



# giving your child a smart start

a guide for parents  
of newborns thru age 3

**free gift  
for your child!**

see details inside

smart start  
oklahoma.org

QUICK REFERENCE: **helping your CRYING BABY**

QUICK REFERENCE: **concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT**

QUICK REFERENCE: **finding quality CHILD CARE**

QUICK REFERENCE: **schedule for IMMUNIZATIONS / PARENT RESOURCES**



  
smart start  
oklahoma.org

## what is Smart Start Oklahoma?

Smart Start is Oklahoma's Early Childhood Advisory Council, advancing opportunities that improve the lives of young children in Oklahoma. Smart Start's state and local leadership teams include businesses, agencies, programs, parents, and providers who all share a commitment to serving Oklahoma's young children better.

## our vision

All Oklahoma children will be safe, healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.

## our communities

Local citizens know what is needed and what can be done to create a brighter future for the children who live in their communities. Smart Start Oklahoma has a network of 18 communities, reaching 51 counties across the state. Each community promotes school readiness, develops local resources, ensures that local early childhood programs and services are coordinated and efficient, and that families have the resources they need to prepare their children for school. Please see the back of this guide for a contact list of Smart Start Communities in Oklahoma.

## dear parent:

**Congratulations and best wishes on having the most important job in the world—parenthood!** Whether this is your first or last child, parenthood is a journey full of memorable moments and challenges. Preparing your child for the best life possible is up to you, and you don't have to go it alone. Smart Start Oklahoma has prepared this guide to help you make sure your child has a smart start.

Each day of your child's life is important and one step closer to his or her first day of school. Unfortunately, many of Oklahoma's children arrive to school on the first day without the skills to succeed. This Guide for Parents provides you with the critical information you need to know so your child grows up physically, emotionally, and intellectually healthy.

As a pediatrician and the Board Chair for Smart Start Oklahoma, I commend you for taking the time to review this material and I hope that you find it an excellent resource.

All the best,



Marianne "Dr. Marny" Dunlap, M.D.  
Board Chair, Smart Start Oklahoma



# birth-1 month



## I talk by crying...

**for more ideas to help me calm down, read helping your crying baby at the end of this guide**

### If I am crying, it could mean that I...

- Am wet
- Am too hot or too cold
- Am sleepy
- Am hungry
- Want to change position
- Want to be held
- Need to be burped
- Have colic

**If nothing seems to help me calm down,** check with my doctor to see if something is wrong.

**Soon you will be able to tell the difference** between my cry that says, "feed me," and the one that says "pick me up and hold me."

**Remember, it is common for babies** to have a fussy time each day.

## help me be healthy

### before I come home from the hospital...

- **I will have a hearing screening and** I may have a hepatitis shot. I will have a blood test designed to screen babies for several genetic disorders. The doctor or nurse will take a small amount of blood by pricking my heel before I leave the hospital. If the test shows a possible problem, you and my doctor will be notified and a follow-up visit will be arranged.

### when I go for my first checkup...

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will be looked at everywhere.** The doctor will want to know how we are all doing as a family and will answer any questions. My health is very important and that is why we go to the doctor or clinic for well-baby check-ups.

### feed me when I am hungry...

- **Breast milk or iron fortified formula** is the only food I need. It will probably take us several weeks to adjust to a feeding schedule. This is normal. If I am breastfeeding, I may eat every 2 to 3 hours. Get in the habit now of wiping my gums after feedings with a soft washcloth even before I have teeth.
- **I am getting enough to eat if I am...**
  - ...Growing
  - ...Having 4-6 wet diapers a day
  - ...Having at least one stool a day.

## help me be safe

### whenever we ride in the car...

- **Put me in a car seat,** put the straps on right, and place me in the backseat. Oklahoma law requires that I be in a car seat when I am in a car until I'm big enough to wear a regular seat belt. The car seat is the only safe place for me to be. In addition, I should be in the backseat and facing backward until I am 22 pounds. So use the car seat even if I fuss.

### make my sleep safe...

- **Place me on my back to sleep** as I should sleep on my back until I'm able to turn over by myself.
- **Doctor's agree that the safest place** for me is to sleep in your room in a separate area. My bed needs to be safe with a firm mattress that fits snugly in the frame with a fitted sheet that is tight around the mattress and avoid placing anything in the bed with me. Also, keep me away from sleeping on futons, sofas, chairs or recliners as I can become trapped and suffocate.
- **Dress me in a one-piece sleeper** with nothing over me and keep the room temperature comfortable for a lightly clothed adult (68° to 72°). If it's cold, layer my clothing (for example, add a tee shirt and socks under my sleeper) and use only a light blanket, if necessary.

- **Should parents fall asleep with me** in their bed, keep me safe and never let me sleep with anyone who is very tired or a heavy sleeper, is extremely overweight, smokes, has been drinking or has taken medications (illegal, prescribed, or over-the-counter) that can make them sleepy.

### check the batteries in our smoke detector...

- **Have you thought of how you** would help me get out if there was a fire? Practice a fire drill.

### don't forget...

- **Never leave me alone with pets** and keep me away from cigarette and cigar smoke. It's hard on my developing lungs.

## help me learn

- **Hold me, cuddle me,** rock me, hug me and let me look at your face.
- **Change my position** every once in a while.
- **Talk to me, sing to me, read to me.** Describe my surroundings to me, tell where and what you are doing as you carry me around.
- **Put a picture on the side of my bed.** Hang a mobile over my crib. Put them on securely so I can't pull them down.
- **Listen to gentle music with me.**

## watch for me to

- **Develop feelings of safety,** security, and trust in parents and other caretakers.
- **Express my needs by crying;** your response helps me to learn to trust.
- **Look to see who is talking.**
- **Move my eyes to follow something** that moves in front of my face. Look at you, look away, and then look at you again when we are playing. I can see best when an object is about 8 inches from my face.
- **Sleep a lot.** I don't know when it is night, so I will wake up in the night and want to eat.
- **Eat every few hours.** When I'm not eating, I may sleep most of the time.
- **Be fussy and cry more** than you would like me to cry. Don't be afraid to hold me.
- **Suck on my fingers or pacifier.** I like to suck even when I am not hungry.
- **Be startled by loud noises.**
- **Adjust to my surroundings** and it's noises.

# 2-3 months



## help me be healthy

At this checkup, I will:

- **Be weighed and measured and have several immunizations (shots).** Look at the immunization schedule at the back of this guide to see a list of the immunizations I will get at this checkup. These shots help my body to build defenses against disease. I will need to have these shots if I am going to be in child care or preschool and before I go to kindergarten. Take my shot record with me so the doctor or nurse can write down the date that I had these immunizations.

I eat about 5-7 times a day.

- **Some babies, particularly breastfed babies, may eat more often on some days.** Breast milk or iron-fortified formula should still be my only food now. Do not put cereal or other solid food in my formula. My body is not ready for solid foods until I am 4 to 6 months old. Feeding solids too early may cause me to have allergies or to eat too much. My doctor might suggest that I have vitamin drops if I am nursing or was born prematurely. Talk to the doctor about this.

How do you know I am hungry?

- **I might be fussy or suck my finger or pacifier.** It's okay to try to feed me. Nursing or iron-fortified formula is what I want.

## being a parent is hard work!

**When you feel stress building, talk to your** spouse, a family member or a good friend about your feelings. It helps to talk with someone who is close to you. Ask someone to come watch me so you have a break.

**Join a group of parents** where they talk about ways to help children grow. To find out about parenting groups or classes, call 211 (<http://www.211oklahoma.org/>) or the Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) at 1-800-426-2747 (<http://oasis.ouhsc.edu/>) or your local county health department and

ask for Child Guidance Services. These resources are also available for a parent having trouble finding the fun times when parenting.

**Read about being a parent.** There are books, magazines, newsletters and flyers for parents. Visit the Oklahoma State Department of Health's Child Guidance webpage for parenting publications to read at: [http://www.ok.gov/health/Child\\_and\\_Family\\_Health/Child\\_Guidance\\_Service/](http://www.ok.gov/health/Child_and_Family_Health/Child_Guidance_Service/)

## help me be safe

- **Handle me gently.** Support my head and neck when you hold me. Do not pick me up by my arms or swing me by my arms or legs. Do not shake me or throw me in the air.
- **Protect me from falls.** Be careful not to fall with me in your arms. Do not leave me alone on a changing table or other high place. I could fall and hurt myself.
- **Provide "Tummy Time" for me to play** and exercise while I am awake and you are watching me.

## help me learn

- **Read to me everyday.**
- **Let me feel different objects** by rubbing them against my hands. Let me feel some soft materials and some that are bumpy. I like to feel the different clothes you wear.
- **Tell me how special I am.** Smile and talk to me a lot.
- **Show me bright colors.** I can easily see the difference between black and white and red and yellow.
- **Look at me when you talk to me.** I want to copy your mouth. Repeat the sounds I make. I like the game of making sounds.

## watch for me to

- **Continue developing feelings of safety,** security, and trust in parents and other caretakers.
- **Express my needs by crying** and your response helps me to learn to continue to trust.
- **Wave, kick, and squirm** when lying on my back.
- **Make sounds** like "uh", "eh", and "oh."
- **Look and stare at things.** I look at you a lot.
- **Lift my head up and turn it sideways** when I am on my stomach.
- **Turn to you and smile** when I see or hear you.
- **Quiet down, move my eyes or change expression** when I hear your voice or I hear some other noise.

**Children are very different from one another.** Don't worry if I am early or late in the ways that I am growing. If I was born prematurely or have some special needs, then it may take me a little longer to do some of the things listed. Help me learn new things. If you are concerned, talk to my doctor or nurse.

You may notice that I also:

- **Sometimes cross my eyes** or have only one eye open at a time. This is normal. I will do this until my eye muscles get stronger.
- **Gurgle and smile** when I am happy.
- **Have tears when I cry.** My tear ducts are starting to work now.
- **Like to suck my thumb or pacifier.** Sucking is a way that I learn about my world and one way that I calm myself down.

**if I am going to be in a child care program, please review the finding quality child care reference in this guide**



# 4-5 months



## help me be healthy

### At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will be looked at everywhere.** The doctor will look how I move, hear, and how well I see.
- **I will have several immunizations (shots).** Remember to bring my shot record so it can be updated.
- **Ask the doctor or WIC Nutritionist** about starting cereal at 4 months. Rice cereal is the first cereal I should try. Please feed me cereal from a spoon—do not put it in a bottle.

### Remember...

- **Keep me away from cigarette and cigar smoke.**
- **Keep wiping my gums and new teeth** with a washcloth after each feeding.
- **If I tug at my ears or have a cold lasting several days** this could mean that I have an ear infection. Ear infections may have an effect on my hearing. Being sick a lot could affect my growth and learning. If I don't feel well, it may be hard for me to see, hear, think and learn. If I act, look or feel like I am sick, please call the doctor or nurse right away.

## new things are happening to me...

When something new happens to me, I may be angry or afraid. I am slow to change. As a parent, you could get angry and confused with me.

### What I really need is for you to:

#### Be patient.

**To show me new things,** new people, and new situations slowly.

**To let me try 3 or 4 times** to get used to something new. I might like it better the second or third time I try it.



if you ever need  
parenting guidance  
call 2-1-1 for help

## help me be safe

- **Hold my bottle for me.** Hold me when I am drinking my bottle. Otherwise I could spit up and choke. Don't put me to bed at night with a bottle either. If I have a bottle in my mouth all night, the milk could decay my new teeth or damage my gums.
- **Make sure that the toys, pacifiers and** other things you give me are safe for me to have. They should not have any sharp edges or loose pieces. Toys should be big enough that I cannot fit them into my mouth.
- **I am strong enough to wiggle out** of the infant seat or tip it over. Use the safety strap and keep the infant seat on the floor and away from steps or other dangers.
- **Never leave me alone on a bed,** on a sofa, on the changing table or in the tub.
- **Use an exersaucer or bouncy seat.** Use only for a short time and only when I'm being watched.
- **Keep me away from hot liquids** such as coffee, tea and soup. When you are holding me, don't try to drink anything hot. I could be badly burned by a hot liquid spilling on me.

## help me learn

- **Respond promptly to my crying.** Don't worry about spoiling me. Answering my needs makes me feel safe, loved and worthwhile, and teaches me to trust. Developing trust is the beginning of self-discipline and is necessary for becoming a well adjusted, caring human being.
- **Play "talking back and forth."** First, I make a noise and you listen. Then you make the same noise and I listen. We can do this many times.
- **Let me reach for toys** hanging from the sides of my crib or playpen. Make sure they are tied safely and securely so they won't hurt me. Make supervised "tummy time" a regular part of my day.
- **Look at picture books of familiar objects** and animals, pointing at and naming things as you turn the pages. Make your own picture book by cutting out pictures from magazines or photographs.
- **Hold a rattle or toy in front of me.** Move it to get my attention. Then let me try to keep my eyes on it while you move it from one side to the other, up and down and in circles. This helps me use both eyes.
- **Play "Peek-a-Boo"** with your hands or blanket.
- **Let me babble to you.**

## watch for me to

- **Smile at you** to get you to pay attention to me.
- **Hold up my head without bobbing** it around when I sit in your lap.
- **Hold a small toy,** like a rattle for a few seconds in my hand if you place it in my hand.
- **Laugh out loud.**
- **Say "oo," "ahh,"** and other vowel sounds. Sometimes when I say these sounds, I will say them quickly. Other times, I will say them slowly and kind of sing the sound.
- **Hold my head all the way up** and rest my arms when I am on my stomach.
- **Recognize sounds that I hear** often-like your voice, the sound of a favorite toy or running water.
- **Get excited when I'm having fun.** Everything is a game to me.
- **Let you know I recognize you as a special person.** I get excited when I see people I know or my bottle.
- **Begin sitting with your help.**

Each child grows and changes at a different rate. Don't worry if I am early or late in the ways that I am growing. Help me learn. If you are concerned, talk to my doctor or nurse.

# 6-7 months



## help me be healthy

### At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and checked over.**
- **I will have the next set of immunizations.** Be sure to bring the shot record to my visit so it can be updated by the doctor or nurse. If I had any reaction to the shots when I had them before, tell the doctor what happened to me.

### I may also:

- **Have my eyes checked** to see if I have crossed eyes or a lazy eye.
- **Have a blood test** to see if I have enough iron in my blood.

### Take care of my diet and teeth:

- **Ask if I need fluoride supplements** to help my teeth.
- **Ask about my eating habits.** Describe when and how much I eat.
- **Start vegetables and fruits.** At 6 months, I am old enough to try vegetables and fruits. Try starting with vegetables. An orange vegetable such as squash or sweet potatoes would be a good one to serve first.
- **Only give me one new food** each week. If I have an allergy, this way you will know what food caused the allergy.
- **Take care of my teeth.** As soon as my teeth come in, it is a good idea to gently brush my teeth with a little, soft bristled toothbrush or washcloth and some water. Do not use toothpaste.

## home needs to be safe for me...

**While you can make my house safer for me, I will need help to learn how to be safe.** Until I learn what to do, take me away from the place I shouldn't be or take away the thing I shouldn't be playing with. Take me where I CAN be and give me the things I CAN play with. Hitting, slapping, or yelling at me just doesn't work. Get me interested in something safe and appropriate.

**Make our house safe for me.** One way to do this is to get on your hands and knees and crawl around. Take away or move anything that I can reach or that could hurt me as I begin to crawl around.

Keep me away from cords of all kinds—telephone cords, drapery cords, and electrical cords. Cover the electrical outlets. Be sure all painted surfaces are free of lead-based paint.

**Understand that I am beginning to be scared of new experiences** and new people. I may get upset when you leave me, even for a short time. I need you to reassure me by talking about what is happening and when you return, greet me warmly.

## help me be safe

- **Put the safety belt** on when I am in a high-chair and be sure the tray is securely locked in place. Make sure my hands are out of the way when you lock the tray in place.
- **Be sure there are no sharp edges** to cut me or you.
- **Don't let me stand or leave me alone in the high-chair.**
- **Don't leave the high-chair too close to a table** or counter. I can push on the table and tip my chair over or use the high-chair to try and climb on to high things or places.

## help me learn

- **Read to me everyday.**
- **Talk to me in complete sentences.** Tell me what you are doing.
- **Make sounds for me to copy** like "eee," "uh-oh," and "aaa."
- **Tell me about a toy** and show me how to use it. I will want to look at it, smell it, chew it, squeeze it, pat it and bang it.
- **Put a favorite toy just out of my reach.** Help me wiggle to it.

## watch for me to

- **Continue developing feelings of safety,** security, and trust in parents and other caretakers.
- **Pick up my head and chest** when I am on my stomach. I can hold myself up with my arms and may begin pulling up onto my knees and begin rocking to get ready to crawl.
- **Stand up if you hold me under my arms.**
- **Roll from my stomach** to my back or from my back to my stomach.
- **Notice things like small round toasted oat cereal** if they are placed in front of me.
- **Lie on my back and look at my hands.** I can bring my hands together over my chest or at my mouth.
- **Reach for toys** or other interesting things that are near to me.
- **Squeal and make high-pitched sounds** when I am happy.
- **Start to have my teeth come in.**
- **Sit for a few seconds without any help.**
- **Help me learn how to drink from a cup.** This will take time.

This list describes what most children can do by 6 months. I am my own person. I might do some activities earlier than others. Play with me to help me learn new things. If you are concerned, talk to my doctor or nurse.

**if you ever need  
parenting guidance  
call 2-1-1 for help**



# 8–9 months



## help me be healthy

At this check-up, I will be:

- **Weighed and measured.**
- **Watched to see what I do when sounds are made.**
- **Listened to when I talk.**
- **Given any immunizations and have any blood tests** that I have missed. Remember to take my shot record with me to be updated at the doctor's office.

Starting me on meats.

- **At 8 months, I can have meats prepared for babies.** Add the baby food meats to my meals of cereal, vegetables, and fruit. Remember: No cow's milk until I am 1 year old.

Shoes or no shoes?

- **I don't really need shoes to help me learn how to walk.** When I do learn to walk, shoes or sneakers will protect my feet.

## I am curious about the world...

**Help me learn why some things are not safe.**

If I go to the stove or heater say, "hot" and move me away. Save the word "stop" for dangerous things (reaching for an electrical outlet) and say "wait" for things that I need to learn how to manage (ex: instead of "stop spilling the cup," say "wait, let me show you how to hold the cup").

**Put things out of reach that** you do not want me to swallow or put in my mouth. Pills, cleaners, makeup or plants are dangerous. If you think I have swallowed something, first call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

**if I am going to be in a child care program, please review the finding quality child care reference in this guide**



## help me be safe

Now that I can pull myself up, there are new safety dangers:

- **When cooking, turn pot handles** to the center of the stove. Don't leave spoons or anything hanging over the edge of the stove.
- **Check knobs on the television** and stereo to see if they can come off.
- **Look for cords, chairs or tables with wheels** and floor lamps and bookshelves that could be pulled over. When I pull or push on these, they could fall over on me.
- **Move the crib mattress to the lowest** position so I can't fall or climb out.
- **Keep things picked up** so I don't fall over anything or swallow something I should not.
- **Use corner protectors** on sharp edges of furniture.
- **Keep the bathroom door closed** so I don't play in the toilet bowl.
- **Use safety plugs** in outlets that I have access to.
- **Use cabinet safety locks** for areas with medicines or cleaning products.
- **Take away anything that dangles.** I will pull on a tablecloth or dresser scarf. Keep my crib away from drapery and venetian blind cords.

Check my toys:

- **Look to see that they are not broken** and they don't have any sharp edges or pieces that can hurt me. If I have stuffed animals and dolls with button eyes or noses, check to be sure that they cannot come off.

I can easily choke:

- **Don't feed me hard foods or** foods that crumble easily, such as graham crackers. Use an empty toilet paper tube to determine if toys are big enough for me. If they fit in the tube, I might choke on them.

## help me learn

- **Teach me to be patient** by modeling that yourself. Tell me what to expect and then follow through with what you have told me.
- **Read to me.** Point to pictures as you tell me about them.
- **Hide a toy under a cloth** so I can look for it.
- **Help me understand my body parts** by pointing to them and naming them.
- **Play hide and seek with me.** Ask me, "where is \_\_\_\_ (name a person or thing)?" I will try to look for this person or item.
- **Play, "So Big!"** Show me how to lift my arms over my head and say "So Big!"
- **Give me a chance to smell** some sage things, such as food, flowers, and spices. Tell me about how they smell.

## watch for me to

- **Sit without help and start to crawl.**
- **Feed myself a cracker,** cereal, or food I can eat with my fingers—I'm pretty messy.
- **Say sounds** of "ma," "ga," "da," "di," "ba," and make other sounds.
- **Pick up small things using my whole hand** in a raking motion.
- **Listen to people talking** and try to make some sounds.
- **Hold a small block in one hand** and pass it to the other hand.
- **Look for something that I have dropped.**
- **Hold onto something and stand** for about 5 seconds.

Children are very different from one another. Don't worry if I am early or late in the ways I am growing. Just keep on helping me learn new things. If you are concerned, talk to my doctor or nurse.

# 10-12 months



## help me be healthy

### At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will have any immunizations** or blood tests that I have missed.
- **I might be screened** to see if I have been exposed to lead. I can get lead into my body by breathing or eating lead dust, chips, or flakes. The lead can get into my nerves and bones. It can affect the way I learn, grow and hear. The earlier we catch the problem, the less harm will be done to me.

## good days/bad days...

**All parents have bad days** and sometimes feel worn out. It is common for a parent's body to ache a little from the work of being a parent. This doesn't mean you are doing anything wrong. Remember that these bad days are usually followed by good days.

Young children need parents who try their best, but that does not mean you will succeed all the time. Try not to worry about being a super parent or a super family.

**If you sometimes feel that you are at the end of your rope**, talk to your spouse, call a good friend or call one of the telephone services that can offer support and suggestions on parenting issues.

**Call 211** (<http://www.211oklahoma.org/>) or the Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) at 1-800-426-2747 (<http://oasis.ouhsc.edu/>) or your local county health department and ask for Child Guidance Services.

### Talking to someone and asking for help:

- Shows that you love and care about me.
- Shows that you are being a good parent.

Oklahoma offers an early intervention program called **SoonerStart**, designed to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays. To find a SoonerStart office near you, call your local county health department.



## help me be safe

- **I like to pull things out of drawers.**
- **Make sure that unsafe things are not in the drawers.** Give me a drawer or cupboard of my own to store some of my toys and things. Put my picture on these places so I know they are mine to play with.
- **Store my toys, books, and things where I can reach them.**
- **Sturdy shelves**, dishpans, and cardboard boxes are good.
- **I can choke on food.**
- **Do not give me hard-to-chew foods** such as nuts, popcorn, raisins, and grapes. Do not give me hot dogs, even if cut into pieces.
- **I still need to be watched carefully.**

### Common accidents:

- Falls
- Burns
- Poisoning
- Choking
- Drowning
- Car accidents

## help me learn

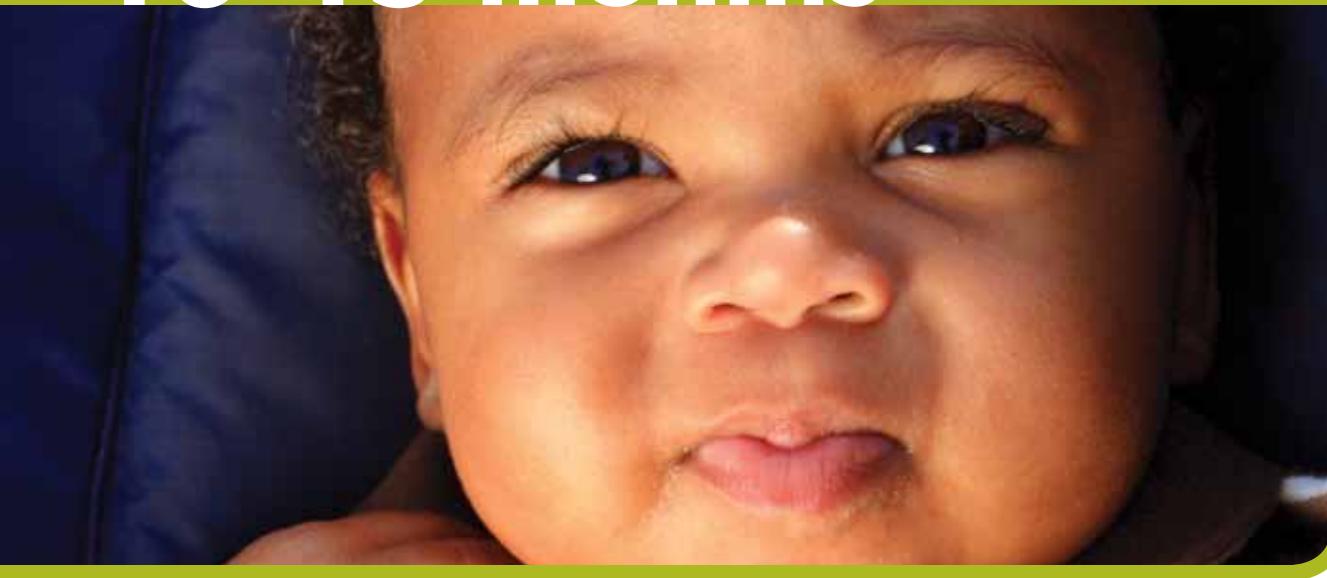
- **I trust people I know well** and am still afraid of strangers and unfamiliar places. I need for you to be calm and confident to help me adjust.
- **Keep reading to me** and begin taking me to the local library to check out books to read together.
- **Play a game of "which hand is it in?"** Hold a small object in your hand. Show me what is in your hand. Switch back and forth between your hands several times. Show me both hands closed and say, "which hand is it in?" When I reach for a hand say either "no, it's not in this hand, where is it?" or "yes, it's in this hand," and quickly open your hand.
- **Let me practice dropping things** into containers such as a block into a box. I will need help getting the blocks back out.
- **Let me practice feeding myself** with my fingers. Applesauce is a good food to try. Chopped and mashed table foods may be given to me now.
- **I have my favorite people and toys.**
- **Call attention to such sounds** as those made by cars, airplanes, fire trucks, trains, and animals. Encourage me to imitate these sounds.
- **Help me understand my feelings** by labeling when I am "happy (because you see me smiling or laughing)", "sad" (because you see my tears or sad face), "frustrated" (because I can't get to what I need), "mad" (because I am screaming or kicking my feet), or other feelings that I demonstrate. I don't know what these feelings are until you tell me and allow me to work through them with your help and patience.

## watch for me to

- **Play "Pat-A-Cake"** or other clapping games.
- **Pull myself up** by hanging onto a chair or my crib rail.
- **Pick up a block or small toy** in each hand and bang them together.
- **Pick up a small object using** my thumb and finger.
- **Say the same sound over and over**, like "babababa" or "lalalala."
- **Watch for me to say my first words.** These will probably be "mama" or "dada."
- **Stop doing something if you say "no"** for dangerous things and "wait" for things that you need to show me how to do.
- **Follow some easy directions** like "come here" or "give it to me."
- **Stand by myself** for at least 2 seconds.
- **Keep growing**, but not as fast as before.

Most children can do the things listed throughout the guide to this point. If I am not doing several of the items, talk to my doctor or nurse.

# 13-15 months



## help me be healthy

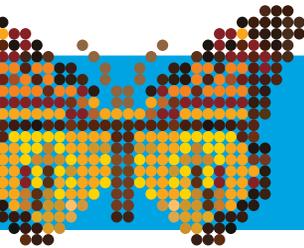
At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will have several shots.** Look at the immunization schedule at the back of this guide to see which shots I will receive at this check-up. If I had any reactions to the immunizations before, remind the doctor or nurse about what happened.
- **Ask the doctor or WIC Nutritionist** about my eating habits. I am eating a variety of foods. Don't worry if my appetite changes from meal to meal.
- **Take my shot record** whenever we go to the clinic or doctor.

## sometimes I get overtired...

**Help me get ready to go to sleep.** Bedtimes can be a problem when I am overtired. I really enjoy a story or other quiet activity before I go to sleep. This bedtime routine helps me settle down.

**If child care is in my future** and you need help finding a quality child care facility, call the Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association at 1-888-962-2772 or go online to the Oklahoma Department Human Services Child Care Locator at <http://204.87.68.21/childcarefind/>



**if you ever need parenting guidance call 2-1-1 for help**

## watch for me to

- **Mostly want my own way;** I don't cooperate much so I need for you to be patient with me.
- **Say 4 or 5 simple words** but can't tell you with my words what I want or need. I am going to cry and scream since that is the only way I know how to communicate with you.
- **Let you know what I want without crying.** I may point, reach, make a sound, put up my arms, pull on you or even say a word.
- **Stand for 10 seconds or more.**
- **Wave bye-bye** when someone is leaving and I might also say "bye-bye."
- **Call you "mama" and "dada."** You are so happy to hear me say those words when I see you.
- **Talk all the time.** Most of the time it sounds like jabbering and I am the only one who knows what it means.
- **Know the meaning of some words** like "juice", "cup", "no", and "out."
- **Stop to pick something up** and stand up again without holding on to anything.
- **Drop small things like a block** into a container. When I do this, I open my hand to drop the block.
- **Turn and look when you call my name.**
- **I am learning at my own pace.** If you have questions because you think it is taking me a long time to learn to do some of the items on this list, please call my doctor or nurse.

## help me be safe

- **Help me learn what is alright to do.** Show me and tell me what you want me to do and remember that you will have to do this over and over as I don't always remember. If I don't do it or disobey you, show me or tell me again. Praise me when I do it right. Do not yell or hit me as this just doesn't work. It only teaches me to yell and hit others. I learn more quickly and easily if you teach or show me the right way than if you punish me.
- **Teach me not to play around stairs or windows.** Accidents can happen. Check the screens on the windows. Make sure the screens are not broken or torn. The screens should be attached securely so I can't open them.
- **Be calm when I have a temper tantrum.** It is O.K. for me to cry because I don't have enough words yet to explain my anger or frustration. You can say "I know you feel really angry (or frustrated) when that happens!" As I grow older, and with your help, I can learn ways to deal with my feelings that are appropriate.

Some ways to help stop a tantrum:

- **When I am upset, let me calm down** and then help me change my attention to something I can do.
- **Stay calm.**
- **Keep me from hurting myself** by putting me in a safe place.
- **Hug me and comfort me** when I have calmed down.
- **Spanking and yelling at me do not help.** It only makes me even more upset. I will calm down on my own. When I am calm, help me to do an activity that I enjoy.

## help me learn

- **Sit with me on your lap and read** a picture book. Encourage me to find things pictured, "Where's the bird?" "Find the ball." "What is the boy doing? Is he swinging?" Encourage me to turn the pages of the book on my own.
- **Play hide and seek games with me.**
- **I like to copy what you do.** Some of the time it will be fun for you to copy what I do.
- **Build a tower of blocks with me.**
- **I like to climb on things** and need your help in letting me do this safely.
- **I need for you to put away your fragile** or breakable items as my curiosity could damage these items and possibly hurt me. Give me safe items to play with.
- **I want to show you how independent** I am by doing what I want, not what you want me to do. Keep me safe but allow me as much freedom as possible to explore new things.
- **I like to imitate,** like sweeping the floor or pushing the grocery cart.
- **I can scribble** with chunky or large crayons on paper.
- **I may let you know** if I have wet or soiled pants but I'm still too young to be toilet trained.

You may also notice that I:

- **Have a change in appetite.** I may not eat as much as I used to because I am not growing as fast.
- **May put all my energy into learning to walk.** Because I am learning to walk, I might be slow to learn some other things.

# 16–18 months



## help me be healthy

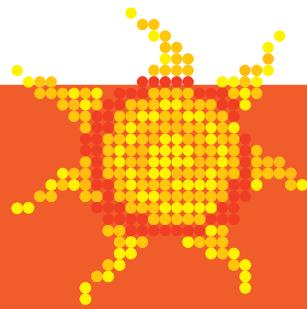
At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will be checked all over.**
- **I will show how I can walk.**
- **I will have my teeth checked.**
- **Take my shot record with us** as I might have missed an immunization and may get them now.

## I don't know any better...

**Help me think about what I do.** For ideas on how to help me behave, join a parenting class or support group. Call 211 (<http://www.211oklahoma.org/>) or the Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) at 1-800-426-2747 (<http://oasis.ouhsc.edu/>) or your local county health department and ask for Child Guidance Services.

**if I am going to be in a child care program, please review the *finding quality child care* reference in this guide**



## help me be safe

- **Close the bathroom doors** so I don't play in there.
- **I can feed myself, but it is still easy for me to choke on food.** Don't give me small foods like peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, or gumdrops. Other foods that are not safe for me to eat are raw carrots and celery, grapes, hot dogs and Vienna sausage. Always watch me while I eat.
- **Now I can climb and get into trouble.** I can push a chair to climb into the cupboards, on top of counter tops or tables, over porch railings, or through an open window. I don't know what trouble I can get myself into. Put screens in the windows and make sure they are latched securely.
- **When you take me shopping,** strap me into the shopping cart seat. If there isn't a strap, make sure that I stay in the seat.
- **Watch me carefully when I am around water.** I like to play in water, but I can easily drown in a few inches of water in a tub, toilet bowl, bucket, ice chest, or wading pool.

## help me learn

- **Read to me everyday.**
- **When I point, tell me what I should say.** If I point to the cat, say "it's a cat," so I can hear the words that I am trying to say.
- **Let me help you.** Let me take a spoon to the table or put dirty clothes with the clothes that need to be washed.
- **Let me play in the bath** to learn the skills of pouring and squeezing. I like to play with plastic bowls and containers in the tub. Do not leave me alone in the tub.
- **Remind me again and again what is okay** for me to touch and what is not okay for me to touch. I am just learning how things work. I will not remember what I should not touch yet.
- **Teach me to take care of my teeth** by helping me brush my teeth with child-sized, soft bristled tooth brush and water. I can use toothpaste that does not have fluoride.

## watch for me to

- **Walk by myself!**
- **Help around the house.** I can put something on the chair when you ask me, I can get what you ask me to get and I can put something away if you remind me.
- **Drink from a cup** or glass by myself, maybe spilling only part of it.
- **Say "no" and shake my head** from side to side.
- **Toss a ball back and forth with you.**
- **Say at least 5 words** other than "dada" and "mama."
- **Play along side a friend** but rarely play with them.
- **Scoot around on riding toys.**
- **Push and pull items,** I like to move around!

# 18–24 months



## help me be healthy

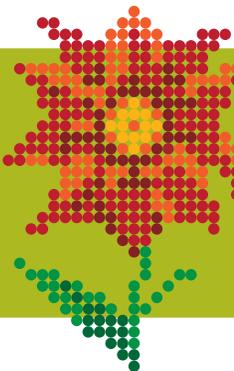
At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **You may be asked to describe how I play** and what I like to do.
- **You may be asked to describe what I eat** and how much food I eat. Some doctors suggest that a cholesterol screen be done now. What does my doctor think?
- **I may be screened to see if I have been exposed to lead.** I can get lead into my body by breathing or eating lead dust, chips, or flakes. This lead can get into my nerves and bones. It can affect the way I learn, grow, and hear. The earlier we catch the problem, the less harm will be done to me.
- **I know you are getting tired of changing diapers.** You would really like me to use the toilet. Don't rush me. It will be easier to teach me how to use the toilet if you wait until I can tell you that I am wet or have pooped. Be patient.

## I am growing up fast...

**You can see what I am able to do from the "watch for me to" lists in this guide.** I may be a little early on some activities and a little late on some others. If you are concerned, though, you could talk to my doctor or nurse. Sometimes when I've been sick, it might serve as the reason for me to take longer to do the items on these lists. I will probably learn them in the order that they are listed in this guide, however I will do them at an older age.

**if you're concerned about my progress, please review the *concerned about your child's development* reference in this guide**



## help me be safe

- **My house may be safe for me.** What happens when we go visiting? Keep me in your sight so I don't get into any safety problems. Take some toys with me so I don't have to go exploring.
- **If someone comes to visit us,** put the visitor's purse or bag in a place where I can't reach it. There could be some pills and other things in there that I should not have.
- **Are there any doors that I could lock?** Could I get locked in the bathroom? Is there a way that you could get me out? An outside lock release on the bathroom door would solve that problem.

- **Offer me choices.** I can tell you if I want to wear red or blue today or if I want a banana or cracker.
- **Play with a pan of water** or sand so I can pour, scoop, and dig.
- **Play some music so we can sing** and dance together.
- **Talk with me before I go to bed.** Let's talk about what happened today and what's going to happen tomorrow.

**Help me feel good about myself. Here are some ideas:**

- **I will copy your words.** Use only the words that you want me to say.
- **I like to be told when I have done a good job.**
- **Hug me, cuddle me** and tell me that you love me.
- **Thank me if I have been helpful.**
- **Tell me what to do, rather than what not to do.** An example would be "use your walking feet" rather than "don't run."

## help me learn

- **Read to me daily.**
- **Play "dress-up" and "telephone"** with me. Help me pretend.
- **Say nursery rhymes and sing songs with me.**
- **Let me play in front of a mirror.**
- **Show me how to use things** we have around the house.
- **Let me use a broom or mixing spoon.**
- **Take me on walks** and let me look, listen, and touch.

## watch for me to

- **Use a fork or spoon when I eat.** I can get most of the food in my mouth.
- **Undress myself** and take off my jacket, pants, and shirt.
- **Pretend to do things.** I will try to feed a doll or my stuffed animals using a bottle or spoon.
- **Run.**
- **Make a tower of 4 or more blocks.**
- **Point to the picture in a book** if you ask me to find something. For example, "show me the dog."
- **Use at least 6 different words.** Saying many simple and many new words. However, I can still get easily frustrated and will still throw tantrums because I'm not communicating with words well enough to express my needs.
- **Point to 2 different body parts** when you ask me where they are. For example, "where's your nose, where's your mouth?"
- **Walk up the stairs all by myself.** I will have to hold onto the wall or railing.
- **Kick a ball forward.**

# 2 years



## help me be healthy

Look for signs that I am ready to start using the toilet.

- **I will let you know that I am ready.** If you wait to start toilet teaching until I am ready, the process may be easier that if you try to push me before I am ready. I will let you know I am ready when I can:
  - Stay dry for a few hours after emptying my bladder.
  - Tell you, "I am wet" or "I have to use the potty."
  - Pull my pants down and up.
  - Understand and follow your directions when you tell me, "go into the bathroom," "wipe" or "pull up your pants."
- **At first, I may not even go** when I sit on the toilet. I need time to get used to sitting on the toilet. Be patient with me while I learn how to use the toilet. There are books at the library about toilet teaching that could answer many of your questions.

I get hungry often.

- **I will usually eat 3 meals** and 2 or 3 snacks a day.
- **While I do like soda**, cookies and candy, it is better for me to have milk, cheese, fruits, vegetables, bread and some meat. Snacks that are good for me are cheese, yogurt, juice, unsweetened cereal, fruits and vegetables cut into small pieces or part of a sandwich.
- **I am learning what foods taste like.** There will be some foods that I do not like now, just as there are some foods you don't like.
- **If I'm a picky eater**, I might try a new food if you give a very small serving of it. I am more willing to try a new food if I know I won't be forced to eat it. I like it when you give me a taste of the food from your plate.

## when I play, I learn...

**Play with me. It helps me learn.** Read me stories. I like to pick out my favorites.

**Sing songs** like "London Bridge" and "Ring Around the Rosie."

**Let me help you around the house.** I can pick up my clothes and toys or put napkins on the table. Let me help.

**Help me learn the names** of new people, colors, feelings, animals, plants and other things.

**Listen to me** even when I don't make sense. My mood can change in a second!

**I notice what comes "first, next, last"** when routines are followed. I don't like changes in my schedule, it confuses me.

**if you ever  
need parenting  
guidance call  
2-1-1 for help**

## help me be safe

- **When cooking on the stove**, turn pot handles to the center of the stove. Don't leave spoons or other utensils hanging over the edge of the pot. I can pull on the handles and pour hot liquid over me.
- **When I do have an accident**, such as touching a hot oven and burning my fingers, help me understand what happened. Explain that if I touch the oven when it is hot, I will be burned.
- **Empty ashtrays.** You don't want me to play with cigarette ashes. Empty drinking glasses and remove beverage cans. Remove all cigarettes and alcohol from my reach.
- **Look at the toys in my toy box.** Are there any broken toys? Either fix them or throw them away. Do any toys have sharp edges? Be sure all my toys are safe for me to use.

## watch for me to

- **Learn to develop a sense of who I am.** It is important for me to develop autonomy—to begin to understand the concept of "me" apart from "you." I might lovingly snuggle close at one moment and then push you away the next. Use of words like "me," "mine," and "no" are attempts to define myself as my own decision maker.
- **Run and jump.** When I jump up, I can get both feet off the ground at the same time.
- **Say my own name.**
- **Stand and balance.**
- **Put on some clothes** that are easy to get on.
- **Point to a picture and name something** in the picture.
- **Say two-word phrases** like "play ball" or "want drink."
- **Ask you questions** and follow simple directions.
- **Brush my teeth with your help.**

You may notice that I also:

- **Say new words**, but I may not know the meaning of the words.
- **Am eating the same good food you eat.** I like mine cut into small pieces that I can eat safely with my own little spoon.
- **Ask to go to the toilet sometimes.**

There is so much to learn! I am learning what is important to me. If you are concerned about what I cannot do yet, talk to my doctor or nurse.

## help me learn

- **Make up a song or story using my name.** Change the words to match my actions or feelings. This may help me calm down when I am cranky.
- **Draw and color simple shapes** with large crayons with me.
- **I can do 3 to 6 piece puzzles.**
- **I like to build with blocks.**
- **Give me a paintbrush**, a newspaper, and a dish of colored water. Let me "paint" the newspaper. The fun is dipping, stroking, and seeing the color come off. Don't expect a picture.
- **Provide for me pushing and pulling toys**, riding toys, a pounding bench, punching bag, or large pillow for active play. I love to rough and tumble play!
- **I still don't understand sharing**, but like to be with other children for short periods of time.
- **I may show my anger** by slapping, biting, and hitting. Make it safe for me to do these actions to things and not people (ex: biting a cold washcloth, hitting a large pillow). Tell me what words to say when I am angry with others so I can continue practicing what to do.
- **I'm beginning to learn the meaning of "soon"** and I am learning to wait. Help me by recognizing this and be patient.

# 3 years



## help me be healthy

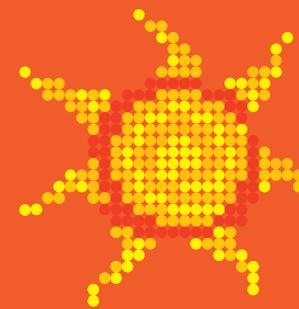
At this checkup:

- **I will be weighed and measured.**
- **I will have my hearing** and vision checked.
- **I may have a blood test** to see that I am healthy.
- **I may be checked for lead poisoning.**
- **The doctor or nurse will want to know** what new things I can do, what my sleeping habits are and what I eat.
- **If I have missed immunizations,** I should have them now. Now that my teeth are in, it's time to schedule my first visit to the dentist.

## I am not a baby anymore...

**This year marks the end of baby/toddlerhood** and the beginning of early childhood. I am more independent now and have a better understanding of myself. I can make simple choices, like to please adults, get easily excited, and have mastered the basics of speech and language. I am beginning to play with other children and sometimes can become jealous and am still learning how to share and take turns.

**if I am going to be in a child care program, please review the *finding quality child care* reference in this guide**



## help me be safe

- **Try to keep all plants out of my reach.** If I do eat any parts of a plant, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Some plants are poisonous.
- **Keep the trash inside a latched cabinet,** or in a place where I cannot get into it. Don't let me reach for anything in the trash. I could find can lids, food, plastic bags and many other dangerous items.
- **If I have a swing and slide,** are they safe and sturdy for me to use?

- **Help me learn to pick up my toys** and put them where they belong.
- **Take me to a play group** or invite a child who is about my age to my house so we can play together.

Help me to learn to do what you want.

- **When I need to do something,** tell me and show me what I should do. For example, if I throw a doll at my sister because I want to play with her game, I need to know why I should not throw the doll and what words to say to work it out with her.
- **I also need to know that** sometimes the answer is "no" from others and I need to respect the other person's decision not to share.
- **Yelling or spanking me will not** help me learn what you want me to do.
- **Praise me when I am doing** what you want me to do. Telling me good things that I do will help me learn quickly. Hug me to show that you are happy about what I am doing. I like to please you. This discipline strategy works better than punishing me.

If you need more tips on parenting certain behaviors, visit the Oklahoma State Department of Health's Child Guidance webpage for parenting publications to read: [http://www.ok.gov/health/Child\\_and\\_Family\\_Health/Child\\_Guidance\\_Service/](http://www.ok.gov/health/Child_and_Family_Health/Child_Guidance_Service/)

## help me learn

- **Take me to the library** to check out some books.
- **Show me how to take things apart** and put them back together again. Be sure pieces are big enough so I won't choke on them.
- **Take me outside.** Show me how to run and throw a ball. Teach me the things that are better to do outside rather than in the house.
- **Teach me how to describe** how things feel. Show me what is soft, sticky, hard, rough and furry.
- **Write down the stories** that I tell. Read them back to me.
- **Play a game with me of matching colors.**

## watch for me to

- **Gain control of finger-hand activities.**
- **Enjoy fast moving activities**—running, jumping, climbing, and tumbling.
- **Possibly have an imaginary friend.** Use this friend to set good examples for me.
- **Like to be "the boss."** I will respond better to positive suggestions rather than demands. I can "bargain" and will do something for a good reason.
- **Experience more tension** as I become more independent and may start nail biting, stuttering, thumb sucking, nose picking, spitting, and whining. Instead of trying to get me to quit these behaviors, help me reduce tension.
- **Point to and tell you about the pictures** in my favorite books.
- **Throw a ball overhand.**
- **Talk in sentences** that have four or more words in them.

I am growing at my own pace. I do some things a little early and some things a little late. If we already know that I have a disability or delay that prevents me from doing some of these things now, understand that I will probably be able to do these later on. It will take me a little longer to learn how to do these.



# how to help your crying baby

## Calming a crying baby can be difficult.

Comforting your baby is sometimes a “trial and error” process. Experiment with the following ideas. See what works best for you and your baby!

## ask yourself...

- Is my baby sick or feverish?
- Is my baby hungry?
- Does my baby need to be burped?
- Does my baby need a dry diaper?
- Is my baby bored or lonely?
- Is my baby over stimulated?
- Is my baby over or under dressed?
- Is my baby in strong sunlight or a cold draft?
- Are my baby’s hands and feet cold?
- Is my baby uneasy about his arms and legs being too free to move around? Does he need to be “swaddled” by wrapping him snugly in a blanket with his hands up to his face?

## some ideas you might try...

- **Hold your baby close to your heart.** The sound of your heartbeat is familiar and calming.
- **Move your baby to a new position.**
- **Dim the lights,** turn the TV down or off.
- **Rock your baby gently,** or try a wind-up swing. (Make sure baby’s head is supported.)
- **Let your baby suck his or her fingers** or a pacifier. (Do not put a pacifier on a string and place it around baby’s neck.)
- **Take a warm bath together.**
- **Distract your baby** with an interesting sight such as fish swimming in a tank, a flashlight shining on a wall or a mobile.
- **Wrap your baby snugly in a blanket.**
- **Take your baby for a walk** outside or go for a drive in the car.
- **Sing softly to your baby.**
- **Turn on a fan.** Soft background noise sometimes helps.
- **Lay your baby tummy down across your lap** and rub his or her back, or sway your knees from side to side.
- **Turn on some slow music** and slow dance together.
- **Some babies enjoy** having all their clothes off.
- **If your baby cries at bath time** and is startled by water, wrap him or her in a diaper or soft blanket before getting them wet. Remove the cover when baby feels more comfortable.
- **Don’t use food as a first solution** to a crying crisis, especially if your baby has eaten recently. More food may add to the problem.
- **If crying seems worse at 3 weeks, 6 weeks or 3 months,** your baby may be hungry during these growth periods.

**if you ever need parenting guidance call 2-1-1 for help**

## when these ideas don’t work...

**Try to stay calm. This isn’t easy! NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY! This can damage your baby’s brain.**

**If you are upset, it’s okay to put your baby** in a crib and take a break for up to 15 minutes.

**If you are still feeling upset after this break,** you may need another adult to care for your baby while you take a longer break. Call a family member, friend, or neighbor to come help.

**If your frustration is high and you are still upset,** or feel you may lose control, leave the room and call or contact another adult to watch your child while you calm down. All parents need help and support sometimes. Caring for children can be stressful.

**If you are upset or angry and think you might hurt your baby—get help!!** Call a neighbor, a friend, a church, your local county health department, a parent assistance center, or the Oklahoma Child Abuse Hot Line at **1-800-522-3511.**

**Getting help is a sign of strength. It is the best thing you can do for you and your baby!**



# what if you are concerned about your child's development?

## you may notice...

- **You may notice that your child is a little slower** than other children to do some things.
- **Your baby may look healthy at birth.** As you use this guide, you may notice that your child takes longer to do some of the activities listed here. All children develop at different rates.
- **The sooner you have your questions answered** about your child, the better it will be for both you and your child.
- **Children can be slower to learn new skills** because of illness, an accident, or one of many other reasons. By knowing what the problem is, you can begin to help your child develop in ways that are appropriate for him or her. The earlier this begins, the better the chances are to help your child reach his or her potential.

## If you are concerned, here's what to do:

### Gather some information

**Look at the lists provided in this guide** that shows what children can do at a certain age. Check off the skills your child has. If you suspect that your child has a developmental delay or a disability, ask your child's teacher, doctor or nurse about books and materials available to help you. To receive more information about parent networks of children with a similar condition contact **211** (<http://www.211oklahoma.org/>) or the Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) at **1-800-426-2747** (<http://oasis.ouhsc.edu/>).

### Make an appointment with your doctor

**Do not wait**, thinking that the situation will change, or get better. Don't wait until the next well-baby checkup. The sooner you have your questions answered, the better it is for you and your child!

**At the doctor's appointment**, show the doctor the list of what your child can do and cannot do. Discuss your concerns with the doctor and ask for ideas on how you can help your child learn new skills. Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion.

### To have your child further evaluated,

contact SoonerStart through Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System (OASIS) at **1-800-426-2747** or your local county health department. For children newborn to age 3, SoonerStart provides services for children with diagnosed developmental or emotional delays and disabilities.

If your child is 3 or above, your doctor can suggest agencies to contact to have your child evaluated. Be very clear about why you want your child evaluated, so the doctor can refer you to the best agency for your child.

**if you ever need parenting guidance call 2-1-1 for help**





# how to recognize quality child care

**Finding quality child care is one of the most important decisions parents can make.** Your local child care resource and referral agency will help you examine all your options and make an informed choice that is best for your child. Search thoroughly, ask plenty of questions, listen intently and remember whose future is at stake.

## how to find quality child care

**Begin your search as early as possible.** Interview with several caregivers well in advance of the time you will first need care. Visit each of them more than once—at different times—over a period of several days to get a feel for the rhythm and pace of the caregiver's routine. How does the caregiver interact with the children? Does the caregiver enjoy taking and playing with them? How does the caregiver respond to a fussy child or resolve conflicts among children? A capable, loving child care provider is in control, but shows flexibility in responding to the needs of different children. Keep visiting from time to time, even after you've selected child care.

## look at things from your child's point of view

**To really understand** the child care environment, look at the space from your child's level. Is the home or center childproofed and clean? Ask yourself the questions your child might ask: "Do they have toys for me?" "Is there a space to put my things?" Are the other children happy and content?

less is more

- **Know what ratios are allowed** and what ratio you prefer. In Oklahoma, the child-to-caregiver ratio for infants is 1 to 4 and toddlers 1 to 6. A low child-to-caregiver ratio is especially important for infants and young toddlers.

ask plenty of questions

- **Are providers licensed?** You'll want to know about your caregiver's qualifications, special training and past child care experiences—as well as those of other adults who will interact with your child in the child care setting. Don't be afraid to ask specific questions. In fact, the more specific, the better. Have certain topics in mind that cover all your concerns...from the child care facility's expectations of you to your accessibility to your child at all times. Good caregivers will answer your questions easily, openly, honestly. Then ask to speak with the parents of other children in their care. Always check references!

look for the stars

- **The Oklahoma Division of Child Care issues star ratings** to child care centers and family child care homes for meeting quality criteria that exceed state licensing requirements. These star ratings are based upon each child care facility's program standards, staff education levels and compliance history with child care regulations. The range of stars issued is from one to three, with three being the highest. You can improve the quality of care for your child by choosing a two-or three-star child care facility.

For more information about choosing quality child care, contact the Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Associations at 1-888-962-2772 or [www.oklahomachildcare.org](http://www.oklahomachildcare.org).

## quality child care checklist

Take this checklist with you as you visit caregivers. Ask these questions to help you choose good quality child care.

- ❑ **Training and education:** Does the person who will be caring for your child have the required special training? Caregivers with degrees and/or special training in working with children will be better able to help your child learn.
- ❑ **Positive interaction:** Does the caregiver attend to children's needs and give them lots of attention and encouragement? Do you see her talking to children at their eye level and listening closely to each child? Children need to form a bond with their caregiver and feel safe and loved.
- ❑ **Teacher turnover:** How long has the caregiver been in the same program or providing child care in the home? Caregivers who come and go make it hard on your child. It's best if children can stay with the same caregiver for at least a year.
- ❑ **Low child/adult ratio:** Are just a few children being cared for by one caregiver? You want your child to get plenty of attention. The fewer the children for each caregiver, the better situation for your child. And the younger your child, the more important this is.
- ❑ **Group size:** If there is more than one caregiver in the setting, is the total number of children in the group still fairly small? A small group is usually safer and calmer.
- ❑ **Health and safety:** Does the place look clean and safe? Is hand washing done often? What is the plan in case of emergency or disaster? Clean environments reduce illness and the spread of germs. Safe programs reduce the risk of injury.
- ❑ **Regulation:** Is the child care center or family child care home licensed and inspected by the state of Oklahoma? Oklahoma requires most child care programs to have a license. A license does not ensure quality, but it does set minimum standards.
- ❑ **Learning environment:** Is there a daily schedule with planned activities for children to do as well as lots of time for free play? Do caregivers read to children? Good child care programs offer active play and learning activities to help children enter school with the skills they need to succeed.
- ❑ **Star ratings:** How many Oklahoma quality rating stars has the program earned? (three is the highest) Programs with more stars have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than basic licensing requirements.
- ❑ **Accreditation:** Is the child care program accredited by a national organization? Accredited child care programs are more likely to offer a higher quality of care.
- ❑ **Family involvement:** Does the caregiver welcome drop-in visits and parent ideas and involvement? Good child care programs involve parents and work as a team with the family to meet the needs of children.
- ❑ **You know your child best:** Will your child be happy there?

Portions of this checklist were reprinted with permission from Child Care Aware, a program of NACCRRA.

# "simplified" childhood immunization schedule

Immunize your children against **13 DANGEROUS DISEASES** as early as possible!

Don't miss your appointment!

OK BY ONE		child's age in months												
		birth	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	3 MONTHS	4 MONTHS	5 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	7 MONTHS	8 MONTHS	9 MONTHS	10 MONTHS	11 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
vaccine	Hepatitis B	☀		☀				☀						
	Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis			☀		☀		☀						☀
	Rotavirus			☀		☀		☀						
	Polio			☀		☀		☀						
	Haemophilus influenzae b			☀		☀		☀						☀
	Pneumococcal Conjugate			☀		☀		☀						☀
	Measles, Mumps, Rubella													☀
	Varicella													☀
	Hepatitis A													☀

The "Simplified" Childhood Immunization Schedule is compatible with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. If you have any questions, call the Oklahoma Immunization Service toll-free at 1-800-234-6196.

Immunization Service — Oklahoma State Department of Health

## resources for parents

### 2-1-1

2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects people with important community services and volunteer opportunities. While services that are offered through 2-1-1 vary from community to community, 2-1-1 provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for every day needs and in times of crisis.

**Call: 211**

**Website: <http://www.211oklahoma.org/>**

### OASIS Information and Referral Service (Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System)

OASIS is a statewide resource center, providing information, referral and assistance for Oklahomans with disabilities and special health care needs. Anyone needing help can call the toll-free number or search on online directory from the link below. OASIS has a database of thousands of agencies, organizations and programs throughout the state, and can help people find the services they need in their area. OASIS also has listings of national organizations and agencies as well as local support groups and parent-to-parent support. OASIS also houses the Oklahoma Respite Resource Network and the Respite Voucher program.

**Call: 1-800-426-2747**

**Website: <http://oasis.ouhsc.edu/>**

### Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA)

The Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association, Inc. (OCCRRA) provides free services to families statewide through a network of offices, strategically placed to serve all 77 counties. Services include referrals to child care facilities that meet a family's specific needs, information on how to look for quality child care and Oklahoma's "Reaching for the Stars" program, resources that can pay some of the costs of care or provide community services, and tips on balancing the competing needs of work and family.

**Call: 1-888-962-2772**

**Website: [www.oklahomachildcare.org/](http://www.oklahomachildcare.org/)**

### Oklahoma Department of Human Services

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services provides a multitude of services. One important online resource is the Child Care Locator/Summary of Facility Monitoring. It is here that the public can locate a child care facility, obtain contact information, view its star level, and a summary of the licensing representatives visits. The case files of child care

centers and family child care homes are open to the public. Appointments may be made to view these files in the county OKDHS Licensing Services office. A Child Care Licensing Specialist will be available to discuss the file with you and answer any questions you may have about the contents of a file.

**Website: <http://www.okdhs.org/>**

*Click on Child Care Locator/Summary of Facility Monitoring*

### Hotlines

**Child or Adult Abuse Hotline**  
**1-800-522-3511**

**Child Support Enforcement**  
**1-800-522-2922**

**Poison Control Hotline**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**Women, Infants and Children (WIC Hotline)**  
**1-888-655-2942**

resources continued on next page

if you ever need parenting guidance call 2-1-1 for help



# other resources for parents

## Can't afford health care? Don't have health insurance?

**You may qualify for SoonerCare provided by the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA).**

SoonerCare is free health insurance that provides medical benefits to eligible pregnant women, children under the age of 19 and individuals with disabilities. Eligibility is based on family size and income guidelines set by the state. Visit OHCA on the web at: [www.ohca.state.ok.us](http://www.ohca.state.ok.us)

## Have a fixed income? Concerned about your child's nutrition?

**You may qualify for WIC provided by the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH).**

WIC provides food vouchers for a special package of nutritious food, supplemented with nutrition education and referrals to additional health care. For more information, or to find out if you are eligible for WIC, call the WIC hotline or visit the Oklahoma State Department of Health on the web at: [www.health.ok.gov](http://www.health.ok.gov)

## Need help with the challenges of parenting?

All families can benefit from the services that Child Guidance programs offer at local county health departments throughout the state. These services provide important and useful information and resources that help guide parents in nurturing their children, and promote healthy behaviors that strengthen family relationships. To build healthy family relationships and enhance child development, services are offered in three specialty areas: behavioral health, early childhood development and parent education, and speech language and audiology services. Visit Child Guidance at [http://www.ok.gov/health/Child\\_and\\_Family\\_Health/Child\\_Guidance\\_Service/](http://www.ok.gov/health/Child_and_Family_Health/Child_Guidance_Service/)

## Other Helpful Websites

**Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth**  
[www.okkids.org](http://www.okkids.org)

**Oklahoma Department of Education**  
[www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us)

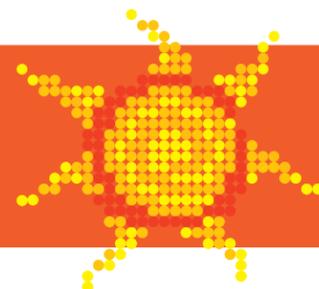
**Oklahoma Department of Human Services**  
[www.okdhs.org](http://www.okdhs.org)

**Oklahoma State Department of Health**  
[www.health.ok.gov](http://www.health.ok.gov)

**SoonerStart**  
<http://se.sde.state.ok.us/ses/preschool/>

visit our website: [smartstartoklahoma.org](http://smartstartoklahoma.org)

if you ever need parenting guidance call 2-1-1 for help



# smart start communities

## Smart Start South Central Oklahoma

580-559-5367  
580-310-9007 fax  
1100 E 14th, PMB E-3  
Ada, OK 74820

## Smart Start Bartlesville (Success By 6)

918-337-6500  
918-337-6525 fax  
5110 Tuxedo Blvd.  
Bartlesville, OK 74006

## Smart Start Canadian County

405-262-6555  
405-262-6557 fax  
7565 E US Hwy 66  
El Reno, OK 73036

## Smart Start Cherokee County

918-456-3032  
918-456-3329 fax  
816 South College  
Tahlequah, OK 74464

## Smart Start Tri County

580-326-6441  
580-326-4841 fax  
502 W. Duke  
Hugo, OK 74743

## Smart Start Durant

580-745-2105  
580-745-7452 fax  
1405 N 4th PMB 4232  
Durant, OK 74701

## Smart Start Northwest Oklahoma

580-548-2268  
580-548-2342 fax  
2615 E Randolph  
Enid, OK 73701

## Smart Start Logan-Kingfisher County

405-282-5524  
405-293-9684 fax  
4710 S Division  
Guthrie, OK 73044

## Smart Start Kiamichi Country

918-471-9192  
918-967-2071 fax  
200 SE A Street  
Stigler, OK 74462

## Smart Start Lawton (Success By 6)

580-355-0218(w)  
580-704-044(c)  
580-355-0810 fax  
1116 SW 'A' Avenue  
Lawton, OK 73501

## Smart Start Muskogee

918-683-9541 ext 233  
918-760-3040(c)  
918-682-3559 fax  
619 N Main  
Muskogee, OK 74401

## Smart Start Norman (Success By 6/United Way)

405-364-3800  
405-329-1878 fax  
550 24th Avenue NW, Suite D  
Norman, OK 73063

## Smart Start Central Oklahoma

405-523-3599  
405-231-0228 fax  
1444 NW 28th st, 73106  
Oklahoma City, OK 73103

## Smart Start Kay County

580-765-9015  
580-762-4539 fax  
205 N. 2nd Street  
Ponca City, OK 74601

## Smart Start Pottawatomie County (Success By 6)

405-273-6833  
405-273-4114 fax  
23 E 9th Street, Suite 333  
Shawnee, OK 74801

## Smart Start Stephens County

580-255-3648  
580-255-3800 fax  
12 South 8th Street Suite 9  
Duncan, OK 73534-1632

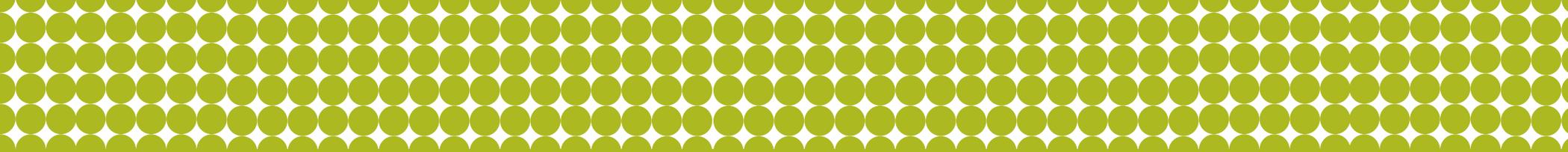
## Smart Start Payne County

405-377-2786  
405-707-9712 fax  
1601 South Main  
Stillwater, OK 74074-7933

## Smart Start Tulsa (Jump Start)

918-585-5551  
918-585-3285 fax  
16 E 16th, Suite 100  
Tulsa, OK 74119

for more information on smart start communities visit:  
[smartstartoklahoma.org](http://smartstartoklahoma.org)



smart start  
oklahoma.org

421 NW 13th St., Suite 270, Oklahoma City, OK 73103  
405.278.6978 • 866.283.0987

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