

All in for Kids

A Birth to 3 Program Family Newsletter

All in for Kids is a newsletter created to keep you and your family informed about the services available through the Birth to 3 Program. The newsletter is published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.



Be Aware of Childhood Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is caused by swallowing lead items or breathing lead dust. Lead poisoning can hurt a child's brain and nervous system and slow their growth and development.

This can cause:

- Learning problems
- Behavior problems
- Trouble paying attention
- Crankiness

How do children get lead poisoning?

Most childhood lead poisoning is from house paint in older homes. Lead was used in some house paint before being banned in 1978. When paint breaks down, it turns into flakes or dust that covers toys, furniture, floors, windowsills, and

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porches. When a child chews on these items or gets lead dust on their hands and puts their hands into their mouth, they can get lead poisoning.

Lead is also found in:

- Drinking water in a house or city with lead pipes
- Dust that adults bring home from jobs where they are around lead, such as house painting or home renovation
- Items made in a country that has not banned the use of lead, including:
 - Toys
 - Jewelry
 - Make-up
 - Spices
 - Religious powders

How do I know if my child has lead poisoning?

A blood test is the only way to find out if your child has lead poisoning. Most children with lead in their blood do not have symptoms. Your child's health care provider may recommend a lead test during a routine check-up. If they do not, you can ask for one. Blood lead testing is covered by Wisconsin Medicaid and many private insurers.

What To Do if Your Child May Have Been Exposed to Lead

If your child may have been exposed to lead, you can get help by:

- **Talking with your child's health care provider**—They can order a blood lead test, explain the test results, and let you know if next steps are needed.
- **Contacting your local public health department**—Every county has a local health department that can provide services and connect you to resources available in your area. You can find contact information for your local health department at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm.

Children who have lead poisoning may be found eligible for the Birth to 3 Program.

Program Reduces Lead in Older Homes

Do you live in an older home that has peeling paint or old windows? The Wisconsin Lead-Safe Homes Program (LSHP) may be able to help make repairs to your home, making it safer for your family. Learn more about this program at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/lshp.htm. ❖

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

You can find more information about lead poisoning at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/index.htm. For ways to prevent lead poisoning, go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/prevention-intervention.htm.

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Ways To Build Your Child's Communication Skills

Communication is the ability and desire to connect with others by sharing ideas and feelings. Some communication uses spoken or signed language. Other communication is non-verbal, such as facial expressions or gestures. Most children learn to communicate to get their needs met or to interact with a loved one. Boosting a child's communication skills helps develop their:

- Patience
- Empathy (being able to understand and care about someone else's feelings)
- Future ability to read and write

These skills are very important for children's relationships and their success in school and in adulthood.

As a parent or caregiver, you can help your child develop communication skills. Here are some tips:

- **Respond to your baby's gestures, looks, and sounds**—When your baby coos at you, coo back. If your baby reaches out their arms to you, pick them up and say or sign simple words like "You want up."
- **Interact with your child**—Speak or sign with your child and give them time to reply. Make eye contact with them. This shows that you want to know your child's thoughts and ideas. Questions are great conversation starters. Here are some ideas:
 - Ask open-ended questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." For example, "Where is the kitty?"
 - Ask your child questions about their day. Encourage them to ask you about your day too! Asking questions and listening to their answers build your child's confidence that they are a good communicator.
- **Describe what you are doing during daily activities**—This helps your child connect words with objects and actions. For example, during bath time you might say or sign, "Here you go into the tub! Your arms, legs, and tummy are getting all wet. Rubber ducky is having a bath too." Or as you play together, you could say or sign, "You are brushing your doll's hair. She has long hair. Are there any tangles?"
- **Teach your child about non-verbal communication**—This can help your child develop empathy and interact well with others. For example, "See how your friend covers their face when you splash? They do not like water in their face."

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

For faster delivery, sign up to receive the electronic version of this newsletter and other emails about the Birth to 3 Program. Go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aboutdhs/alerts.htm and then scroll down and click the "Birth to 3 Program Information for Families" link on the left side.

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- **Recognize and respect your child’s feelings**—Children are more likely to share their feelings if they know they will not be judged or teased. You can show you understand your child’s experience yet disagree with their behavior. For example, “I know it can feel scary to sleep alone, but you are safe. Let’s work together for you to stay in your own safe bed. Would you like some quiet music on?”
- **Help your child name their feelings**—Notice and name your child’s feelings. For example, “You seem sad that we have to stop playing and clean up. Is that how you are feeling?” When a child knows that you understand their feelings, they can often move past sadness, anger, or frustration more easily.
- **Read together**—Reading a book is a great activity to do with kids of all ages. Young babies love to cuddle up with you and look at the pictures. Older babies can turn the pages and point to what they see. With a toddler, you can ask how a character might be feeling or imagine together what will happen next. ❖

Empathy and Young Children

The Birth to 3 Program supports your family in helping your child grow and develop in all areas, including social-emotional development. One part of social-emotional development is the ability to show empathy. Empathy means being able to understand and care about someone else’s feelings.

Why Empathy Is Important

Empathy is a basis for positive interactions with others. It is a foundation of strong relationships. An empathetic child is better able to manage their emotions, settle conflicts in a respectful and peaceful way, and take responsibility for their actions. This benefits the child, family, and community.

Tips for Helping Children Develop Empathy

Around age 2, a child’s developing brain gains the ability to show empathy. Parents and caregivers can help children practice this skill. Some ways to help a child develop empathy include:

- Helping your child recognize and name common feelings like happiness, sadness, frustration, and anger. You can look for chances to do this in daily life, such as “Your sister is feeling sad because she lost her toy.”

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- Setting an example with acts of kindness toward others. For example, hold the door for someone whose hands are full and explain to your child why you are doing it.
- Using empathetic language with your child, such as “I understand this is hard for you” or “You’re disappointed that we can’t go to the park because it’s raining.”
- Helping your child learn that they can look at body language or facial expressions to see how someone is feeling. You can help your child practice with simple activities such as cutting out pictures of faces from a magazine and talking or signing about the feelings they see, or making faces in front of a mirror and naming the emotion shown.
- Reading books with your child about feelings, such as “How Are You Peeling?” by Saxton Freymann, or watching videos together like this one from Sesame Street: [wisconsin.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sesame-mark-ruffalo-empathy/mark-ruffalo-empathy-sesame-street/](https://www.wisconsin.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sesame-mark-ruffalo-empathy/mark-ruffalo-empathy-sesame-street/).

When families teach empathy, children learn to:

- Build relationships.
- Act with compassion and understanding.
- Think about the similarities among people of all ethnic backgrounds, races, and income levels.
- Make choices throughout life that treat others as equal.

The Birth to 3 Program supports your family and child based on individual needs. Talk to the service team if you would like to learn more about nurturing empathy. ❖

The Birth to 3 Program Wants Your Family Stories and Photos!

The All in for Kids newsletter is for families, and we want to feature your photos and experiences for other readers to enjoy! You can share things like:

- A positive interaction with the Birth to 3 Program or an example how it has helped your family or child.
- A photo or story of an activity you did with your child.
- A photo of artwork or something else your child has made.

Email your family story or photo to dhsbirthto3@dhs.wisconsin.gov with “All in For Kids” in the subject line. You can also send ideas for

SPREAD THE WORD

If you know of a child who might be helped by the Birth to 3 Program, spread the word! Tell other parents about the program, pass along this newsletter, or share the website address with them.

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stories you would like to see in the newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you! ❖

Helpful Resources for Families

New! COVID-19 vaccines have been approved for everyone age 6 months and older. For the latest information about COVID-19, including information about vaccinations for children, vaccine booster doses, and testing, go to:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm

Tips for talking about COVID-19 vaccinations with family and friends:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-talk.htm

Parenting tips for stressful times from the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health, including short videos with advice from mental health professionals and parents and flyers in English and Spanish:

children.wi.gov/Pages/TrainingsVideos/Parenting.aspx

New to the Birth to 3 Program? Take a look at these resources:

The Early Intervention booklet helps you understand how early intervention helps your family and child learn and grow together:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-03022.htm

The Birth to 3 Program Services at a Glance guide explains the supports and services available:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-03011.htm

Previous issues of All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program newsletters:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/family/index.htm (Scroll down to the Publications and Videos tab at bottom of page.)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent COVID-19. You can also help stop its spread by:

- Wearing a mask on public transportation or at crowded gatherings. You can wear a mask even if it is not required.
- Staying home when feeling sick.
- Getting tested if you have symptoms or after close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

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All in for Kids is a newsletter published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for children and families in the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program.

The Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention program committed to serving children under the age of 3 with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The program partners with families to assist the child's development and support the family's knowledge, skills, and abilities as they interact with and raise their child. For more information, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/children/index.htm.

Para leer este boletín en español, visite www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3-2022.htm.

Xav nyeem tsab ntawv xov xwm no ua Lus Hmoob, mus xyuas www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3-2022.htm.

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