

Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 20, Issue 4, Fall 2024

Finding Quality Child Care

Look

Begin by visiting several child care homes, facilities or centers. On each visit, think about your first impression.

Does the place look safe for your child?

Do the caregivers/teachers who will care for your child enjoy talking and playing with children?

Do they talk with each child at the child's eye level?

Are there plenty of toys and learning materials within a child's reach?

You should always visit a home or center more than once. Stay as long as possible so you can get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. Continue to visit from time to time even after you have started using the child care provider.

Listen

What does the child care setting sound like?

Do the children sound happy and involved?

Are the teachers' voices cheerful and pleasant?

A place that is too quiet may mean not enough activity. Too noisy may mean that there is a lack of control.

Count

Count the number of children in the group, then count the number of staff members caring for them. Obviously, the fewer the number of children per caregiver, the more attention your child will get. A small number of children per caregiver is most important for babies and younger children.

Ask

Its very important that adults who care for your children have the knowledge and experience to give them the attention that they need. Ask about the background and experience of all staff, including the program director, caregivers, teachers, and any other adults who will have contact with your children in the home or center.

- Reprinted from rvcds.org

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Concerned about Development?

How to Get Help for Your Child



Talking to the doctor is the first step toward getting help for your child if you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves). **Don't wait.** Acting early can make a real difference!

1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

- When you schedule the appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you would like to discuss with the doctor.

2 Complete a milestone checklist

- Before the appointment, complete a milestone checklist by downloading CDC's free [Milestone Tracker mobile app](#) from the App Store or Google Play or printing a paper checklist from www.cdc.gov/Milestones.
- Write down your questions and concerns; take these with you to the doctor's appointment.

3 During the doctor's appointment

- **Show the completed milestone checklist to the doctor**
 - > If your child **is** missing milestones, point them out, and share any other concerns that you have.
 - > If your child **is not** missing milestones but you still have concerns, tell the doctor about them.
- **Ask the doctor for developmental screening for your child**
 - > Developmental screening is recommended whenever there is a concern. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child.
 - > For more information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- **Ask the doctor if your child needs further developmental evaluation**
 - > If your child does, ask for a referral and call right away. If you have difficulty getting an appointment, let the doctor know.

4 Make sure you understand what the doctor tells you, and what to do next

- Before you leave the appointment, check the notes you have written and make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- When you get home, review your notes and follow the steps the doctor has given you. Remember, you can always contact the doctor's office if you have any questions.

You Know Your Child Best

If your child's doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with others (doctor, teacher, another provider) to get a second opinion

AND

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

- **If your child is under age 3:** Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.
- **If your child is age 3 or older:** Call the local public elementary school.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait.
Acting early can make a real difference!



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker app



FALL AND HALLOWEEN FUN

A FAMILY GUIDE



TIPS ON COSTUMES

BE CREATIVE

Costumes are an opportunity for children to practice pretend play and dress up. Many children have definite opinions about what they want to be for Halloween. Some children just want to go out and have fun or don't like the idea of wearing a mask, gloves, or an itchy costume. Be creative in supporting all children. Costumes don't have to be new or expensive. For example, sometimes a fun pair of pajamas can be a costume, or modified accessories can add to regular clothes. It's okay if children change their minds at the last minute. This happens quite a bit.

TIPS ON TRICK OR TREAT

FOCUS ON THE FUN

Halloween can be an overwhelming time for families. If you feel that your child is becoming overwhelmed from the noise, decorations, or too many treats, consider taking a short break from the activities. You could take a walk or find a bench or chair to sit in for a few minutes. If you are trick-or-treating with older children, consider bringing a book or a toy along that your younger child can play with, while the older children continue trick-or-treating.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility can be challenging during Halloween activities. For children with limited mobility, the addition of a costume, lots of people out trick-or-treating, or stairs can be difficult to manage. Consider going to one location with better accessibility for all of your trick-or-treating. Check your community calendar for local events. Language can also be a challenge during trick-or-treating. It's okay if your child doesn't say "trick or treat" like some of the other children.

JUST HAVE FUN

Halloween can be one of those times that we spend so much time planning for, and then our plans change. Often the reason for the changes are out of our control. Weather, the child's sudden refusal to wear a costume, or not being able to find the perfect costume can change those well-intentioned plans. Remind yourself that it doesn't have to be perfect to be fun. Children will find the joy in just being part of the celebration. Letting the small stuff go will make it more enjoyable for everyone -- including yourself!

If Halloween isn't for your family, there are lots of other fall activities to enjoy. Looking at pumpkins, walking through crunchy leaves, smelling and tasting apple butter are all something to celebrate. Here's a list of other [fun fall activities](#) to do together.

WV Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association

[facebook.com/nurturingwvbabies.org](https://www.facebook.com/nurturingwvbabies.org)

www.nurturingwvbabies.org

[instagram.com/nurturingwvbabies/](https://www.instagram.com/nurturingwvbabies/)

Why Should WV Child Care Professionals Consider Infant Mental Health Endorsement?



Myth: Endorsement is only for those who have lots of degrees and experience.

FACT: Neuroscience tells us that the first three years of life are critical to lifelong health and well-being, making the role and responsibilities of home visiting professionals incredibly important to family and community success. The IMH Endorsement® recognizes professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. It's the largest and most recognized IMH credentialing system in the United States, and it's available to you here in West Virginia! Anyone in the early childhood field can work toward earning Endorsement, including directors, supervisors, child care professionals, and service coordinators.

Why should I pursue Endorsement?

Good for You: Earning IMH-E® enhances your credibility and confidence in working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. You'll gain recognition and belong to a cross-systems, multi-disciplinary network of Endorsed professionals in WV.

Good for Babies and Families: Infants, toddlers, and families receive culturally sensitive, relationship-based early childhood services provided by a workforce that demonstrates a common set of core competencies.

Good for Communities: IMH-E® provides assurance to families that early childhood professionals meet high standards of care and are prepared to support optimal development of infants, young children, and their families.

Good for Programs: IMH-E® professionalizes the early childhood field and ensures consistency of professional standards across programs, no matter the curriculum, location, or services.

The IMH Competencies® naturally align with Early Childhood work

IMH-Endorsement® supports the belief that positive social-emotional development is foundational to other learning, and that healthy development happens within the context of nurturing relationships and environments.

IMH competencies® provide a professional development "road map" for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to attend to the often complex nature of early social and emotional development and parent-child relationships.

Financial assistance is available for Endorsement. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies have funds available to provide financial assistance for those seeking Endorsement within the Early Childhood field.

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association or visit www.nurturingwvbabies.org

Special thanks to the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health for sharing information