

# Parent Blocks

## NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 20, Issue 2, Spring 2024

## Supporting Positive Early Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example:

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence in the home or community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide

Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with:

- substance use problems
- mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison

Please note the examples above are not a complete list of adverse experiences. Many other traumatic experiences could impact health and well-being, such as not having enough food to eat, experiencing

homelessness or unstable housing, or experiencing discrimination.

ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence and adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential. However, ACEs can be prevented.

Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full potential.

Raising awareness of ACEs can help:

1. Change how people think about the causes of ACEs and who could help prevent them.
2. Shift the focus from individual responsibility to community solutions.
3. Reduce stigma around seeking help with parenting challenges or substance misuse, depression, or suicidal thoughts.
4. Promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments where children live, learn, and play.

Let's help all children reach their full potential and create neighborhoods, communities, and a world where every child thrives.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Family Assistance/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

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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](http://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](http://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 another doctor 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](http://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](http://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).

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



[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)

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



Download CDC's Milestone Tracker App



**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



## Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

**Help Me Grow**, a free developmental referral service, provides vital support for children from birth to age five including:

- Information and community resources to aid development
- Free developmental screening questionnaire
- Coordination with your child's doctor

Talk to a care coordinator and schedule a developmental screening for your child today.

**Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522**

**[www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow)**



# Help Me Grow

West Virginia

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services

# SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN MAKING THE MOST OF FAIRS, FESTIVALS, AND PARADES

WEST VIRGINIA INFANT/TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION



Spring, summer, and fall in West Virginia often include lots of fairs, festivals, and parades. This is a great time for young children to explore different foods, music, animals, and fun new experiences. It can also mean that young children may experience unfamiliar sounds, smells, lights, and crowds. Preparing young children in advance, and a little pre-planning, will help to make the experience enjoyable for all! Fairs and festivals are a great way to explore the state, both in your own area and beyond.

[WWW.NURTURINGWVBABIES.ORG](http://WWW.NURTURINGWVBABIES.ORG)



To access more resources of the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association, please scan the QR code.

**Start with a plan.** Begin with making sure the festival, fair, or parade is the right fit for your family. Other considerations could be the time when you attend, how long you attend, and what activities your family would be interested in seeing. Visit the areas that your family is most interested in first, in case you need to leave early. Depending on the length of time you will be staying, you may want to bring:

- comfort item for naptime,
- snacks to stretch between meals,
- sunscreen for hot days,
- jackets for cooler evenings, or
- change of clothes for water rides.

**Consider sensitivity to sounds, lights, and costumes.** Some children LOVE loud noises, bright flashing lights, and characters in costumes. Others do not. If your child is sensitive to these things, you may consider:

- bringing ear plugs or head phones, or leaving the event earlier before all the loud noises begin.
- avoiding activities with bright lights, or attending in the daytime when the lights are not as bright.
- redirecting the child away from an area that has characters in costumes. Children should not be made to interact with characters in costume if feeling anxious or afraid.

**Recognize your child's need to have some quiet time if feeling overwhelmed.** Signs that your young child is feeling overwhelmed:

- irritable or crying,
- anxious,
- agitated, or
- clingy behavior.

Plan for breaks and look for quiet areas. Sometimes, fairs and festivals will offer a sensory room that offers young children a quiet place to rest and recharge.