

Important Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child

You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates and other ways to keep them safe. But, did you know that one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have **all** of their vaccinations?

Immunizations can save your child's life. Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children, have been eliminated completely and others are close to extinction- primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio is one example of the great impact that vaccines have had in the United States. Polio was once America's most-feared disease, causing death and paralysis across the country, but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is very safe and effective. Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination, such as severe allergic reaction, are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

Immunization protects others you care about. Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, we have seen resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. Since 2010, there have been between 10,000 and 50,000 cases of whooping cough each year in the United States and about 10 to 20 babies, many of which were too young to be fully vaccinated, died each year. While some babies are too young to be protected by vaccination, others may not be able to receive certain vaccinations due to severe allergies, weakened immune systems from conditions like leukemia, or other reasons. To help keep them safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or child care facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills or long-term disability care. In contrast, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children from low-income families. To find out more about the VFC program, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/> or ask your child's health care professional.

Immunization protects future generations. Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots any more because the disease no longer exists. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has been dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus no longer are seen in the United States. If we continue vaccinating now, and vaccinating completely, parents in the future may be able to trust that some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm their children in the future.

For more information about the importance of infant immunization, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines>.



Love them, Protect them, Immunize them!

Building Language and Literacy With Infants & Toddlers

By Alice Sterling Honig, Ph.D.

Development

Loving caregivers can be enormously effective in advancing the language skills of infants and toddlers. Research reveals that the more that adults talk with young ones and respond to infant vocalizations and to toddler jargon and babbling, the richer and more powerful the language repertoire of children when they become preschoolers.

Use Teachable Moments

Language is best learned during familiar, daily routines. The diapering table is a language-interaction opportunity par excellence! As you diaper a child, coo and smile. Use "self-talk." Explain what you're doing to make the little one more comfortable with a clean diaper. Pat a baby's tummy as you admire how delicious and beautiful he looks! If a baby coos while you are cleaning and diapering, be sure to respond with pleasure and delight to these vocalizations.

While you are dressing and undressing or bathing a little one, be sure to talk about what is happening - how you are putting *ON* baby's shoes or how you are *ZIPPING* up a toddler's jacket. As you use words while showing by actions, children are learning the meanings of the words. Talk about what is going to happen next. "We are getting ready to go outdoors. You can play on the slide. You can play in the sandbox with a pail and shovel. I will help swing you in the swing back and forth, back and forth."

Children learn to anticipate and to picture activities that will happen next by your descriptions and your explanations. As you vividly share such experiences, you are giving language power to your little ones!

Label Actions and Activities

As the children push up from the floor with their arms, or try those first wobbly steps, provide the words that tell what is happening. "Parallel talk" means that you give words to the gestures and activities the children are carrying out. Exclaim admiringly, "You are trying so hard to put one block on top of another block. You are building a tower. Good work!" If the child is staring with a worried look at a crying peer, use reassuring words. "Tamar tumbled on the floor. She is feeling a little scared. We will comfort her and help her feel that she is safe. Let's give her a gentle pat and we will help her feel better."

Picture Book Sharing

During the first years, adults need to "Hook babies on books!" Be sure to settle cozily with a baby for a book sharing experience every day. Settle a baby comfortably on your lap. Let toddlers lean against you as you choose a book and snuggle on a comfy chair and then open and share the book's treasures. Choose books with bright colorful pictures. For very young infants, make sure there is only one picture per page. Then they can focus without distractions on a puppy, a baby in a crib, or a nursery rhyme character, such as Little Boy Blue sound asleep leaning against his haystack. Even when the old nursery rhymes seem quaint, babies enjoy the rhythms and meter of traditional nursery poems. By 9 months, some babies can even point to Little Boy Blue and exclaim "Boy!" When you read frequently with little ones, they look forward to their favorite pictures and the poems and words that go along. And they often are more easily able to memorize the words to familiar poems.

Supporting Challenging Behavior

As parents and caregivers, it can be difficult to experience challenging behaviors with children. Behaviors can sometimes feel overwhelming, and often parents are unsure of how to respond. It is important for parents to keep in mind that all behavior is communicating a message.

The good news is that parents and caregivers can learn to understand and interpret the meaning behind these behaviors. Once adults have this understanding, they can begin to support the child.

Punishing the child for exhibiting behaviors will never end the behavior. "Yelling at or punishing a child for a behavior may stop the behavior for the moment, but it does not give the child support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When adults use punishment, they are sending the message that anger is a good way to solve problems. When adults help children find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, children learn important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life." (PBS Parents http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/challenging_behavior2.html)

In addition to talking with your WV Birth to Three team about any concerns you may have with your child's behavior, here are a few things to try to help you and your little one through those difficult times:

- Prepare your child for upcoming activities by telling them in advance what is going to happen
- Make them a part of planning for daily activities - helps them to feel a part of the family and more "in charge"
- Give clear, simple directions
- Provide specific praise when your child has done what you wanted, such as "I really like how you put that paper in the trash" or "I like how you shared the toy with your sister"



Encourage your kids just for who they are...



- I love you.
- You're the best.
- I trust you.
- You're my son/daughter.
- You make my heart smile.
- I'm glad you're my kid.



- You're the best.
- You look beautiful.
- I love your smile.
- I love spending time with you.
- You are my sunshine!
- You make me happy!

Sleep and Preschoolers (3-5 years)

Preschoolers typically sleep 11-13 hours each night and most do not nap after five years of age. As with toddlers, difficulty falling asleep and waking up during the night are common. With further development of imagination, preschoolers commonly experience nighttime fears and nightmares. In addition, sleepwalking and sleep terrors peak during preschool years.



Sleep Tips for Preschoolers

- Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine that ends in the room where the child sleeps.
- Child should sleep in the same sleeping environment every night, in a room that is cool, quiet and dark – and without a TV.

Sleep and School-aged Children (6-13 years)

Children aged six to 13 need 9-11 hours of sleep. At the same time, there is an increasing demand on their time from school (e.g., homework), sports and other extracurricular and social activities. In addition, school-aged children become more interested in TV, computers, the media and Internet as well as caffeine products – all of which can lead to difficulty falling asleep, nightmares and disruptions to their sleep. In particular, watching TV close to bedtime has been associated with bedtime resistance, difficulty falling asleep, anxiety around sleep and sleeping fewer hours.

Sleep problems and disorders are prevalent at this age. Poor or inadequate sleep can lead to mood swings, behavioral problems such as ADHD and cognitive problems that impact on their ability to learn in school.



Sleep Tips for School-aged Children

- Teach school-aged children about healthy sleep habits.
- Continue to emphasize need for regular and consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine.
- Make child's bedroom conducive to sleep – dark, cool and quiet.
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom.
- Avoid caffeine.

Excerpts taken from www.sleepfoundation.org



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