Parent Blocks
NEWSLETTER

"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 17, Issue 3, Spring 2021

The Benefits of Breastfeeding

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, breastfeeding is good for both infants and mothers. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. As an infant grows, breast milk changes to meet the infant's nutritional needs. Breastfeeding can also help protect the infant and mother against certain illnesses and diseases.

Benefits to Infants

Infants who are breastfed have a lower risk of:

- Asthma

- Obesity

- Type 1 diabetes

- Severe lower respiratory disease

- Acute ear infections

- Sudden infant death syndrome

- Gastrointestinal infections

Benefits for Mothers

Mothers who breastfeed their infants have a lower risk of:

- Breast cancer

- Ovarian cancer

- Type 2 diabetes

- High blood pressure

- Reprinted from www.cdc.gov

CDC'S WORK TO ⬤ SUPPORT & PROMOTE

BREASTFEEDING

IN HOSPITALS, WORKSITES, & COMMUNITIES

THE PROBLEM

1 IN 4

Only **1 in 4** infants is exclusively breastfed as recommended by the time they are 6 months old.

Low rates of breastfeeding add more than **$3 billion** a year to medical costs for the mother and child in the United States.

Black infants are **15%** less likely to have ever been breastfed than White infants.

BREASTFEEDING IS AN INVESTMENT IN HEALTH, NOT JUST A LIFESTYLE DECISION

BENEFITS FOR INFANTS

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Type 1 diabetes
- Severe lower respiratory disease
- Acute otitis media (ear infections)
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting)
- Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) for preterm infants

BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer

Breastfeeding provides unmatched health benefits for babies and mothers. It is the clinical gold standard for infant feeding and nutrition, with breast milk uniquely tailored to meet the health needs of a growing baby. We must do more to create supportive and safe environments for mothers who choose to breastfeed.

Dr. Ruth Petersen, Director of CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

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MOTHERS NEED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THEIR BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY

60% of mothers stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.

Certain factors make the difference in whether and how long babies are breastfed:

- Hospital practices
- Education and encouragement
- Policies or supports in the workplace
- Access to community supports

What are developmental milestones?

Early childhood is where learning begins. Early experiences are important to beginning a child's lifelong journey of development and success. Although children learn in different ways, they learn best when they are interested, and even excited, about what they are doing.

Developmental milestones are guidelines for skills a child may develop around particular ages. Milestones are developed around **movement** (ex. raises head and cheek when lying on stomach), **visual** (ex. grasps objects dangling in front of him), **language** (ex. points to object or picture when it's named for her), **cognitive** (ex. begins to sort shapes and colors), and **social/emotional** (ex. demonstrates increasing independence). It is important to remember that each child develops differently (even within families) and in his or her own way. Being aware of milestones, will help you track your child's development and growth.

Daily learning opportunities don't require a lot of special equipment or detailed planning. Just take advantage of learning opportunities that happen naturally. You can turn these times into teachable moments. When you use daily events and routines that have meaning to your children, the impact is very powerful.

Children's development is nourished through everyday play and explorations of the world around them. It is important that families support children's play, take care of their physical needs, and encourage their natural curiosity.

Help your child grow and thrive

Your child's early years are so very important. Tracking how your little one plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves helps you support their development.

Download CDC's free *Milestone Tracker* app to find fun and easy activities for each age.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play
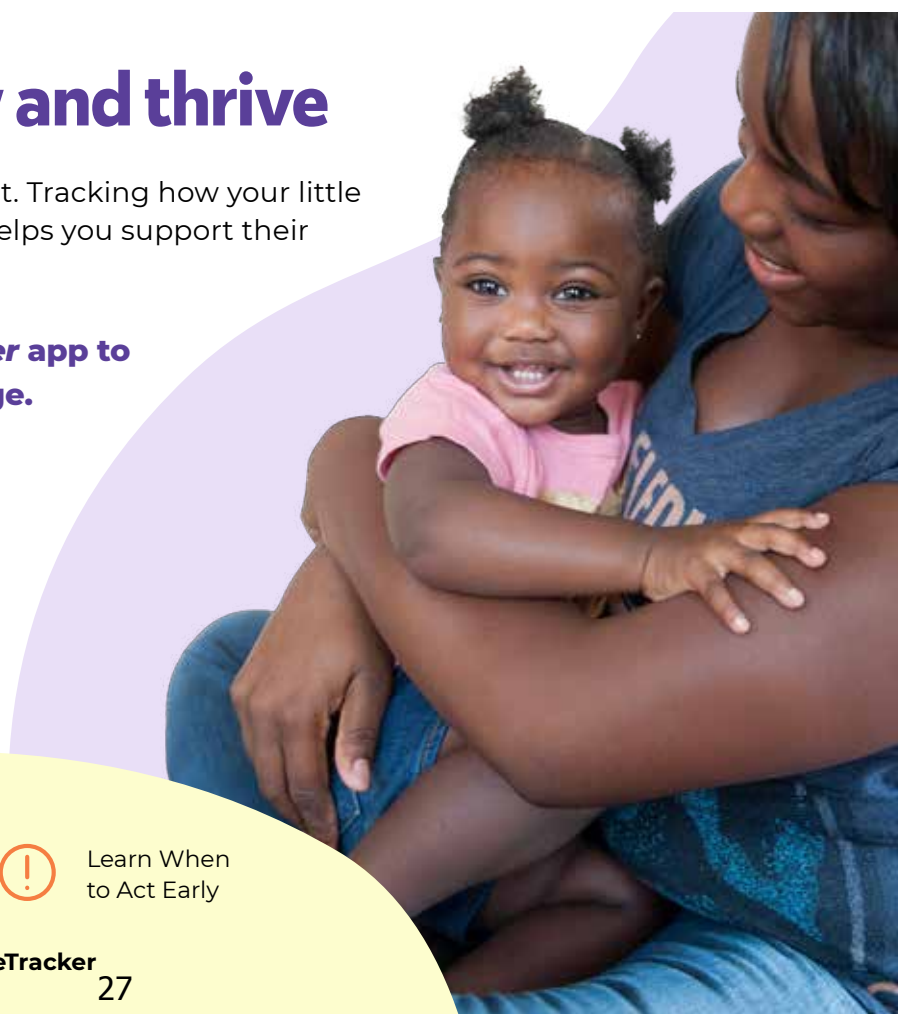
Track & Share Milestones

Get Tips & Activities

Learn When to Act Early

Learn more at **cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker**

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 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**.

- **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)

Download CDC's Milestone Tracker App

GET IT ON Google Play   Download on the App Store

Learn the Signs. Act Early.