

healthy kids now

Children's Play **Builds Skills for a Lifetime**



How much time does your child spend playing? A new report says letting kids play may be more important to their development than many people realize. The report used the most recent research about children, play, and learning.

Learning Important Skills

Kids have the chance to build on the skills they already have and learn many new skills while playing. Playtime lets them learn early math skills and

better social and language skills. They can also improve their self-control, physical development, problem-solving skills, and more. Some research also found a link between playing and lower levels of stress. This playtime should be separate from any screen time. You should still be limiting screen time for your child.

Even with all these benefits, many children are not spending as much time playing as they did in past decades. The report says there is less

time for kids to play because there is a bigger focus on schoolwork and worries about safety.

Play with Your Child

Playing together also helps you build a stronger bond and reduce stress for you and your child.

Here are a few ways to add some play to your child's day:

- Sit on the floor with your infant or toddler. Let them explore blocks, stacking rings, rattles, or soft books.
- Ask your preschooler to role-play or pretend with you. You can pretend you are at the store or at school, or somewhere else fun.
- Head outside with your child for some outdoor playtime. Play together in a puddle after the rain, hit the field for some soccer, or go for a family bike ride.
- Find a board game and plan a family game night.
- Put on some music and dance together.
- Grab a basketball and shoot some hoops.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

LOOK INSIDE

Look Out for Lead **2**

Keep an Eye on
Your Child's Weight **4**

When Your Child Needs
Daily Asthma Medicine **5**



Look Out for Lead

If you live in an older home, your family might be exposed to lead. Lead is highly toxic. It is very harmful to young children and babies. Even low levels can affect a child's brain and nervous system development. This can cause learning disabilities, lower IQ, and behavior problems.

Sadly, lead poisoning is also very common. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say there are about 500,000 children under age 5 with lead poisoning. Because lead poisoning doesn't cause clear symptoms, some parents might not know to seek treatment for their children.

What Is Your Child's Lead Level?

Children should be tested by 12 months and, again, at 24 months. Schedule an appointment with your child's doctor for a lead blood test. This is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning.

Sources of Lead

Lead paint is banned today, but most houses built before 1978 used it. When paint in older homes peels, it leaves behind paint chips and dust that may contain lead. Young children can eat paint chips or put something in their mouths that touched dust containing lead.

Lead can also be found in:

- Drinking or tap water from lead pipes
- Soil around a home
- Older furniture
- Toys and play jewelry with lead paint
- Glazed pots
- Leaded gasoline
- Old or recycled electronics
- Candy and candy wrappers from other countries
- Vinyl blinds made in China, Taiwan, Mexico, Indonesia, or other countries

Prevent Poisoning

If you live in a home that was built before 1978:

- Have your home tested for lead
- Keep kids away from peeling paint
- Wash your child's hands and toys often
- Wash floors, window sills, and other flat surfaces every two to three weeks
- Don't let kids play in bare soil
- Let the tap water run for one or two minutes when using cold water to make food and drinks. If it needs to be hot, heat it in the microwave or on the stove.

Protect Your Home and Family

Talk with your child's doctor about a blood test to check for lead contact. Your child should have two blood lead screenings before age 2. If you think your family is at risk, download a lead poisoning home checklist at www.epa.gov/lead/lead-poisoning-home-checklist.

Don't Let Your Kids Get Cavities

Did you know that cavities are a disease? In fact, cavities are the most common disease in young kids and teenagers.

How do cavities happen?

Bacteria live inside of everybody's mouth. The sugars and starches in sodas and junk foods feed the bacteria, which create acid. If teeth are not cleaned well, the acid stays on the teeth and can cause cavities.

Cavities can be very painful and make it hard to eat. They can also cause your child to miss school.

Steps to help prevent cavities:

- **Brush teeth two times a day.** Brush in the morning and at bedtime.
- **Use dental floss once a day.** It helps to clean between teeth.
- **Go to the dentist for regular checkups.** The dentist will clean your child's teeth and look for cavities. The dentist may also suggest fluoride varnish or sealants.

What is fluoride varnish?

Fluoride varnish is a strong fluoride that helps prevent cavities in children. It is painted onto the teeth and gets hard right away. It's easy to put on young children's teeth and they're not likely to swallow it.

The fluoride stays on the teeth for a few hours and slowly gets absorbed. After fluoride varnish, your child's teeth may look yellowish. This is normal and goes away in 24 hours. Your child should not eat or drink for 30

minutes after getting a fluoride varnish to allow the teeth time to absorb the fluoride and help repair microscopic carious areas. Also, your child should not brush until the next morning.

What are sealants?

A sealant is a protective coating applied to the chewing surfaces of the teeth. A child's first and second molars are usually most at risk for cavities. So sometimes, only certain teeth need to be sealed. Your dentist will recommend which ones are best for sealants.

Remember, sealed teeth need the same care as unsealed teeth. Sealants can help prevent cavities, but your child still needs to brush and floss regularly and get regular exams by the dentist. Children should refrain from chewing on ice or hard foods as they can break down sealants.

Always ask the dentist what treatments are best for your child.

Source: United Concordia

Remember!

Under the Keystone CHIP plan, your child is eligible for one oral evaluation every six months, one cleaning every six months, and three fluoride varnish or topical fluoride treatments every year. Your child is also eligible for one sealant per tooth on permanent first and second molars every three years. Visit the Dental Health Center at www.UnitedConcordia.com for more tips.



Remember to Renew!

We verify children's eligibility for CHIP once each year.

You will receive a Change Reminder Notice 120 days before the anniversary of enrollment, stating that we will attempt to review your child's eligibility by using data available through federal and state databases. If this data is reasonably similar to the income you reported to us, the renewal will be processed without further documentation required from you.

It is extremely important that you report any changes that may affect your child's eligibility, including:

- Income
- Employment
- Household size
- Marital status
- Address
- Medical insurance coverage

If the electronic data is not reasonably similar to the income that you previously reported, you will receive a letter and Renewal Form. Please complete the Renewal Form, include all documentation of your income*, and return these items to Independence Blue Cross as soon as possible. The sooner you respond to the request, the more time there will be to resolve any questions and avoid a potential loss of your child's CHIP coverage.

Be sure to follow the instructions on the Notice and Renewal Form. If you have any questions about this renewal process, call the Member Help Team at **1-800-464-5437**, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

*Copies of pay stubs and other sources of income are required. If you are self-employed OR report tax deductions, please be sure to include a copy of your most recent federal tax return with all schedules.



Keep an Eye on Your Child's Weight

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say one in six children is obese. Almost half of parents do not notice when their children are overweight. Ignoring a child's weight can affect their health later in life. After all, if you don't see that there is a problem, you're less likely to try to find a solution.

When It Starts

Obesity begins early. Compared with children of the same age who are at a normal weight, overweight 5-year-olds have four times the risk of becoming obese. If obesity continues into the teen and adult years, they have a higher risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems.

Make a Difference

Ask your child's doctor how to start a weight and exercise plan for your child. Doctors should begin keeping track of your child's body mass index, or BMI, at age 2. They should also counsel you on nutrition and physical activity based on your child's age. This will

give you the facts about your little one's weight and health. Pediatricians can also offer advice about helping kids reach and maintain a healthy size. Things they might suggest are:

- **Make sure your child gets enough sleep.** Children who do not sleep enough are more likely to be overweight or obese. Preschoolers usually need 10 to 13 hours of sleep each day. School-age children need 9 to 12 hours. Teens need 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Set a bedtime schedule and stick to it.
- **Get your child moving.** Make physical activity as normal as eating and sleeping for your child. Let young children have at least an hour each day to run around and play. Give children options to do activities they enjoy, like playing tag, jumping rope, or basketball. Such physical activity can improve kids' bones, self-esteem, and health for years.
- **Forget the idea of having a clean plate.** Do not pressure your child to finish all his or her food. It does not make eating habits or health better. Instead, let kids eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; American Academy of Pediatrics; Pediatrics; American Heart Association; JAMA; U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

When Your Child Needs Daily Asthma Medicine



Does your child have to take prescription asthma medication every day? Helping your child keep up with the medication needs of asthma can be difficult. You can help your child cope with the condition. Try these tips:



Learn about the medications. Make sure you and your child understand why he or she needs the medication. You both also need to know what the side effects might be. Make sure you both know what to do if a dose is missed. It is also smart to learn how to deal with changes from day-to-day life, such as trips.



Have your child help. Use rewards, such as praise, stickers, and reward charts. This works for older children, too. For example, teens who are learning to drive can be rewarded if they take their medications as prescribed. Remind them that a good report from their doctor may be needed to get their driver's license.



Talk with your child. Explain to your child that, even with side effects, medication can help your child lead a more normal life. Listen when your child talks about the problems she or he may be having. Look for solutions together. Your child's doctor may have ideas, too.



Bargain when you can. Your child may be able to take medications at home if your child is uncomfortable taking them at school. Work with your child's doctor to find other safe options.

Share information with others. Explain your child's medication needs to school staff. They should know how to handle an asthma attack and have access to your child's rescue medication. Explain how to use your child's rescue medication. Also, be sure you understand the school's rules on medication. Your child should not carry his or her own medication at school unless your pediatrician and school agree it is needed.

Get your child ready for questions. Help your child plan for any questions he or she may be asked at school. Ask your child, "If your friends wonder why you need to take medication, what will you say?" Discuss and practice answers your child can use.

Prepare for times when your child does not want to follow the rules. Children do not always want to listen to rules from parents and doctors. Try not to fight about your child's medication. Instead, slowly transfer the responsibility for managing your child's medication to your growing child while supporting healthy behaviors.



Don't Give Cervical Cancer a Chance

Parents never want to see their children in harm's way. Almost all cervical cancers are caused by HPV, and you and your child can help stop the spread of this virus.

For Better Health

The HPV vaccine does a great job of stopping the virus. It protects those who get the shot almost 100 percent from precancerous growths, or cell growths that could turn into cancer. It also provides very strong protection from the type of HPV that causes genital warts. The shot also does not cause any infections or cancer.

The side effects from the HPV shot are usually very mild. Normal reactions include arm swelling, fever, and headache.

The Time to Act Is Now

Your child's doctor may ask you about giving your child the shot. The doctor may want to talk about it even if you do not think your child is sexually active. This is because the HPV vaccine works the best in people who have not had contact with the virus through sexual contact.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say all boys and girls ages 11 or 12 should get two doses of the HPV vaccine. The shots should be spaced at least six months apart.

Even older teens and young adults can benefit. Talk with your child's doctor about the best timing for your child's health and future.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Cancer Institute; American Association for Cancer Research; Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Make Time for Well-Child Visits

As a busy parent, it may feel tough to fit everything in. But, you don't want to skip well-child visits. These doctor visits are the time for shots, health screenings, and a check of your child's development. They are also a great time for you to ask questions and voice concerns. Use the tips below to make the most of your well-child visits.

Know when to go. Babies and toddlers should have well-child visits at:

- 3 to 5 days old
- 1 month
- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- 15 months
- 18 months
- 24 months
- 30 months



Starting at age 3, kids and teens need one visit every year through age 21.

Get developmental screenings. Your child should have developmental screenings during well-child visits at 9, 18, and 30 months. Developmental screenings look at a child's:

- Development
- Language
- Movement
- Thinking
- Behavior
- Emotions



The screenings help find risks for delays in development. That way, your child can get the help he or she needs as early as possible.

Understand the big wellness benefits. Sick visits focus on diagnosing and treating illness. But every well-child visit covers a wide range of health needs. What is done depends on your child's age. These may include:

- Shots
- A physical exam
- Checks of vision, hearing, cholesterol, and blood pressure, plus developmental and autism screenings
- A check of your child's emotional health
- For older children and teens, checks for alcohol and drug use and high-risk behavior
- Depression screenings



Keep up with your rapidly growing child. Kids grow quickly. Well visits help you keep up with what they need now. You can talk about things like:

- Healthy eating
- Sleeping
- Exercise
- How your child is doing in school, at home, and in activities



Build your partnership with the doctor. Write down questions to help you better understand your child's health conditions and how to help keep your child healthy. An educational program from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement suggests these Ask Me 3 list of questions:

- What is my child's main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

During the visit, talk with the doctor about these questions and others of your own. Talking with your child's doctor is a great way to build a relationship. By speaking freely, you are adding more information to your child's health history. This helps the doctor better understand your child's wellness needs.



Sign Up for Screening Reminders!

Get health screening reminders, plan notifications, and cost-savings alerts with email and IBX Wire text messages. Sign up today at

www.ibx.com/CHIPconnect.

Keep Kids Safe This Summer

Warm weather, outdoor fun, and poolside games are right around the corner. However, many summer activities carry health risks for kids. You can help them avoid these hazards by taking simple steps.

Bug Bites

- Serious reactions to bee and wasp stings need quick medical help. This includes hives, dizziness, or shortness of breath. Call **911**.
- Mosquitoes can carry the West Nile and Zika viruses, which can be deadly. To stay safe:
 - Try keeping kids indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
 - Apply an insect repellent that contains no more than 30 percent **DEET**.
- Ticks can cause Lyme disease and other infections. To protect your kids:
 - Have them wear pants and long-sleeved shirts when walking in the woods or tall grass.
 - Check their hair and skin for ticks after they spend time outdoors.

Bikes and Boards

- Make sure children wear helmets made for the sport and that fit well. Helmets reduce the risk for brain injury by up to 88 percent. When skateboarding, in addition to helmets, make sure they also wear wrist, knee, and elbow guards.
- Make sure your child's bike is the right size, and adjust the seat to the right height.
- Be sure your child knows and follows the rules of the road.

Independence

Independence Blue Cross
1901 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1480
1-800-464-5437
www.ibx.com/chip

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
INDEPENDENCE
BLUE CROSS

© Copyright 2019. Articles in this newsletter are written by professional journalists or physicians who strive to present reliable, up-to-date health information. But, no publication can replace the advice of medical professionals, and readers are cautioned to seek such help. Models are used for illustrative purposes only. Developed by StayWell. 5506M (SP19)

Heat Hazards

- Have your child drink plenty of water, especially before, during, and after doing draining activities. Avoiding all drinks with caffeine, which can cause dehydration, is also a good idea.

Sunburn

- Apply sunscreen on kids, even on cloudy days. Use a sunscreen with at least 15 SPF that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Reapply often according to the directions on the sunscreen, especially if sweating or during water play or swimming.
- Have kids wear sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats.

Water Safety

- Teach kids to swim. If you can't teach them, sign up any child age 4 and older for swimming lessons.
- Install a fence with a locking gate if you have a home pool.
- Watch kids at all times when they are in or near bodies of water.
- Let them dive only in areas meant for diving, where the depth of the water is known.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; American Academy of Pediatrics; SafeKids USA; Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



Independence Blue Cross complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, cuenta con servicios de asistencia en idiomas disponibles de forma gratuita para usted. Llame al 1-800-275-2583 TTY 711.

注意：如果您讲中文，您可以得到免费的语言协助服务。请致电1-800-275-2583。

Sí necesita ayuda para traducir esta información, por favor comuníquese con el departamento de servicios a miembros de Independence Blue Cross al 1-800-464-5437. Estos servicios están disponibles de lunes a viernes, de 8 a.m. a 6 p.m. Usuarios del sistema TTY deberán llamar al 711.