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3 1/2	3 1/2
	Girls	1 1/2	1 1/2	3	3 1/2	3 1/2

Modified from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (eatforhealth.gov.au)



## Common concerns

### Won't eat the evening meal

It's not unusual for busy children to eat very little at the evening meal.

Offer a small, nutritious afternoon snack, such as a slice of toast, cheese and crackers, or milk and fruit. Then just offer the family meal and allow your child to eat until they are full.

Encourage your child to stop eating once they've had enough, even if this means they haven't finished everything on their plate.

### Picky eating

It's normal for children to be picky eaters – or even to dislike something they liked the day before!

Picky eating is normal while your child is exploring new tastes and textures.

- Make mealtimes happy, regular family occasions, with no screens or phones.
- Make food fun – get your child to help prepare it, or make shapes and faces with the food.
- Encourage your child to keep trying new food by offering them regularly.
  - Some children need to see a new food 10 or more times before they'll try it.
  - Offer new foods with other foods you know your child likes.
  - Seeing others enjoy the food may help.
- If your child hasn't eaten the food after around 20 minutes, then take it away and wait until the next meal or snack time.
- Punishing your child for not eating something (or offering treats as a reward) can make them think of new foods as something bad.

Children can go through stages when they are picky about eating certain food, or how they want you to prepare their food.

If this behaviour is short-term, don't worry. Stay calm and keep offering a wide range of healthy food. But talk to your child health nurse if you have ongoing concerns.

### Messy eating

Messy eating is also part of your child's development as they're learning to feed themselves and learning about new foods – and finding new ways to make you react!

- Try to stay calm and be patient – this will help make mealtimes more fun for everyone.
- Offer food cut into strips which your child can eat with their hands – though they do need to practice using a fork and spoon sometimes.
- Offer lots of praise when they eat something without making a mess instead of being annoyed when they do make a mess.
- Sit together at mealtimes as a family – get your child to 'help' setting the table and clearing up afterwards.

### Not growing as expected

If you're worried that your child is gaining too much or not enough weight, it's important to talk to your child health nurse or doctor.

Weight loss diets are not suitable for children unless your child is under the care of a doctor or dietitian.

Limit the amount of time spent in front of screens and encourage your child to do something active – play games or sports, walk to the shops, or take the dog for a walk. It's best if the family joins in some of these physical activities every day (see pages 18 and 19).

#### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Eat for health (EatForHealth.gov.au)
- Kidsafe WA
- Raising Children Network



## Immunisation

### Why immunise your child?

Immunisations are a simple and safe way to protect everyone, including your child, against many diseases that can cause serious illnesses and sometimes death.

- Many serious diseases are rare in Australia today because of immunisation.
- If you and your child are immunised, it will prevent you from getting or passing on these diseases to others, especially to young babies who are not yet fully immunised.
- When more babies, children and adults are immunised, these infectious diseases are less likely to spread in the community.

### When should my child be immunised?

- Your child will need immunisations throughout childhood and as a teenager.
- Check your child's Purple Book for a list of immunisations and when they are due.

### Where can I get free immunisation?

Ask your child health nurse, doctor, or Aboriginal Medical Service about your child's free immunisations.

Visit [healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation) to find your local immunisation clinic, as well as information about immunisations.



Remember to bring your Medicare card and your child's Purple Book (which has your child's immunisation record card in it) to all your immunisation appointments.

#### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- [healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation)
- [health.gov.au/immunisation](http://health.gov.au/immunisation) (including how to access your child's immunisation record)



## When to see your doctor

It's always OK to visit your doctor if you think your child is ill.

★ You know your child best. If you notice something is not right, or if you are worried about your child's appearance or behaviour, don't be afraid to phone or visit your doctor.

Even if the doctor tells you nothing is wrong – at least it will set your mind at rest. But if you're still worried, it's OK to visit the same or another doctor, or to call *healthdirect*.

You can talk to a health professional at any time, night or day at *healthdirect* on **1800 022 222**.

### ★ Call 000

★ If your child is so ill that you think they need urgent medical attention, don't hesitate to call 000.

★ Call 000 if your child is unresponsive, or has symptoms including strong pain, dehydration, drowsiness, seizures or fitting, difficulty breathing, pale, blotchy or blue skin, or a rash that doesn't fade when you press their skin.

★ See your doctor immediately or go to Emergency if your child is feeding poorly, vomiting a lot and/or weeing less than usual.

If your child has a fever (a temperature above 38 °C) but no other symptoms, you can take them to your doctor if you can get an appointment on the same day.

Call *healthdirect* on **1800 022 222** if you're unsure what to do.

★ Never give aspirin to children – it can cause a rare but potentially fatal illness.

## When to get help

It's OK to put yourself first.

Talk to your child health nurse or doctor if things become too hard, or if you are worried about your own health or your child's health or development.

You don't have to wait for a Purple Book appointment to see your child health nurse (see page 4).

### ★ You should get help if:

- you are unhappy a lot of the time (see page 50)
- your child is not developing or growing well, or seems unhappy a lot of the time
- you feel you're not getting any sleep at all
- your child seems fine but you worry about them a lot of the time.

### i Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- *healthdirect* (1800 022 222)
- Ngala
- Beyond Blue



Children can drown in very shallow water in a **few seconds**.

**Never** leave babies, toddlers or young children alone or in the care of older children in the bath or bathroom. If you need to leave the bath area – even for a second – take your child with you.

## Daily care

Good hygiene habits make your child feel more comfortable and help keep them healthy.

Remind your child to always wash their hands before eating or helping in the kitchen, after going to the toilet, touching animals or playing outside.

You still need to help your child to brush their teeth twice a day, after breakfast and dinner. Take your child to the dentist regularly (every 6 to 12 months) for a check-up.

### Stopping germs from spreading

Make sure everyone washes their hands with soap and water before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet, blowing their nose, getting body fluids (saliva, snot, wees and poos) on their hands, and changing nappies.

You don't need special cleaners at home. Clean with detergent and water, then rinse and dry. This will remove most germs and viruses from hard surfaces, such as the kitchen bench and plastic toys.

If any children in the house have runny eyes, ears or noses, clean their faces and hands as often as needed. Wash your own hands afterwards. This will help stop the spread of sickness and make the children feel more comfortable.

### Bathing

Bath time can be a special time to spend with your child. It can be fun and splashy, or quiet and relaxing.

- A bath or shower 2 or 3 times a week is enough to keep your child clean, but you can do it every day if they enjoy it or if they are dirty.
- If you aren't giving your child a bath or shower, you still need to clean their face, hands and genitals at least once every day.





### Your child's skin

Healthy skin helps to stop germs and viruses getting inside our bodies and making us unwell.

You can look after your child's skin by:

- keeping their skin clean and dry – bathing, and changing wet and dirty nappies
- washing your own hands before touching your child and after changing nappies
- looking for rashes, dry areas or sores when bathing or changing nappies.

★ **See your doctor as soon as possible if your child:**

- has weeping sores on their skin. (Clean the area and cover with a dressing.)
- shows signs that their throat is sore (like crying when they swallow), and that their joints are sore (like crying when they move). Some germs in skin sores can get into a child's blood and make them very sick (such as rheumatic heart disease).

### Common health conditions

Now your child is more active and probably spending more time with other children, they may develop some of the common and very infectious childhood health conditions.

One of the best ways to prevent spread is teaching your child to wash their hands before eating, after going to the toilet, and after touching animals or dirty things.

These are some common health conditions in young children.

**Visit Raising Children Network or *healthdirect* ([healthdirect.gov.au/skin-conditions](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/skin-conditions)) for more information about each condition.**

### Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis causes redness and swelling of the surface lining of the eye and eyelids, and can make the eyes very sore. It is very common in young children and can be very infectious.

★ **If your child has sore, watery eyes with a lot of pus, see your doctor as soon as possible.**

### Hand, foot and mouth disease

This common virus causes fever and tiny blisters, mainly in the mouth, hands and feet, and sometimes a sore throat. It is a mild infection that generally goes away after 7 to 10 days. It's very infectious, so you need to keep your child away from other children until the blisters have dried. (It's not related to the Foot and Mouth Disease found in animals).

★ **See your doctor if you think your child has hand, foot and mouth disease.**

### Head lice

Head lice are tiny insects that live and lay eggs (nits) in hair, and feed on blood from the scalp. While they don't cause disease, they can make the scalp very itchy.

As they spread easily between children and family members, it's important to check for them regularly, and, if found, treat them immediately. Keep your child at home until you've treated the lice.

### Impetigo (school sores)

Impetigo is a very common skin infection in children that causes sores and itchy blisters. It is very infectious, so you need to keep your child away from other children. It can be very dangerous for newborn babies.

★ **See your doctor if you think your child has impetigo.**

### Roseola

Roseola is a very common infection in children that sometimes causes a sore throat, runny nose, high fever, swollen neck glands and a rash. Most children recover completely within a week.

★ **There is no treatment, but see your doctor if your child has a high fever and rash, complains of a severe headache or muscle pain, is sleepy, weak or confused, or if you are worried.**

### Scabies

Scabies are tiny mites that burrow into the skin and cause red, itching bumps and threadlike 'tracks' in the skin. It's very itchy, especially at night. Scabies can spread through everyone in the house. In children, the rash usually affects the hands, arms and armpits, the tummy button area and bottom.

★ **It is important to see your doctor to get treatment for scabies.**

### Slapped cheek disease (Parvovirus)

Slapped cheek disease is a fairly mild infection. It starts with a fever, headache and runny nose, and then a red rash appears on the cheeks making them look like they've been slapped. The rash spreads across the body and can last for up to 3 weeks.

★ **There is no treatment, but see your doctor if:**

- your child has a high fever and rash, or if you are worried.
- you or someone you know is pregnant as it can affect unborn babies
- your child has other medical conditions or if you are worried.

### Worms

Worms aren't usually serious and are easy to treat with medicine from the pharmacy. Symptoms of worms include an itchy or red bottom.

Treat everyone in the family at the same time. It's very common for worms to come back, especially for children at child care, Kindy or school.

#### **i Need more information or help?**

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- *Healthdirect*
- Raising Children Network



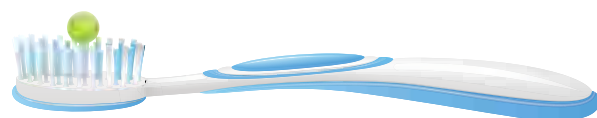


### How to clean your child's teeth and gums

Help your child to brush, and check their brushing.

- Your child will need your help to clean their teeth until they can do it properly themselves.
- Children can't brush properly on their own until they're around 8 years old.
- Brush 'every bit of every tooth' in the morning and always before bed at night.
- From 18 months, use a pea-sized amount of low-fluoride toothpaste.
- Let your child be involved with brushing their teeth – make it fun.
- Talk to your dentist about how to brush your child's teeth, and if you have any concerns.

#### Toothpaste



**18 months to 5 years, use low fluoride children's toothpaste**

### Baby teeth

Children need their 'baby teeth' to eat and grow, talk clearly, keep space for their adult teeth – and to smile and feel good. So take care of your child's baby teeth.

Children get teeth at different times, but most have all their baby teeth by the time they're 3. Adult teeth start coming through from the age of 6.

### Healthy eating for healthy smiles

Healthy food and drinks are important for healthy teeth (see page 26).

Water and milk are the best drinks.

#### Healthy teeth



**Keep up with regular dental checks**

#### Early signs of tooth decay



**Can be reversed, visit dentist now**

#### Tooth decay



**Severe and may be painful. Visit dentist urgently.**

### Check every month

Every month, have a good look inside your child's mouth and teeth.

Lift up the top lip and check for any changes.

Changes might include:

- white lines along the gums
- brown spots on the teeth.

See your dentist if you notice any of these changes. Your dentist can treat early signs of decay.

#### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Raising Children Network
- Dental Health Services ([dental.wa.gov.au](http://dental.wa.gov.au))





## When will my child be ready?

Helping your child learn to use the potty or toilet is a big step for you both.

Most children are not ready to control their poo and wee (bowels and bladder) until they are at least 2 years old. Some aren't ready until they are 3.

Your child is ready to use the toilet or potty when they:

- are interested when you (or others) use the toilet
- know they have to do a wee or poo before doing it
- can hold on long enough to get to the potty or the toilet
- say they don't want nappies anymore, or pull at their wet or dirty nappies
- understand they're meant to use the toilet or potty.

Often, the first sign is when they tell you while they're doing a wee or poo, or have just done it.

Praise your child for telling you so they learn to tell you before they do it.



## Getting ready

Teach your child the words they need – wet, dry, wee, poo, 'it's coming'. Use words that you're comfortable with.

### Potty or toilet?

Choose either a potty or the toilet – or both. Find out what your child prefers.

- A potty is mobile and less scary than the toilet for some children. Remember to take it with you if your child doesn't like using toilets.
- If you're using the toilet, you need a special toilet seat and a footstool or step (such as a couple of bricks) so your child can get up to the toilet on their own, and feel safe and relaxed.
  - Children need to be relaxed to let the wee or poo out.
  - It's easier for children to poo if their feet are on a flat surface when sitting on the toilet.
  - Make sure your child can get to the toilet (or potty) by themselves and that it's always ready for them – door open, light on at night.
  - Remind the rest of the family that there's no time to set it up when your child really has to go 'NOW'!
- If you feel OK, let your child come into the toilet with you, and talk about what you are doing.
- Learn your child's signals so you're ready to take them to the potty or toilet in time.
- Some children are afraid of being flushed down the toilet. You can use a potty, let them flush the toilet with you, or flush after they've left the bathroom.
- Make sure your toilet area is safe. Keep household cleaners, deodorants and toiletries out of reach.

### Clothing

- Start by using underpants or training pants during the day (except during daytime sleeps). Let your child choose their underpants to make it more fun.
- Make sure your child's clothes are easy to get on and off, and to wash.
- Toilet training is often easier in warm weather because there's less clothing to remove. Try letting your child run around in their underpants at home.

## Starting toilet training

If you think your child is ready, choose a time when you can stay at home, and will have lots of time and patience to give them your full attention.

Delay toilet training if there are other changes going on, such as a new baby, a sick family member, or starting childcare.

- Leave the potty where your child can see and touch it – try sitting teddy on the potty 'to do a wee'.
- Watch for signs that they're about to do a wee or poo (such as being very still) and guide them to the potty or toilet – 'Let's see if there's a wee coming'. Eventually they'll know and get there themselves.
- If your child hasn't done a poo or wee for some time, ask them if they need to go – they might be too busy to remember to go to the toilet.

### Lots of praise

If your child tells you before doing a wee or poo, thank them and take them to the toilet or potty straight away. They can't 'hold on' for more than a few seconds.

Even if they don't get there in time, cuddle and praise them for trying to get to the toilet, pulling down their pants, or sitting on the toilet.

- Don't make your child sit on a potty or toilet for long periods of time. Your child will think they are being punished and it does not help toilet training.
- If you want to use a reward, try stickers or stamps rather than food rewards.

It is common for children to relax and 'let go' as soon as they stand to walk away from the potty. They may not be quite ready for toilet training if this is happening a lot.



### Outside the house

- It's easier to stay home for the first few days when you start toilet training.
- When you have to go out, learn where the nearest toilets are at the shops or the park. When you get there, ask your child if they need to go.
- If you're visiting, take the potty or toilet seat with you.
- It's OK to use a nappy for long trips or long periods away from home.
- When you're out, have a change of underpants and clothes until you're very confident your child can use the toilet.

### Hygiene

- Wipe your child's bottom until they learn to do it themselves. Teach children, especially girls, to wipe from front to back.
- Teach boys to shake their penis after a wee to get rid of any drops. Try floating a ping pong ball in the toilet to aim at while they're still learning.
- Teach your child to always wash their hands after using the toilet or potty. Make it a fun activity.



## 'Accidents' and other toilet training troubles

Learning to control poos and wees is a big change. There will be 'accidents' while your child is still learning.

- Remember that your child can't 'hold on' to a wee or poo that is ready to come out.
- If they're busy playing, you'll probably need to remind them to go to the toilet. They won't always notice that the wee or poo is coming until it starts to come out, or it's too late to get to the toilet.

### Starting too soon

Starting too soon can cause problems.

You might want your child to be ready by a certain time, such as when they turn 2 or before you go on holiday. But you really have to wait until they are ready, even if it doesn't suit your plans.

### Relax

Toilet training works best when there is no pressure for you or your child.

- If you start getting stressed, stop and wait a few weeks until things are less tense.
- Don't pressure your child. You can't 'make' your child wee or poo, and learning to use the toilet is even more difficult if they're upset and tense.
- Punishment does not help with toilet training.

### Hiding when doing poo

Many children who are being toilet trained may start hiding in strange places to do a poo.

- Your child may poo behind the sofa or in a cupboard, in the garden or anywhere they feel safe. We're not sure why children do this, but they usually stop doing it by themselves.
- Don't get angry with your child for doing a poo in the wrong place, even though it's not nice to deal with. It won't help and can make things worse.
- Check that your child always has easy access to their potty or the toilet – try putting the potty in a more private place.

## Spreading poo around

Doing a poo feels good, and parents show a lot of interest in poo during toilet training, so it's normal for children to be interested in their own poo.

- Some children get some poo on their hands and spread it around.  
This isn't nice to deal with, but your child is not trying to upset you.  
Calmly tell them that we don't play with poo. Don't be angry, and clean them without any fuss – but don't reward the behaviour with a fun bath full of bubbles and toys.
- There are germs (viruses and bacteria) in poo, but hot water and normal household cleaners are usually enough to clean walls, cots and other furniture.

## Constipation

Make sure your child has a healthy diet with lots of water and vegetables so they don't become constipated (hard poo).

Encourage your child to use the toilet regularly – such as 30 minutes after each meal.

Constipation can make it hurt when a child does a poo. They may try to hold on and not be able to push it out, or become very upset.

★ **See your doctor if the problem doesn't go away.**

### ALERT

**See your doctor if:**

- you're worried
- a child who has been dry during the day starts to wet their pants again
- there are any signs of a urinary tract infection, including:
  - doing wee very often
  - pain when doing wee
  - blood in the wee
- your child sometimes has wet pants during the day by 3½ years or older.



## Remember

- Toilet training is a big step and a new skill to learn.
- Start toilet training when your child shows they're ready.
- Don't set a date by which you want your child trained – it puts pressure on both of you.
- Children learn new tasks in small steps – praise each step – don't wait until they do everything properly before praising them.
- Go at your child's pace, and don't expect too much. Accidents will happen even when children are trained, especially if they're stressed or upset.
- If there are any setbacks, stop for a few weeks and then start again.
- Don't get angry, and don't make your child clean up any mess.



### Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- National Continence Helpline
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network

## Bedwetting

Many children still wet the bed long after they are dry during the day. Most children are dry during the day at around 3 years old and are dry at night by 5.

It's not uncommon for young children to wet the bed from time to time.

- Don't worry about bedwetting if your child is under 5.
- Don't make your child wash their own pants or sheets after an 'accident'. This will make them feel bad and can make the problem worse.
- Check with your doctor to make sure there is no medical problem if:
  - bedwetting continues after your child is around 5
  - your child has been dry and starts wetting again
  - one child is bedwetting at a later age than others in the family.

Check out Bedwetting at the Raising Children Network or [cahs.health.wa.gov.au](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au)





Image: Britax Australia

**Accidents are the biggest cause of children being admitted to hospital in Australia. Most accidents can be prevented, especially at home where young children spend a lot of their time.**

One of your most important jobs is to keep your child safe.

Your child is curious, more active and independent.

They may seem more 'grown up', but they are still not aware of risks and danger.

As children get older and more independent, you also need to be more aware of internet safety, pedestrian and road safety, and playground safety.

**Always supervise your child**, and do regular safety checks of:

- your home – inside and outside
- other homes and places you visit
- the car.

Discuss safety with everyone who looks after your child, and don't expect older children to keep smaller children safe, especially around water.

Learn CPR (First Aid) and update your training regularly.

Kidsafe WA ([kidsafewa.com.au](http://kidsafewa.com.au)) has lots of child safety information.

## Car and road safety

### Heat

**Never leave a child alone in a car.**

- If you have to leave your car, always take your child with you.
- It can quickly get very hot inside a car, even on a cloudy day or if the car is in the shade.

### Restraints

- Your child must travel in an approved, properly fitted car restraint that is adjusted to fit.
- Use a restraint appropriate for your child's size rather than their age.
- Never let your child travel in a car without a restraint.
- It's safest to keep your child rearward facing as long as possible. Keep the restraint rearward facing until your child outgrows the height markers on the restraint.
- Once your child has outgrown their rearward facing child restraint, use a forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness until at least 4 years of age.

## Driveways and car parks

- Always walk around a car before you move it, and teach your child to never play in a driveway area.
- If you're alone with your child and need to move a vehicle, put them in their car restraint while you move it.
- Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of this information.

## Road safety

- Make sure external doors, fences and gates are self-closing, never left open, and that your child can't climb or open them.
- Always supervise children under 12 near roads – always hold your child's hand near traffic.
- Start teaching them about road safety, including being an example by you modelling safe behaviour. Go for walks together to talk about and practise pedestrian safety.
- If possible, use the left hand passenger door, away from traffic, when you get your child out of their seat.

For more information on car safety, including hiring and fitting restraints, visit Kidsafe WA ([kidsafewa.com.au](http://kidsafewa.com.au)).

## Beds and bedrooms

Most parents begin to start thinking about moving their child into a bed after they're 2 years old.

Until that age, a cot is generally the safest place for your child to sleep.

However, you should move your child to a bed if they are climbing out of their cot and might hurt themselves. This usually occurs after children are 2, but can happen as young as 18 months.

Here are some ideas if you're thinking of moving your child to a bed:

- Your child's first bed could be a toddler bed or single bed, or a mattress on the floor.
  - Don't give your child a pillow until they are at least 2 years old, and never if they're still using a cot.

- There is a high risk of young children being injured from falling out of the bed or becoming trapped between the bed and bedrails or the wall.
- Take the legs off the bed, or use another mattress or other soft flooring material and keep the area around the bed free from hard toys or furniture to reduce injury from falls.
- If you use portable rails, make sure they are fitted properly, with no gaps between the rail and mattress, and nothing that could suffocate your child, like pillows or soft toys.
- Do not use bunk beds for children under 6.

## Make the bedroom safe

- Don't put the bed:
  - underneath a window that they could climb out of
  - against shelves, ledges or appliances that they could climb on or pull over onto themselves
  - under heavy pictures or mirrors.
- Secure TVs and top-heavy furniture such as chests of drawers and bookcases to the wall, if possible, so they can't be pulled over. In most cases you can do this if you rent, but talk to your landlord first. Don't leave drawers open that a child might climb.
- Secure any dangling cords from lamps or window blinds.
- Use socket covers in all plug sockets.
- Make sure windows can't open more than 10 centimetres – or install safety latches. Make sure any door-type windows are kept locked.





## Burns and Scalds

- If you want your child to 'help' in the kitchen, try doing it when you're not tired or busy, so you can closely supervise your child. Give them safer jobs like washing fruit and vegetables, or getting utensils for you.
- Keep appliance cords out of reach, and make sure your child can't reach hot appliances such as toasters, kettles and irons.
- Make sure your hot water is 50°C or under. (A licensed plumber can install a 'tempering' device that controls the maximum temperature of your tap water.)
  - Always run the water for your child's bath or shower yourself – consider installing child resistant tap cover.
- Make sure your house has smoke alarms – test your smoke alarms every month. Change the batteries every year on 1 April if your alarm is not wired in.
- Install guards around fires and heaters, and teach your child why they are there.

★ **If a child is scalded or burned, put the burnt area under a cool running tap for 20 minutes, and call your doctor – or 000 if you are concerned.**

## Choking

Choking on food and small objects is a risk for children under 5 years old because their throats are small, and they also tend to put anything into their mouths.

Children can choke on anything smaller than a 20-cent coin. Regularly check for and remove all small objects around the house, garden and car.

- Avoid nuts, popcorn, seeds, hard lollies and corn chips, and cook hard fruit and vegetables such as beans, carrots and apple.
- Buy toys designed for your child's age. Keep older children's toys out of reach, especially if they are small or have small part.
- Be particularly careful with 'button batteries', as these can cause severe burning if swallowed. Check that button batteries are secure in things such as remote controls and toys.
- Learn what to do if a child is choking.



## Drowning

Drowning is a top cause of death in children under 5 in Australia.

Young children can drown in silence in 20 seconds, and in only a few centimetres of water.

- Never leave a baby or any children alone around water, including the bathroom, pools and dams.
  - Always supervise your child around water, even if they can swim.
  - Restrict your child's access to water.
  - Always take your child with you if you need to leave the bath or pool.
- Never let older children supervise younger children near water. They may not know how to keep a young child safe.
- Empty baths and other things such as paddling pools and buckets, right after use.
- Cover ponds and water features with a strong mesh that can hold a child's weight.
- If you have a swimming pool or spa, make sure that swimming pool fences and gates are working properly and clear of anything that a child could climb.
- Learn what to do if there is an emergency.

## Falls

Falls are the main cause of injury in toddlers and young children.

Children under 5 shouldn't be able to climb onto anything over 1.5 metres.

- Move furniture away from windows and balconies, and secure TVs, chests of drawers and bookcases to the wall so they can't be pulled over. In most cases you can do this if you rent, but talk to your landlord first.
- Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs and other dangerous places.
- Lock windows and doors that access balconies, and make sure windows can't open more than 10 centimetres – flyscreens won't stop a child from falling.
- Always use the harness whenever your child is in the highchair or stroller, even if it's for a short time.
- Teach your child to safely climb up and down stairs, sofas, playground equipment and trees under supervision.

## Farm safety

Farms are dangerous places for children as they are both a workplace and home.

- Have a secure, fenced play area for your child.
- Make sure all water areas are fenced off or covered.
- Keep chemicals locked away.
- Never leave young children alone with farm animals, including dogs.
- Don't let young children ride farm machinery, quad bikes, or in the back of utes.

## Heat and sun safety

Young children are very sensitive to over-heating and sunburn.

- UV (Ultraviolet) radiation levels show when the sun is most likely to cause skin damage. In summer, levels are highest between 9 am and 4 pm. You can check the UV levels for your area using the SunSmart app (myuv.com.au).
- Keep your child out of direct sunlight, especially when the UV radiation level is 3 or above.
- Make sure your child's skin is protected, even in the shade or if it's not a sunny day:
  - Use sun-protective clothing – rash vests, long sleeves and long pants (or at least knee-length shorts) are the best choice.
  - Use wide brimmed or legionnaire's hats and sunglasses, and teach your child that they need to keep their hats on if they want to stay outside – no hat, no play.
  - Use broad spectrum sun screen SPF30 or higher.
  - Use window shades in your car.
  - Set a good example by being sun smart yourself.





### Internet safety

The main internet risks for 2 and 3 year olds are seeing unsuitable content or accidentally agreeing to contracts such as sharing information.

- Limit your child's screen time (see page 19), and only let your child go online when you're close by and can see what your child is doing online.
- Use child-friendly search engines and content providers.
- Check privacy setting, disable online payment and location services, and use parent controls on the devices your child has access to.

Go online with your child, and get them to show you content that they've enjoyed. Talk about what you've both seen and done online, and encourage your child to let you know if they've seen something that upset or scared them.

### Pet safety

**Never leave your child alone with animals** – even a much loved and gentle old cat or dog can behave differently around children – most bites are from a family or friend's dog.

- In particular, keep children away from dogs that are feeding, unwell, pregnant or with puppies

- Teach your child to always ask the owner before approaching a dog, even one they know very well.
- Teach your child to always wash their hands after handling any pets.

### Playgrounds

Playing in playgrounds is important for your child's health, and physical and social development, and helps them explore and learn new skills.

Minor playground injuries – cuts and bruises – are common, but more serious injuries can happen occasionally, usually from falls.

The most common playground injuries are fractures and dislocations when children fall from high up equipment like monkey bars and climbing frames, or off things like slides and trampolines.

Toddlers and young children often fall from equipment because they still don't understand something is – and isn't – safe to do.

### Playground safety

- Always supervise your child in playgrounds, especially when they're trying something new. It's even more fun if you play with them!
- Choose games and equipment that suit your child's age and skills:
  - For under 3s, stick to playground equipment under 1 metre high.
  - 3 and 4 year olds should play on equipment under 1.5 metres high.
- Check the temperature of playground equipment, even in the shade. Choose playgrounds with shade cloth if you can.
- Make sure the ground surface is soft – such as mulch or rubber matting.
- Teach your child to safely climb up and down playground equipment and trees.
- Look for playground with fencing around it, particularly if you're looking after several children.

Follow this advice even for play equipment at home. Only install play equipment that complies with the relevant Australian standard.

### Poisoning

Poisoning is a leading cause of injury in toddlers and young children, usually from medicines and common chemicals found in the home.

- Keep all medicines, essential oils, cleaning products, alcohol, cigarettes and other poisons locked away, in their original containers. Always put them back immediately after use.

★ **Put the Poisons Information Centre number (13 11 26) in your phone.**

### Smoking and vaping

Cigarette smoke and e-cigarette vapour are bad for everyone, especially babies and children.

- In Western Australia it is against the law to smoke:
  - in a car carrying children
  - within 10 metres of children's playground equipment.
- E-cigarettes and vapes can contain nicotine and other harmful chemicals, so do not leave or use them around babies and children.

★ **If you need help to stop smoking or vaping, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, or call the Quitline on 13 78 48.**

### Alcohol and other drugs

If you're affected by alcohol or other drugs, you may not be able to properly care for your child.

Alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs are also toxic to babies and children – even small amounts can lead to death. Treat alcohol and other drugs the same way you treat other poisons.

### In an emergency

They don't happen every day, but accidents do happen.

- It's a good idea to take a first aid course and learn how to do CPR. (CPR is first aid for when someone isn't breathing properly, or their heart has stopped.)
- Raising Children Network (raisingchildren.net.au) has information on CPR and first aid for children of all ages.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your phone or in a handy place.
- In an emergency call 000.

#### **i Need more information or help?**

- Child health nurse
- Kidsafe WA
- Raising Children Network





## Family and domestic violence

## What is family violence?

Family violence is when a family member threatens, harms, controls or abuses another family member.

Intimate Partner Violence is when this type of abuse occurs within an intimate relationship.

Family violence is sometimes also called domestic violence, intimate partner violence or domestic abuse.

**There is no reason for anyone to be violent or use violence.**

## Do you and your partner have a good relationship?

- **I feel safe.** I don't worry that my partner will hurt my body or my feelings.
- I can say '**no**' for sex.
- **My partner respects me.** My partner feels what I say, how I feel, what I think is important.
- My partner is happy if I want to **see my family and friends**.
- I can honestly say what I think. If I don't want something, **I can say 'no'**.
- My partner and I **decide things together**. I feel I have the **same power as my partner** in my relationship.

**This good feeling is for everyone.**

**Everyone has the right to a healthy relationship.**

**Maybe your partner does not make you feel good like this.**

★ If family violence is happening in your home, you need to get help.

## The partner who is abused

You and your child have a right to be safe.  
You are not responsible for this violence and abuse.

**★ If you're scared or living in fear of your partner, think about your safety and the safety of your child. You may need to make a safety plan. You can find services to help you with this safely and in confidence, as well as provide support, on page 50.**

## The partner who abuses

If you bully or abuse your partner, or find it hard to control your anger, you can learn nonviolent ways to deal with your feelings. Being a good parent includes being a good non-abusive role model for your children. If you think you could be a danger to your family, leave until you have calmed down.

**★ Talk to someone who understands the problem of family violence or phone a family violence helpline. There's lots of support if you need it – see page 50.**

If you or your child are in immediate danger, call the police on 000.

 **Need more information or help?**

1800RESPECT  
(24 hr, 7 days), 1800 737 732

Support for people experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, violence and abuse, their friends and family.

## Notes



Contact		How we can help
Emergency		
Ambulance, Fire, Police	000	For emergency and life-threatening situations
Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26	If you think someone's been poisoned, including medicines, drugs, chemicals, plants, bites and stings
Parenting information		
Raising Children Network	raisingchildren.net.au	Information and tools for raising healthy, happy children
Ngala Parenting Line (8am–8pm 7 days)	ngala.com.au 9368 9368 or *1800 111 546	Counselling, information and support for families with babies and children up to 18 years
Support for parents and carers		
Playgroup WA	playgroupwa.com.au 9228 8088 or *1800 171 882	Find and join a playgroup near you
Grandcare	wanslea.org.au *1800 794 909	Information/support for grandparents raising grandchildren
Crisis and other support (24 hours, 7 days)		
Crisis Care Helpline	*1800 199 008	For people in crisis, needing urgent help
Perth Children's Hospital Child Protection Unit	6456 4300 or *1800 199 008	When there is a concern that a child has/may have suffered from child abuse.
1800RESPECT	*1800 737 732	For anyone experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, violence and abuse
Men's Domestic Violence Helpline	*1800 000 599	For men concerned about violent and abusive behaviours AND/OR who have experienced family and domestic violence
Women's Domestic Violence Helpline	*1800 007 339	For women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, including safe accommodation
DVassist	dvassist.org.au	Family and domestic violence help in regional Western Australia
Alcohol and Drug Support Line	9442 5000 or *1800 198 024	For anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol or other drug use
Mental Health/Postnatal depression		
beyondblue (24 hours, 7 days)	beyondblue.org.au healthyfamilies.org.au 1300 224 636	Crisis counselling and information on mental health, depression, anxiety, postnatal depression
Lifeline (24 hours, 7 days)	lifeline.org.au 13 11 14	Crisis support if you are experiencing a personal crisis or thinking about suicide

Contact	How we can help	
Child health and safety		
Purple book appointments (8.30am–5pm Mon–Fri)	cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ PurpleBook 1300 749 869	Book your Purple Book appointments by phone or register online (Perth metropolitan only)
Child Health Centre (appointment may be required)	healthywa.wa.gov.au/ service-search	Find your nearest Child Health Centre
Child Development Service (appointment/referral required)	cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ ChildDevelopment (metro) wacountry.health.wa.gov.au (non-metro)	Services for children with, or at risk of developmental difficulties and delay
Immunisation clinic (you may need an appointment)	healthywa.wa.gov.au/ immunisation	Find your nearest Immunisation Clinic for free childhood vaccinations.
Kidsafe WA	kidsafewa.com.au 6244 4880	Help keep babies and children safe at home, on the road and at play. Free <b>Child Safety App</b> .
Red Nose Australia	rednose.org.au	Information on moving from a cot to a bed
Bright Tomorrows	brighttomorrows.org.au	Free <b>App</b> to help build young brains
Health and medical services		
<i>healthdirect</i> (24 hours, 7 days)	healthdirect.gov.au *1800 022 222	Health advice with a registered nurse. Online health information.
Quitline (8am–8pm Mon–Fri)	13 78 48	Help to quit smoking and vaping
Sexual Health Quarters	shq.org.au 9227 6178 or *1800 198 205	Information and services on contraception, pap smears, planned and unplanned pregnancy, period problems and sexual difficulties
Child care		
Starting Blocks	startingblocks.gov.au	Finding the right child care for you
Child Care Subsidy	servicesaustralia.gov.au/ child-care-subsidy	Child Care Subsidy and how to claim it
Translation/communication (24 hours, 7 days)		
Translating and Interpreting Service (24 hr, 7 days)	13 14 50	Phone if you need an interpreter. You need the name and phone number of the agency that you want to contact.
National Relay Service (24 hr, 7 days)	accesshub.gov.au TTY: 133 677 Voice Relay: 1300 555 727	The National Relay Service (NRS) can help you if you're d/Deaf or find it hard to hear or speak to hearing people on the phone

\*Freecall: Calls made from a mobile may be charged at a timed rate.

**i Find this information online:**







# Have your say

We welcome feedback, both positive and negative.  
It helps us provide you with a better service.

If you have any compliments or complaints about your child health appointment, please tell a staff member or contact:

- **Metropolitan:** [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/cahsfeedback](https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/cahsfeedback)
- **Country:** [wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/feedback](https://wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/feedback)
- **Care Opinion:** You can also share your feedback anonymously (without your name) at [CareOpinion.org.au](https://CareOpinion.org.au)

## Your Child magazine – what do you think?



This magazine is how we provide information to families in WA.

Because every family is different, your feedback can help us make it better for other parents.

Please scan the QR code or visit [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/magazine](https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/magazine) to let us know what's useful, what we should remove, and what we missed out.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability. Please contact: [childcommunity@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:childcommunity@health.wa.gov.au)

This publication is provided for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

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