

Safety

Keep your child safe as they grow.

As your child get stronger and more independent, they may take more risks—which can lead to accidents.

Here are some ways to help keep your child safe:

- Teach traffic safety. Show them how to watch for cars and be careful when walking to school, riding a bike, or playing near streets.
- Practice water safety. Make sure they know how to stay safe around water. Always keep an eye on them when they're swimming or playing near a pool, lake, or beach.
- Supervise risky play. If your child is climbing or doing something adventurous, be nearby to watch and guide them.
- Talk about asking for help. Let them know it's okay to speak up if they're hurt, scared, or unsure what to do.
- Keep dangerous items out of reach. Store things like cleaning products, tools, sharp objects, and firearms safely where your child can't get to them.

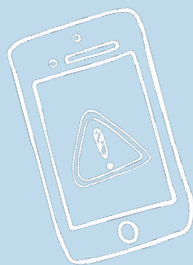
Help your child stay safe online.

Your child need guidance to learn how to be safe and responsible when they're using the internet. Teaching them good habits now can help them avoid harmful content, people, and behavior—and make it easier for them to ask for help if something does not feel right.

One of the best ways to teach your child internet safety is by using it together. You will learn what they like—such as apps, games, or videos—and you can help them enjoy those things in a safe way.

For example, if a game has pop-up ads, you can explain that:

- Ads are trying to sell something.
- Some may lead to websites that are not safe.
- They should avoid clicking on pop-ups, especially if they ask for personal or money-related info.



More ways to teach online safety:

- Go online with your child. Explore the internet together so you can see what they are doing and show them how to stay safe.
- Talk about what's OK and not OK to see. Help them understand that some things online—like scary, mean, or adult content—are not meant for children.
- Teach respectful behavior. Talk about how to be kind and respectful online, just like in real life.
- Set a good example. Let your child see you using the internet in safe, thoughtful ways.
- Talk about privacy. Show them why they should keep personal info (like their name, address, or school) private.
- Set up parent control on apps and internet settings to help manage screen time and limit website your child may go to.



Help me stay safe online by going online with me.



Well-Child Visit

Schedule health checkups!

Just like last year, the doctor will check your child's health and ask your child some questions—like how school is going, what they enjoy and dislike.

Talking like this helps build trust and gives the doctor or nurse a chance to see how your child is doing socially and emotionally. If your child is having a tough time with anything, the doctor or nurse can help figure out what is going on and suggest ways to support them. This is a great time to ask any questions you may have about your child's health and development.



8 Years

Vaccines

Make sure your child's vaccines are up to date.

To continue staying protected, your child will need a flu vaccine each year and maybe the following vaccines:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap).
- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine.
- COVID-19
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) can be started at age 9. This vaccine protects against multiple cancers caused by HPV



Even though your child may have started school, make sure they have a well-child visit every year. If your child is not fully vaccinated, or if you have questions about vaccines, talk to your doctor, nurse, or clinic

To see and download your family's vaccine records online, visit myirmobile.com.

Oral Health

Take your child to the dentist regularly.

Regular checkups help the dentist see any problems early and help keep your child's teeth healthy.

By this age, your child will have a mix of baby teeth and adult teeth. The dentist can also give helpful tips, apply fluoride to protect teeth, and track how your child's teeth are coming in.

Start brushing and flossing habits early.

The earlier your child learns about brushing, flossing, and seeing the dentist, the better. Talk to them about why keeping their teeth clean matters. Your child may need help with flossing, since hand muscles are still developing.

Let your child know they are doing a good job when they brush on their own.

If they see you brushing, flossing, and taking care of your teeth, your child is more likely to do the same.



Cheer us on when we brush and floss our teeth!

Protect your child's teeth when playing sports.

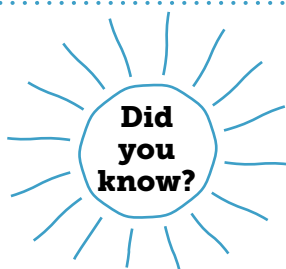
If your child plays sports or does other physical activities, make sure they wear a mouthguard. It helps protect their teeth from getting chipped, broken, or knocked out.

Ask your child's dentist which kind of mouthguard is best. Wearing a mouth guard is a simple way to avoid serious dental injuries.

Dental sealants and fluoride help protect your child's teeth.

Ask your child's dentist about dental sealants to protect the chewing surfaces of new adult molar teeth that have grown in. These teeth have grooves and pits that are often hard to clean and are at more likely to get cavities. Dental sealants provide a safe, protective coating over these surfaces, making them easier to keep clean. Like sealants, fluoride helps protect your child's teeth from cavities too.

Most tap water has fluoride in it, but if your area does not, your dentist may suggest extra fluoride through treatments or supplements. When at home, always use a small, age-appropriate amount of fluoride toothpaste, and follow the advice of your child's dentist.



The sun is so large that over one million Earths could fit inside it!

Thanks for reading!

Share this letter with other caregivers in your child's life. You'll hear from us again before your child is 9 years old with information on:

- HPV vaccine
- Screen time
- Healthy sleeping habits

For the Health of All Our Children

Watch Me Grow Washington is a program of the Washington State Department of Health

[@WatchMeGrowWA](https://www.facebook.com/WatchMeGrowWA) www.watchmegrowwa.org



Information in this publication is current as of the date noted. For updates, visit watchmegrowwa.org.

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Family Support and Routines

Help build your child's resilience and coping skills

It's totally normal to worry about how your child is doing emotionally during tough times. There are simple things we can do every day to help your child stay strong, hopeful, and connected.

1. Connect through play.

Think about the times you feel truly connected with your child—when you're having fun, being silly, and just being yourselves. Maybe it's reading together, tossing a ball, or doing silly hand-clap games. These everyday moments help build trust, joy, and resilience. Try to make them part of your child's day.



Cooking together makes me feel closer to you.

2. Lean into traditions.

Traditions help us make sense of both happy and hard times. Whether it's a special meal, a favorite song, or a bedtime story passed down from grandparents, these rituals give comfort and meaning. You can also create new ones and make them your own.

3. Move together.

Dance parties, doing yoga, or just walking around the block can lift everyone's mood. Physical movement can help your child (and you) manage stress.

4. Let go and be silly.

Stress can make us feel like we have to be serious and alert all the time. But it's OK to let go and just play. Laugh, be goofy, and do things just for fun—not because they're productive.

5. Unplug (when you can).

Try setting simple limits around screen use—for yourself, too. Put down the phone and do something with your child. Even taking 10 minutes without screens can make a big difference.

Remember, with your help, your child can get through stressful times. Your child may need more support at times. What matters most is showing up with love, connection, and a little bit of play every day.



Growth and Development

Emotional and social changes are happening.

By age 8, your child's physical, social, and mental skills develop quickly. They can dress themselves, catch a ball more easily using only their hands, and tie their shoes.

When starting school, your child will be in regular contact with more people. Friendships become more and more important. Having independence from parents and caregivers may become more important to your child now.

This is an important time for your child to develop confidence in all areas of life, including through friends, schoolwork, and sports. Your child may want to:

- Show more independence from parents and family.
- Start to think about the future.
- Understand more about their place in the world.
- Pay more attention to friendships and teamwork.
- Want to be liked and accepted by friends and classmates.



Spending time with my friends is very important to me.

Sleep matters!

How much and how well your child sleep affects everything from their mood and behavior to how well they learn and stay safe. Children who do not get enough sleep may have trouble paying attention, remembering things, or managing their emotions.

Starting good sleep habits early will help your child now and as they grow—and it can make bedtime easier for you too!



Nutrition and Physical Activity



Keep your child moving—every day!

Physical activity is great for your child's body and mind. It helps them stay healthy, build strong bones and muscles, and even feel happier and more focused. Aim for at least 60 minutes every day. That time can be split up into smaller chunks or done all at once—whatever works for your day. Whether it's biking, running, dancing, or playing games, what matters most is they move their bodies. Do not forget to cheer them on!

You can even join them in their activities and keep your body moving. Let your children see you enjoying physical activity. When they see you being active—and having fun doing it—they are more likely to join in and make it a regular part of their day too.

Active play doesn't have to be fancy. Try indoor games like 'Simon Says', dancing, yoga, obstacle course, or even a family cleaning session (yes, chores count!). Go outside for jump rope, hopscotch, kickball. Depending on the season, plan family activities and go to places to be active together, like going to the park, the pool, or activities in your community. Do what works for your family.

Make screen time active.

When your child is using screens, look for ways to get them moving. Video games that include dancing, sports, or fitness activities are great options. They can keep your child engaged and encouraging movement at the same time.



Let's keep our bodies moving while we have fun dancing together.

School Experience

Encourage a daily routine!

Help your child get into a good homework routine. Pick a regular time and place each day for them to do their homework. It doesn't have to be a desk in their room—even the kitchen table works fine. Just make sure the spot is well-lit and quiet, with no distractions like TV, loud conversations, or other children playing nearby. Keep supplies like paper and pencils, close by so your child can get started easily on their own.

