



LEARNING BEGINS AT BIRTH



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LEARNING BEGINS AT BIRTH

Nebraska statute 79-1902 states that the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will collaborate to create a resource booklet titled *Learning Begins at Birth*. This booklet is to be given to the parents of each child born in Nebraska to provide information on child development, child care, how children learn, children's health, services available to children and parents, and any other relevant information.

Children's experiences, interactions, and environments in their first years form the neural foundation on which all future development is built. The stronger that foundation, the more likely children are to lead healthy, productive and successful lives. *Learning Begins at Birth* contains important information for families as they work to ensure their children have a strong foundation in their early years to help them thrive throughout their lives. Learning begins at birth, and this booklet is a resource to help families as they guide their children's development.

We hope you will find this resource useful.

Sincerely,

Matt Blomstedt

Nebraska Commissioner of Education

Dannette R. Smith

CEO, Nebraska Health and Human Services



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The Learning Begins at Birth Parent Guide resource resulted from a collective effort among dedicated Early Childhood Care and Education professionals as well as caring parents who committed countless hours in developing and reviewing content. Through relationships and networking, the group helped to assure that the guide has broad distribution to those who might benefit.

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PREGNANCY AND BIRTH



You will likely have many feelings while you are pregnant. You may feel excited, nervous, and tired. It is important to take care of yourself. Ask for help from your partner or support system when you need it. You should schedule an appointment with a doctor as soon as you find out that you are pregnant. It is also important to find a doctor for your baby (such as a pediatrician). Do not wait until your baby is born.

Health Care Visits During Pregnancy

It is important to go to the doctor while you are pregnant. If you have a partner, try to schedule appointments so you can both be there. This helps keep your partner informed about your baby too.

- Tell your doctor about any medicines, vitamins, herbs, and substances you are taking.
- At each visit, your doctor will check your baby's heartbeat and your health. They may also check your baby's growth.
- Your doctor may test your blood to check for concerns, such as diabetes. There are many treatments for these concerns.
- The visits can help you monitor your weight. Your doctor may share ideas for keeping a healthy weight while you are pregnant. Talk to your doctor about how much weight you should gain. Gaining too much weight increases the risk of a C-section (Cesarean section), diabetes, and high blood pressure. Not gaining enough weight increases health risks for you and your baby. If you have a healthy weight before getting pregnant, doctors usually recommend to gain 25 to 35 pounds.



The Office of Women's Health

(womenshealth.gov/pregnancy) and the Department of Health and Human Services

(dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Pregnancy.aspx) both offer resources on care during pregnancy (prenatal care).

Nutrition

Eating well during pregnancy keeps you healthy and supports your baby's growth. Some helpful eating tips include:

- Choose low-fat or non-fat milk or yogurt.
- Eat foods that are rich in protein. Choose lean meats, beans, eggs, or tofu.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit each day.
- Eat vegetables every day.
- Choose whole grain bread and pasta.
- Avoid deli meats, raw or undercooked eggs, soft cheeses, and raw sprouts. Limit the amount of fish you eat.
- If you have heartburn, eat small meals and avoid laying down right after eating.
- Take prenatal vitamins daily. These vitamins provide nutrients your body needs to help your baby grow, such as extra folic acid. Folic acid is important for your baby's spinal and brain development. Your doctor may be able to prescribe prenatal vitamins.

Physical Activity

It can be helpful to engage in gentle exercises. Exercising can help if you have back pain. Talk to your doctor about activities

that support your health. Your doctor may recommend walking and swimming. Avoid activities like jumping.

Rest

It is very important to get enough sleep. It may be helpful to sleep with a pillow between your knees. During the first and third trimesters, you may feel especially tired. If you can, rest during the day when you feel like you need to.

Take Care of Your Teeth

- See a dentist early in your pregnancy. When you meet with your dentist, tell them you are pregnant.
- Preventing gum disease is important for having a healthy baby and keeping yourself healthy.
- Brush your teeth twice each day with toothpaste.
- Floss once a day.



Visit the American Dental Association for information on the importance of dental health during pregnancy: [mouthhealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org)





TIPS FOR CARING FOR YOU AND BABY DURING PREGNANCY

First Trimester **WEEKS 1 TO 13**

A lot of development is happening during these weeks. Your baby's lungs, heart, legs, and arms are developing.

- Listen to your body and rest when you can.
- If you have morning sickness, try eating something before you get up, eating small meals, drinking water with lemon, or drinking herbal tea.
- Call your doctor right away if you bleed or spot from your vagina or have strong cramps.

Second Trimester **WEEKS 14 TO 26**

You may start to feel your baby move. You may have more energy. Being active is great for your baby. Your baby's senses are developing. Your baby is sleeping and waking.

- Eat healthy foods.
- Exercise. Talk to your doctor about what types of exercise are right for you.
- Get good sleep. Try to sleep 8 to 10 hours a night.
- Wear comfortable shoes with good support.

Third Trimester **WEEKS 27 TO BIRTH**

- Lie on your left side to increase blood flow to your baby. Avoid sleeping on your back.
- Call your doctor if you experience strong headaches, suddenly begin to gain weight, or have extreme swelling.
- Wear support hose if you have varicose veins.



Things to Avoid

It can be hard to change habits such as smoking. Everything you put into your body affects your baby. Even small amounts can be harmful. Some harmful substances include:

- Tobacco, including chewing tobacco
- Smoking (e-cigarettes, vape pens, and marijuana)
- Alcohol
- Some medicines, both prescribed and over the counter
- Street drugs



If you need help to stop the use of these or other substances, call **(800) 662-4357** or visit [samhsa.gov/find-treatment](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment). You can also call **(800) 780-2294** to speak with a drug or alcohol counselor. Visit [cdc.gov/quit](https://www.cdc.gov/quit) or [women.smokefree.gov](https://www.women.smokefree.gov) for support to quit smoking.

Child Care

Selecting quality child care is one of the most important choices you will make for your child. If you plan to return to work after your child is born, you should start looking for child care options early. You may need to get



on a waitlist before your baby is born. Visit the child care programs in your area. Check out the *Choosing Quality Child Care* section on page 48 for information on what to look for in a child care provider.

Birth Plan

Getting ready for the birth of your baby can be an exciting time. It may also feel overwhelming. Making a birth plan may help. Before making your birth plan, learn about giving birth, take a local childbirth and breastfeeding class, and visit the place where you plan to have your baby.

When making a birth plan it may be helpful to keep your choices for childbirth to one page. Focus on what you want, rather than what you don't want. Before you deliver, talk about your plan with your doctor, labor and delivery nurses, and your support person. Events may change and so will your birth plan. Try to be flexible and remember that the safety of you and your baby is most important.

Learn more about making a birth plan at American Pregnancy Association (americanpregnancy.org) or KidsHealth (kidshealth.org and search “birth plan”).



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING BEFORE CREATING YOUR BIRTH PLAN:

- Pregnancy and giving birth
- Why a cesarean section (C-section) delivery may be needed
- Holding your baby skin-to-skin (on your bare chest) right after delivery
- Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth
- Breastfeeding and creating a breastfeeding support group that includes a lactation consultant, family, and friends
- Keeping the baby with you in your room at the hospital



BRINGING BABY HOME



Car Seat Safety

Nebraska law requires that you bring your baby home in a car seat when you leave the hospital. There may be a car seat installation event in your area. There are also options for making sure the car seat is installed correctly. Check the *Keeping Your Child Safe* section on page 34 for information on installing car seats.

Care After the Birth (Postpartum Care)

- Many parents may feel sad or anxious after the birth of their baby. It is typical to feel this way for a few weeks. If you experience strong feelings of anxiety or depression, it is important to seek help. Reach out to your doctor if you need support.
- Check the *Your Emotional Health* section on page 46 for more resources and information on postpartum depression. If you are in crisis, call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255).
- Eat a healthy diet and drink extra fluids, especially if you are breastfeeding.
- Talk to your doctor about whether you should be taking a multivitamin or other supplement.
- Talk to your doctor before taking any new medications, especially if you are breastfeeding. This includes medications you took before getting pregnant. Some prescription drugs are not safe to take while breastfeeding or while taking other drugs.
- Talk to your doctor about when it is safe to start exercising after having your baby. If you had a vaginal delivery and a pregnancy with few complications, it is usually safe to start exercising a few days after delivering your baby. Start slowly and stop if you experience pain. Slow walking is a good way to ease yourself back in to physical activity. Talk to your doctor about other good options.



Keeping Your Baby Safe

Before bringing your baby home, ask family members and others who will be around your baby if they are updated on their immunizations. If they are not, request that they get updated vaccinations. Vaccinations to ask about include:

- **MMR** (measles, mumps, rubella)
- **DTaP** (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) to protect your baby from whooping cough
- **Influenza** to protect your baby from the flu

Breastfeeding

Check the *Food and Nutrition* section on page 40 for more information.

- Try to breastfeed your baby within the first hour after birth.
- You may need some support from a professional to help your baby latch.
- The first month can be challenging and overwhelming. Typically, babies eat often to build a milk supply and do not need to follow a breastfeeding schedule.

- Your baby may cluster feed. This means your baby wants to breastfeed very frequently over the span of several hours. This often happens during the evening hours and 2 to 9 weeks after birth.
- Breastmilk provides things that help your baby's body fight infection, prevent disease, and support healthy development.
- Attend regular well-baby visits to ensure your baby is getting enough to eat and growing at a healthy rate. You may need to supplement with formula, or you may choose to only feed your baby formula.

If You Have Other Children

- While challenging, it can be helpful to find time to spend time alone with each child so they feel connected to you.
- It is important to maintain routines as much as possible. This helps create a sense of safety and predictability for the family. Routines that are especially helpful to maintain are bedtime and meals.
- It can sometimes be tempting to start toilet learning for an older child after your baby is born. It is best to either start toilet training before your baby is born or wait a few months after the birth.



Teen Parents

Ask your school about programs to support you. The Pregnancy Resource Network also offers supports for teen parents. Reach out by visiting pregnancynet.org, calling **(800) 712-4357**, or texting 313131.



YOUR BABY'S FIRST YEAR



Protect Your Baby

- Exposure to secondhand smoke increases your baby's risk of asthma, illness, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Do not smoke around your baby and ask that other people do not smoke around them either. Even infrequent exposure to secondhand smoke is dangerous for your baby's developing body.
- Thirdhand smoke can also affect your baby. This can happen when someone smokes and then holds your baby, even after the cigarette is put out. Protect your baby by asking smokers to change their clothes and wash their hands before holding your baby. Avoid putting your baby in cars or homes where people smoke.
- Your baby's immune system is not fully developed. Ask people to wash their hands with soap before holding your baby. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after being in public.

Abusive Head Trauma

- Abusive head trauma, commonly known as “shaken baby syndrome,” can occur when a baby is shaken, dropped, thrown, or hit on the head. Normal play and normal falls do not cause abusive head trauma.
- Never shake your baby. Shaking your baby can result in permanent brain damage, developmental delays, or death.
- It is normal for infants to cry. It is also normal to get frustrated or feel helpless if you cannot get your baby to stop crying. If you feel frustrated, ask for help or call a parent helpline. If you are getting upset, put your baby in a safe place on their back and walk away. Check on your baby every 10 minutes.



The Fussy Baby Network provides infant specialists who are available Mon–Fri 9am–5pm to answer questions about infants' crying, sleeping, or feeding: **(888) 431-2229** or **erikson.edu/fussy-baby-network**



REDUCE THE RISK OF SIDS

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS) and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) describe the sudden and unexpected death of an infant. The cause is unknown, but there are steps you can take to help keep your baby safe.

- Place your baby on their back for all sleep — bedtime and naptime.
- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around your baby.
- Place your baby in a crib to sleep. Do not sleep with your baby in a bed, recliner, sofa, or chair.
- Have your baby sleep in your room.
- Keep the sleep environment cool.
- Use a sleep sack.
- Do not place blankets or other items in the crib.
- If possible, breastfeed.
- Immunize your baby.

For more information on reducing the risk of SIDS, visit [cdc.gov/sids/Parents-Caregivers.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/sids/Parents-Caregivers.htm)

Comforting Your Baby

- Research shows that crying increases around 2 to 3 weeks of age, happens most often around 6 to 8 weeks of age, and begins to decrease around 3 to 4 months of age.
- When your baby cries, they are letting you know that they need something.
- You cannot spoil your infant.
- When you respond to your baby's cries by picking them up or providing other types of comfort, you are fostering healthy development.
- Providing consistent comfort to your baby will let them know that they can trust and depend on you. This is how babies learn about relationships. The more responsive you are to your baby's cries, the less your baby will cry as they grow.

Colic and Cry Plans

Colic is frequent, intense, and prolonged crying by an infant for no apparent reason. The cause of colic is unknown.

If you believe your baby is crying excessively, schedule

an appointment with a doctor to make sure there are no underlying causes.

- Colic can be very difficult for caregivers. It is related to higher instances of postpartum depression and feelings of helplessness, exhaustion, and guilt.
- There are things you can do to try to comfort your infant, but you may just have to wait it out.
- It is important to schedule breaks from your baby, especially during times of day when they usually cry (often in the evening).
- Ask for help when you are feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.

It is good to have a plan for times when your baby cries more frequently. It may help to:

- Sing, laugh, read, walk, have a cup of tea.
- Take a deep breath. Keep breathing deeply.
- Call a family member, friend, or neighbor to step in for a bit.



REMEMBER THE ABCs OF SLEEP SAFETY

- A** Baby is always **alone**. Your baby is safest when they sleep in your room, but not in your bed.
- B** Baby should always be on their **back**, on a firm, flat surface.
- C** Baby should always sleep in a **crib** (or pack and play), not in a bed made for older children or adults. No blankets, toys, stuffed animals, crib bumpers, or pillows should be in the crib. The sheet should fit tightly and there should not be any gaps between the mattress and the bars of the crib.

For more information on SIDS and sleep safety, visit dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/SIDS.aspx

Sleep Safety

Practicing safe sleep habits helps protect your baby from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Newborns are not yet able to control their sleep and wake patterns. Your baby does not yet have the ability to control themselves. This is why letting your newborn “cry it out” is not recommended. You can help your baby develop a regular sleep cycle by responding promptly and warmly to them. Typically, babies between 3 to 6 months begin developing a more regular sleep cycle. Check out the *Sleep Routines and Sleep Safety* section on page 35 for more information.

Supporting Your Baby’s Development: Birth to 6 Months

Your baby learns best when you engage in caring, warm interactions with them. When babies cry, babble, and coo, they are learning to communicate. When you respond by talking, making eye contact, or hugging, you are helping to shape your baby’s brain.

- Respond to your baby when they cry.
- Talk to your baby often. You can explain what you or someone else is doing.
- Infants love looking at faces. Several times a day, give your baby your undivided attention. Turn the television off, put your phone down, and eliminate other distractions. Spend time face-to-face with your baby. Talk, sing, or make faces.
- During the first 4 months, babies focus best on objects 8 to 10 inches from their face.
- Begin introducing simple toys that stimulate your baby’s sense of sight (shatterproof mirrors), hearing (rattles or toys that play gentle music), and touch (textured toys).
- Try holding your baby in different positions as you walk around the house. Talk about what you see.
- Sing songs and read books with your baby that have accompanying actions, such as “This Little Piggy” or “Pat-A-Cake.”



TUMMY TIME

Introduce your baby to tummy time. For a few minutes at a time, a few times each day, lay your baby on their tummy. This helps your baby develop muscles in their neck, back, and shoulder. It also helps their skull form correctly. You might enjoy laying your baby’s tummy on your tummy. Do not leave your baby alone during tummy time, and never put your baby to sleep on their tummy. Gradually increase the amount of time your baby spends on their tummy. By 3 months old, your baby may be able to spend about an hour each day (broken up into short sessions) on their tummy. Get on the floor and play or read together during tummy time.





Supporting Your Baby's Development: 6 to 12 Months

- Encourage your baby to explore new objects and try new activities.
- Continue talking, reading, and singing to your baby often.
- At this age, your baby is not yet able to remember safe or appropriate behaviors. It is best to prevent your baby from being in unsafe situations rather than expecting them to understand rules. For example, use covers on electrical outlets and prevent your baby from accessing outlets.
- Take your child on outings. You can find free events in your community to expose your child to new activities and people. Even trips to the grocery store or laundromat are good learning opportunities. Talk to your child as you add items to your cart or sort your laundry. Every interaction is an opportunity to learn!
- Expand on your child's sounds and words. For example, if they say "wa-wa" respond with, "That's right, you are drinking water."



Zero to Three provides resources to support the learning and development of infants and toddlers:
zerotothree.org/early-learning

If you have concerns about your child's development

Assistance may be available through Nebraska's Early Intervention program known as the Early Development Network. Your child may qualify for services if they are under the age of three and not developing typically or have a health condition that may affect their development. Your child must be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in your school district in order to qualify. To refer a child to the Early Development Network, call Nebraska ChildFind at **(888) 806-6287** or visit **childfind.nebraska.gov**.

MILESTONES

Every baby develops at a different rate. Developmental milestones help you to know if your baby is showing signs of developmental delay. The best thing you can do for your baby is act early if you think their development is delayed.

AROUND 2 MONTHS OLD

Babies often begin to:

- React to sounds
- Smile at people
- Briefly soothe themselves
- Make gurgling or cooing sounds
- Push themselves up when laying on their tummy

Talk to your doctor if your baby does not yet:

- Smile at people
- Follow things as they move
- Respond to loud noises
- Hold their head up when on their tummy

AROUND 4 MONTHS OLD

Babies often begin to:

- Play with people
- Babble and copy sounds they hear
- Use different cries to express different needs (hungry, tired, in pain)
- Reach for objects with one hand
- Recognize familiar people from a distance
- Hold their head up without support

Talk to your doctor if your baby does not yet:

- Watch things move
- Bring things to their mouth
- Hold their head steady
- Make sounds
- Smile at people

AROUND 6 MONTHS OLD

Babies often:

- Respond to other people's emotions
- Know if someone is a stranger
- Enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror
- Respond to sounds by making sounds
- Respond to their name
- Try to get things that are out of reach
- Can roll over in both directions
- Begin to sit on their own
- Plan basic movements (e.g., reaching for something they want)

Talk to your doctor if your baby does not yet:

- Reach for objects or people
- Show affection for caregivers
- Roll over in either direction
- Laugh
- Have healthy posture (if they seem to have tight muscles or are floppy)

AROUND 9 MONTHS OLD

Babies often:

- Use their fingers to point
- Are nervous about strangers and may be clingy to their preferred adults
- Put things in their mouth
- Can stand up while holding something for support
- Sit without support
- Pull up to standing
- Crawl

Talk to your doctor if your baby does not yet:

- Babble
- Respond to their name
- Play back and forth games
- Look where you point
- Recognize familiar people
- Sit with help
- Hold their weight on their legs with your support

AROUND 12 MONTHS OLD

Babies often:

- Have favorite people and things
- Cry when their preferred adults leave
- Use simple gestures such as shaking their head or waving
- Says “mama” and “dada”
- Can find objects you hide
- Put objects in and out of containers
- Can follow simple directions
- Walk while holding onto furniture
- Focus attention for 2 to 4 seconds at a time

Talk to your doctor if your baby does not yet:

- Crawl
- Stand when supported
- Point
- Look for things that you hide
- Say any words
- Learn gestures (for example, shaking their head and waving)
- Retain skills (for example, if they used to wave but do not anymore)



CDC'S MILESTONE TRACKER APP

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has a free app to help you track your child's development from 2 months to 5 years. The app has pictures and videos to help you know what to look for, and tips and activities to support your child's development. Visit cdc.gov/milestonetracker to download the app.





Books and Reading Strategies: Birth to 6 Months

It is never too early to start reading to your baby. Book sharing provides a calm way for you to engage with your baby. At this age, the emphasis is not on the story, but your connection and the time you are spending together.

Point to and label pictures. At this age, babies often enjoy looking at pictures of black and white shapes, real faces and people, and real objects. Try checking out these books with your infant:

- *Black on White* by Tana Hoban
- *Look, Look!* by Peter Linenthal
- *Baby Faces* by Margaret Miller
- *Black Bird Yellow Sun* by Steve Light
- *First 100 Words* by Roger Priddy

Books and Reading Strategies: 6 to 12 Months

Read short, simple stories using books with colorful illustrations. Your baby may want to explore books by chewing them. Allow and encourage your baby to open and close books and turn the pages. Board books are a good option for this age. Try checking out these books with your baby:

- *First 100 Animals* by Roger Priddy
- *Baby's Firsts* by Nancy Raines Day
- *Count with Little Fish* by Lucy Cousins



1–2 YEARS



Routines, Guidance, and Discipline

Routines give your baby a sense of security. When daily schedules are predictable and familiar, your baby feels more comfortable in their environment. Until about 18 months, you may find that your baby clings to you when they are put in new situations or are around new people. You may also notice your baby begin to play for a few minutes without you. They will probably look back for you to make sure you are still near them. This safe feeling of knowing you are near if they need you allows them to become curious about their environment. Encourage your child to explore and try new things when you are near. This will help them develop confidence and competence as they learn they can do things by themselves.

Encourage your child's independence by:

- Letting them feed themselves
- Allowing them to try to dress themselves before helping. You may also want to allow them to pick what they wear by giving two options, such as “Would you like to wear your dinosaur shirt or your monkey shirt today?”
- Encouraging them to wash their hands and brush their teeth on their own before you help
- Requesting they help with chores and tasks they can manage, such as carrying items to the table for meals or helping to put away laundry

As a parent, you are doing what you can to help keep your baby safe. Try to tell your baby what to do, rather than what not to do. Babies at this age enjoy having freedom to move around and manipulate new things. Do what you can to support your baby in a positive way so they can explore their environment safely.

- **Remember your baby's age.** Developmentally, it is appropriate for your baby to be getting into everything. Learning at this age comes in the form of curiosity and often involves:
 - dumping
 - licking
 - tearing
 - squeezing
 - climbing
- **State expectations clearly.** Tell your baby what they can do. Emphasize what behavior you want to see. For example, if your baby is crawling on the table say, "Feet on the floor" or if they are throwing a toy truck say, "The truck drives on the road" and show them how to drive the truck on the floor.
- **Relationships are key.** In every interaction you have, your child is learning from you. Play with your baby, follow their lead, laugh with them, and support them as they learn something new. Focus on the positive things you see your child do and tell them. Your baby wants to please you, so tell them when you see them doing the right thing. For example, "I love that you picked up your toys!" Add in a hug or kiss or state the positive behavior in front of another caring adult.

Supporting Your Baby's Development

- Continue talking to your baby often and reading together every day.
- Name objects when you are playing together, doing routine things like eating or bathing, or are out in the community.
- Encourage your baby to point to things that you name, such as "Where is your nose?" or "Where is the teddy bear?" Praise your baby and show excitement when they respond.
- Encourage your baby's curiosity. Support them to explore their environment and new objects safely.



If you have concerns about your child's development

Assistance may be available through Nebraska's Early Intervention program known as the Early Development Network. Your child may qualify for services if they are under the age of three and not developing typically or have a health condition that may affect their development. Your child must be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in your school district in order to qualify. To refer a child to the Early Development Network, call Nebraska ChildFind at **(888) 806-6287** or visit **childfind.nebraska.gov**.

MILESTONES

AROUND 18 MONTHS OLD

Children often:

- Walk alone
- Push and pull toys
- Say 10 to 20 words
- Point to body parts
- Point to objects
- Throw a ball
- Show affection
- Hold a crayon
- Eat with a spoon
- Display challenging behaviors
- Understand simple commands (e.g., “no touching”)
- Seek their parents for comfort when they are upset

Talk to your doctor if your child does not yet:

- Walk
- Understand at least 5 words
- Learn any new words
- Make eye contact
- Imitate others
- Notice or care when you leave or return
- Point to show you things

AROUND 24 MONTHS OLD

Children often:

- Walk up stairs
- Run
- Say 50 or more words
- Begin showing readiness signs for potty training (dry through a nap, tell you they went potty)
- Jump with two feet
- Drink from a cup without a lid
- Focus their attention for 10 to 15 seconds

Talk to your doctor if your child does not yet:

- Run
- Express emotions
- Engage in pretend play (feeding a baby doll a bottle)
- Use two words together (for example, “drink milk”)
- Copy your words and actions
- Know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Follow easy instructions



CDC'S MILESTONE TRACKER APP

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has a free app to help you track your child's development from 2 months to 5 years. The app has pictures and videos to help you know what to look for, and tips and activities to support your child's development. Visit cdc.gov/milestonetracker to download the app.



Books and Reading Strategies

Reading books with rhymes and repeating phrases may interest your baby at this age. Your baby might start to show interest in a favorite book or pick the same books over and over again. This is exciting – your baby is becoming a reader! Try asking your baby to find pictures in the book, such as “Where is the bunny?” and “Can you point to the red ball?” It is good for babies to hear the same stories repeatedly and to be exposed to new books and stories.

Try checking out these books with your 1 year old:

- *Press Here* by Herve Tullet
- *Textures* by Joanne Barkhan
- *Moo, Baa, La La La!* by Sandra Boynton
- *Where's Spot* by Eric Hill



Nebraska Family Helpline is a free resource for parents with kids of all ages, who have any type of question regarding their child's behavior: **(888) 866-8660**



Public libraries are a great resource for families. Many public libraries provide free enrichment activities for children and families. Librarians can also help you find accurate, up-to-date information. To find your local library, visit nlc.state.ne.us



2–3 YEARS



Routine

Routines help your toddler feel safe and secure in their environment. Toddlers learn about everyday events, procedures, and what is expected of them. Children who have effective routines are more engaged with their environment and the people around them. Your toddler will learn to anticipate changes in routines and will slowly become more independent as they learn what each routine entails. You can use these everyday routines as opportunities to talk with your child and help them develop their communication skills.



The CDC provides tips for parents such as creating routines, using time-outs, responding to good behaviors, and communicating with your child.

Visit [cdc.gov/parents/essentials](https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials)

Guidance and Discipline

Tantrums

Crying and temper tantrums are normal for toddlers. Tantrums are a way for your child to express their disappointment or frustration. To help your child calm down, you must remain calm yourself. Your reaction to the tantrum depends on the reason for it. You may need to comfort your child, provide a snack or nap, ignore the behavior, or distract your child. Do not punish children for having a tantrum. Visit kidshealth.org and search “tantrums” for more information on preventing and responding to tantrums.

Tantrums may also be stress clues. Stress affects everyone, even the youngest children. Things that can cause stress include natural disasters such as floods, loss of loved ones, or moving to a new home. Everyday things like noisy rooms or late meals can also cause stress.

Toddlers will often show stress by:

- sucking their thumb
- clinging to parents
- wetting the bed
- having temper tantrums
- uncontrollable crying
- sleep problems, nightmares, screaming in their sleep

To help your child during a stressful time:

- Try to stay calm and relaxed.
- If possible, stick to your child's normal sleeping and feeding routines.
- If they love to snuggle, make sure that you make time to snuggle with them as much as possible.
- Try to find the space and time for them to calm themselves.
- Reassure your child that you are doing everything you can to keep them and your home safe.

Rethink your Reaction

Toddlers need patience, humor, and fair rules. As a parent of a toddler, you will need these things:

- Patience to cope with your child's mood swings. Your child may go very quickly from being very helpful to very difficult.
- Awareness to see that your child is safe.
- Loving firmness to apply rules in a consistent way so your child can learn to be responsible.
- Humor to laugh at yourself and with your child.
- Wonder to see your toddler as a creative, special person.
- Enthusiasm to enjoy and celebrate your toddler's new skills and abilities.



In Nebraska, it is the responsibility of all adults to report suspected child abuse. This includes parents, child care providers, teachers, and grandparents. If you suspect that someone is abusing your child, or any child, report it. The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: **(800) 652-1999**





Learning to Use the Toilet

Most children learn to use the toilet regularly between the age of 2 and 3. It is common to have accidents as they learn. Do not overreact to accidents. Stress can cause your child to lose interest in learning to use the toilet.

Signs of Readiness

Most children become interested in learning to use the toilet on their own. A potty on the floor that your child can use on their own helps them to get started. Give your child lots of praise for trying and for every success.

It is not recommended to start toilet training until your toddler shows they want to use the toilet. Toilet training should not be upsetting to you or your child. If it is, wait a few weeks and try again.

Your child needs to:

- Be physically ready
- Be able to understand what you want
- Have the motivation to do it
- Wake up dry after naps or stay dry for 2 hours at a time

Talking about using the toilet can speed things along.

- Teach your child words to use for the toilet and their need to use it.
- Storybooks about the toileting process can help.
- Your child needs to feel secure while sitting on the toilet.
- Place the potty in an easy place to get to and encourage your child to use it.
- Your child may need a reward for trying at first. Small rewards are best. Clapping and cheering may encourage your child to try.
- Dress your child in clothing that is easy for them to remove quickly.
- Watch for signs that your child needs to go and help them go to the potty.
- Praise effort.
- Do not punish accidents.



The American Academy of Pediatrics shares toilet training tips like choosing a potty, making a plan, and information on bedwetting. Visit: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) and search "potty training."

Supporting Your Toddler's Development

- Make learning fun by playing games and talking with your child.
- Talk about colors, shapes, letters, and numbers.
- Talk about things that are alike and things that are different.
- Teach your child about language and books by reading short stories to your child every day. You can also make up your own stories to share.
- Engage in pretend play with your child.
- Praise your child for positive behaviors.
- Model and talk about appropriate behaviors.



If you have concerns about your child's development

Assistance may be available through Nebraska's Early Intervention program known as the Early Development Network. Your child may qualify for services if they are under the age of three and not developing typically or have a health condition that may affect their development. Your child must be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in your school district in order to qualify. To refer a child to the Early Development Network, call Nebraska ChildFind at **(888) 806-6287** or visit **childfind.nebraska.gov**.



MILESTONES

AROUND 3 YEARS OLD

Children often:

- Say sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Use common things as intended like a fork or spoon
- Copy others' actions and words
- Follow simple instructions
- Can kick a ball
- Keep building on the skills they have
- Build towers of 4 or more blocks
- Point to things or pictures when they are named
- Show shame, pride, or embarrassment
- Can wait for toy or treat for about 1 minute
- Focus their attention for 30 to 60 seconds
- Can label basic emotions like happy, sad, angry
- Show a desire to do things on their own

Talk to your doctor if your child does not yet:

- Speak in sentences
- Engage in make believe or pretend play
- Walk steadily
- Want to play with others
- Make eye contact
- Retain skills they once had



CDC'S MILESTONE TRACKER APP

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has a free app to help you track your child's development from 2 months to 5 years. The app has pictures and videos to help you know what to look for, and tips and activities to support your child's development. Visit cdc.gov/milestonetracker to download the app.



Books and Reading Strategies

Toddlers have trouble sitting for long periods of time. Keep stories short and simple. Children at this age will begin to follow a plot in a simple story. Engage your toddler with books by:

- Keeping books on a low shelf where they can reach them
- Encouraging them to help turn the pages of the book
- Letting them fill in the words in a story they know
- Allowing them to interrupt the story to ask questions or share thoughts
- Encouraging them to point to and name pictures
- Looking at the pictures together and talking about them

Toddlers enjoy hearing the same things over and over again. Look for books that have the same word or set of words repeated a number of times in the story. Try checking out these books with your 2-year-old:

- *Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee
- *Whistle for Willie* by Ezra Jack Keats
- *What's Up, Duck? A Book of Opposites* by Tad Hills
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *Big Little* by Leslie Patricelli



Public libraries are a great resource for families. Many public libraries provide free enrichment activities for children and families. Librarians can also help you find accurate, up-to-date information. To find your local library, visit nlc.state.ne.us





3–5 YEARS



Guidance and Discipline

Teaching and guiding a young child takes patience. As a parent, there are steps you can take to help your child learn to make the right choices.

- Have clear, consistent rules.
- Provide choices. Allow your child the freedom to make some age-appropriate decisions in their life. For example, you can allow them to choose what to wear.
- Notice and acknowledge good behaviors. Talk more about what you like than what you do not like.
- Show interest in your child, their activities, and the time that you spend together.
- Be a good example. The best way to teach your child to act appropriately is to model the behaviors you would like to see.



Nebraska Family Helpline is a free resource for parents with kids of all ages, who have any type of question regarding their child's behavior: **(888) 866-8660**

Routine

A consistent routine for children—including taking naps, sleeping well at night, and eating regularly and healthily—can help them with their behavior. Routines also help to establish expectations from children and parents and creates a calmer house. A routine can give your child confidence and independence because they know what to expect and what they are supposed to do. In times of change or stress, a daily routine provides normalcy so your child can still find calmness.



The CDC provides tips for parents such as creating routines, using time-outs, responding to good behaviors, and communicating with your child. Visit **[cdc.gov/parents/essentials](https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials)**



Supporting Your Child's Development

Your child learns new things:

- By doing and trying
- Through movement
- By being noticed and encouraged
- Through their senses
- By making things
- Through language and stories

Here are some things to keep in mind while you support your young child's development.

- Your child's brain will take many years to mature and develop. Your child is learning about self-control. They will depend on you to model behaviors and help them learn how.
- You may hear "Let me" or "I can do it" constantly. Your child is exploring and figuring out their independence. Your job is to keep them safe as they try new things. Try to be patient and let your child do things at their own pace. Offer help and support, but let your child decide when they want your help.
- Your child is building new skills and becoming more confident. Give general problem-solving advice and hints rather than a solution. For example, when working on a puzzle together you can say "I wonder what would happen if you tried that piece in a corner" rather than "This piece goes up here."
- Make play materials and toys available both indoors and outdoors for your child. Include games and activities that your child can play with others or alone.



- Everyday tasks can be a fun way to spend quality time with your child and to help them learn. Point out letters and numbers you see as you are walking or driving together. Talk about the steps of taking a bath or brushing your teeth.
- Encourage your child to ask questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, look up the answer together.
- Talk about learning in a positive way. For example, say things like “I love reading with you” and “Learning about numbers is fun!” This helps your child be excited to learn new things.
- Children learn best with active chores that they understand. Break a big task into smaller parts that your child can handle. For example, rather than saying, “Clean your room” you can say “Please put your books on the shelf and then we can put your clothes away together.”
- Tell your child what they are doing right, rather than wrong.
- Expand on your child’s language. For example, if your child points and says “A bus,” you can say, “You’re right, there’s the big, yellow school bus. There are many children on the bus. Where do you think they’re going?”



If you have concerns about your child’s development

Assistance may be available through your local school district. Your child may qualify for special education services if they are 3 years of age or older and not developing typically or have a health condition that may affect their development. Your child must be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in your school district in order to qualify. To refer a child for special education services, call Nebraska ChildFind at **(888) 806-6287** or visit **childfind.nebraska.gov**.

Preparing for Kindergarten

When your child goes to kindergarten, they will learn new skills by building on the skills they already know. You can work on building these skills together by practicing them with your child. Their teacher will be looking for your child to be able to:

- Follow simple directions
- Use the toilet by themselves
- Use pencils and crayons
- Explain what they need
- Focus on a task for at least several minutes
- Work at tasks independently

You can help build these skills by:

- Engaging in activities that require them to follow directions
- Drawing together
- Encouraging your child to use their words, even when you know what they want
- Playing games like Follow the Leader and Red Light, Green Light
- Encouraging your child to play independently sometimes
- Giving your child opportunities to play with other children



READY FOR SUCCESS

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) provides important information about starting school in Nebraska. The booklet provides information on preparing your child for kindergarten and resources to support you and your child. Visit education.ne.gov/oec/ready-for-success to download a copy.



MILESTONES

AROUND 4 YEARS OLD

Children often:

- Engage in pretend play
- Would rather play with friends than alone
- Can sing songs from memory
- Know some colors
- Can make predications, such as what will happen next in a story
- Can use scissors with supervision
- Can comfort themselves when they are upset

Talk to your doctor if your child does not yet:

- Interact with others outside of the family
- Retell stories or remember songs or rhymes
- Speak clearly
- Jump in place
- Show interest in using the toilet

AROUND 5 YEARS OLD

Children can often:

- Speak clearly
- Use full sentences
- Count 10 or more objects
- Print some letters
- Stand on one foot
- Use a toilet on their own
- Remember more than one rule or instruction
- Focus their attention for about 2 minutes
- Understand others' emotions
- Stop themselves from doing something inappropriate

Talk to your doctor if your child does not yet:

- Engage in an activity for at least 5 minutes
- Say their first and last name
- Show a variety of emotions
- Enjoy a variety of activities
- Wash their hands or get dressed without help



CDC'S MILESTONE TRACKER APP

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has a free app to help you track your child's development from 2 months to 5 years. The app has pictures and videos to help you know what to look for, and tips and activities to support your child's development. Visit cdc.gov/milestonetracker to download the app.



Books and Reading Strategies

Read to your child every day. When reading a book, you can talk with your child about different parts of the story, explain the meaning of new words, and try to connect the story to real life situations. Your child may enjoy acting out the story in pretend play. Your child may also enjoy telling you the story based on what is happening in the pictures or what they remember from reading the book previously.

- Ask questions about the story that require your child to think and explain, such as “How do you think the boy is feeling? Why do you think that?” and “What do you think will happen next?”
- Make connections between the book and your child’s life by asking questions such as “The boy in this story played in the snow. What do you like to do in the snow?” or “The family is going to the zoo. Have you ever been to the zoo? What did you see?”

Try checking out these books with your child:

- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
- *Go, Dog. Go!* by P.D. Eastman
- *Kindergarten Here I Come!* by D.J. Steinberg
- *The Berenstain Bears* series by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- *What Do People Do All Day?* by Richard Scarry
- *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt
- *How Rocket Learned to Read* by Tad Hills
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn



Public libraries are a great resource for families. Many public libraries provide free enrichment activities for children and families. Librarians can also help you find accurate, up-to-date information. To find your local library, visit nlc.state.ne.us





KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE



Car Safety

- Children must ride in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old.
- Your baby should be in a rear-facing seat until they are 2 years old or meet the height or weight requirements specified by the car seat manufacturer.
- There are many inspection stations throughout Nebraska to help you install your child's car seat.
- Do not place your child in a car seat while wearing a winter coat or snowsuit. Instead, put a blanket or coat over your child after they are strapped in.
- Always buy a new car seat or booster seat. Used car seats may be damaged or expired. If you cannot afford a new car seat, check safekidsnebraska.org for information on local agencies that may be able to help you get one.
- Your child should always be secured in their car seat if the vehicle is moving. Never remove your baby from their car seat in a moving vehicle, even if they are crying.
- Never leave your child alone in the car for any period of time, even if the weather is nice and even if they are sleeping.



Safe Kids Nebraska can help you find free or reduced-price car seats. They also provide resources for checking to make sure your baby's car seat is installed correctly. Call **(402) 471-8749** or visit safekidsnebraska.org/carSeats



For helpful information regarding car seat safety and Nebraska car seat laws:

NEBRASKA STATE PATROL

Call (402) 471-4545 or visit statepatrol.nebraska.gov and click How Do I? then How Do I Follow Nebraska's Child Restraint Laws?

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Call (402) 471-4567 or visit dot.nebraska.gov and click Safety > Driving Safely then Child Passenger Safety.



Sleep Routines and Sleep Safety

Getting enough sleep is very important for babies and young children. These are ways to support your child's safe and healthy sleep:

- Your baby is safest when they sleep in your room, but not in your bed. Placing your baby's bassinet or crib near your bed makes it easier for you to respond to them at night and may protect them from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Make sure your child's sleep area is free of hanging objects, like window cords.
- Use sleep sacks until your baby is 1 year old. It is not safe to place blankets on your baby until they are at least 1 year old.
- Babies can be swaddled for sleep until they are two months old. After two months, babies may begin rolling over and swaddling becomes unsafe.
- Find a routine that works for your family and try to stay on schedule as much as you can. Try to put your toddler to bed and down for naps at the same time every day.

By keeping a routine, your child is more likely to sleep through the night.

- Avoid screen time at least 2 hours before bedtime. Put away phones and tablets and turn off computers and televisions.
- Avoid conflicts close to bedtime.
- Have a bedtime routine.
- Help your child learn to be comfortable sleeping in the same bed each night.
- Be consistent and loving. When your child calls for you in the middle of the night, they are letting you know they need you to comfort them. Carry or walk them back to their bed and help them feel safe while they fall back to sleep.



For more information on sleep safety, how much sleep your child needs, and sleep routines, visit kidshealth.org and search "sleep" or sleepfoundation.org.



Home Safety

Make sure your home is safe for your child.

- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and working properly. Detectors should be installed in every sleep room, outside of each sleeping area, and on every level of your home. Visit [getasmokealarm.org](https://www.getasmokealarm.org) to see if you qualify for free smoke alarms.
- Get down on your baby's level and check your home for things that may harm them. Check again as your baby starts crawling and walking.
- If you have stairs in your home, secure them with a baby gate.



Visit safehome.org/resources/childproofing-guide for detailed information on how to childproof each section of your home.

- Keep child safety locks on cabinets with chemicals or other dangers.
- Keep all electrical outlets covered.
- Never leave your child alone unless they are confined to a safe space.
- Make sure doors are secure and that your baby cannot wander outside.

Street and Neighborhood Safety

- Do not leave your child alone outside.
- Talk to your child about safety. Talk about safe adults they can go to if there is an emergency or problem.
- Talk to your child about how to be safe around strangers.
- Teach your child about street safety. Model street safety by looking both ways before crossing a street. Talk about the importance of not playing in parking lots or streets and not chasing toys into the street.
- Do not put your child's name on their backpack or the outside of their clothes.

Common Items Can Poison Children

Babies like to put things in their mouths as a way to learn about their environment. Use child safety locks and keep dangerous items out of reach. Be aware of common items that are poisonous:

- **Kitchen:** Cleaning supplies, dishwasher soap, oven cleaner, floor and furniture polish
- **Bathroom:** Prescription drugs, pills, vitamins, supplements, cold and cough medicines, cosmetics, mouthwash, perfume, drain cleaner, disinfectants, rubbing alcohol
- **Laundry room:** Bleach, detergent, fabric softener, stain remover
- **Outside and other rooms:** Kerosene, lighter fluid, gasoline, paint, paint thinner, turpentine, weed killer, pesticides, rat poison, fertilizer, house plants, garden and yard plants, tobacco, alcohol, mothballs, paint chips or dust



If your child eats something poisonous, immediately call the Poison Control Center at **(800) 222-1222** and tell them what your child ate. They will tell you what to do. If your child is having convulsions, stops breathing, or loses consciousness, call **911**.

Pool and Water Safety

Water play in the bathtub and pool or at the beach can be a lot of fun for your child. However, water can be dangerous. Here are some tips to make water time safe and fun:

- Never leave your child alone in or near water.
- It is possible for a baby to drown in less than 2 inches of water. Babies can drown in buckets and open toilet bowls because their heavy heads can become trapped when they fall in.
- Always watch your child closely in or near water. Floating toys are fun, but they do not prevent drowning.
- Use a waterproof sunscreen with SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15. Put more on every two hours or sooner if your child is in water.
- Use an umbrella or tent when you are outside for the day.
- Learn CPR and infant CPR so you are prepared in case of an accident.



Safe Nebraska (safenebraska.org) and the Red Cross (redcross.org) provide tips for child safety as well as information on registering for CPR classes.





SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL HEALTH



Well-child Visits

Children grow fast. Regular health exams will help your child's doctor spot problems and address them early. Well-child visits are typically scheduled very often for infants and are more spaced out as your child grows. At these visits, your doctor may:

- Address any concerns you have. Feel free to go prepared with a list of questions.
- Check your child's health and physical development.
- Check that your child is meeting developmental, social, and cognitive milestones.
- Administer immunizations (vaccinations).

Immunizations

Immunizations are a proven way to keep your child safe from preventable illnesses. Immunizations typically begin at birth. If you deliver in a hospital, they often begin before you leave. Most immunizations are delivered in a series of two or three shots. It is important to schedule well-child visits so your child can get the full series. Keep your child's health record in a safe place where you can find it easily. You will need the record when you enroll your child in child care, preschool, or kindergarten.



Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics (aap.org) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov/vaccines) for more information on immunizations, keeping your baby healthy, and well-child visits.



Oral Health

Babies typically get their first teeth between 4 and 7 months. You can begin brushing your baby's gums sooner to keep them healthy.

- To brush your baby's gums, use a small, soft washcloth or piece of gauze. Gently wipe down gums after meals, or at least once per day.
- When baby teeth appear, brush your child's teeth and gums using an infant toothbrush and a little dab of fluoride-free toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice). The toothbrush should have a small head and soft bristles.
- You should hold the toothbrush and brush the teeth and gums until your child can hold the toothbrush themselves. Supervise your child to ensure proper tooth brushing (the correct amount of time and spitting out toothpaste).
- You should plan for your baby's first dentist visit around age one.
- Limit the amount of sugary foods and drinks your child has.



Vision

If you have concerns about your child's vision, check in with their doctor or contact the Eye Care Council at (800) 960-EYES or seetolearn.com. The Eye Care Council provides free vision assessments for 3-year-olds.



FOOD AND NUTRITION



Feeding: Birth to 6 Months

The World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding for six months. Breastmilk or formula provide your baby with all the nutrients they need for the first 6 months of life. Breastmilk or formula also keep your baby hydrated. Babies under 6 months old should typically not be given water to drink, even in hot weather. Giving your baby water may fill their small stomach, leaving less room for nourishing breastmilk or formula. Your doctor will tell you when it is appropriate to start giving your baby water.



MilkWorks provides reliable information on breastfeeding, including tips for continuing to breastfeed after returning to work, weaning, and illnesses while breastfeeding. Visit milkworks.org or call **(402) 423-6402**.

Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding helps protect babies from illnesses, allergies, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). It also helps your body recover from birth. Many mothers find that breastfeeding is a way to bond with their baby.

For many parents, breastfeeding requires patience and practice. If you feel pain, unlatch your baby and try again. If you continue having pain, check in with a medical professional. You may need to try a few positions before finding one that is comfortable for you and your baby.



Cradle position: Hold your baby with the arm on the same side you will be breastfeeding. Hold your baby so their head is resting on your forearm and your hand and arm support the rest of their body.



Laid-back position: Lean back in bed or on a couch in a reclining position. Make sure you are comfortable, and your back is supported. Lay your baby on your stomach, facing your breast. This position may be beneficial for newborns and babies with sensitive tummies.



Clutch or "football hold" position: Position your baby to face you and tuck their legs under your arm on the side you will be breastfeeding. Hold your baby's head with your hand on the same side. This position may be particularly beneficial for parents who had a C-section, have a small baby, or have twins.



Side-lying position: Lay on your side, facing your baby with your tummies together. This is a good position for night feedings. To keep your baby safe, be sure there is no loose bedding near your baby and only use this position on firm, flat surfaces.

Formula: For a variety of reasons, breastfeeding may not be an option for all families, or it may just be something you choose not to do. There are many options of formula to help keep your baby healthy. You may need to try a few before you find one that is right for your baby.

- When mixing formula, only make enough for your baby to drink right away. Throw away whatever your baby does not finish.
- Follow the directions on the formula package for mixing and heating. Do not add extra water or your baby may not get all the nutrients they need.
- Do not heat formula in the microwave. The formula may heat unevenly and can burn your baby's mouth.



If you are having trouble affording food or formula, see if you qualify for WIC or TANF.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):
signupwic.com or **(800) 942-1171**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):
dhhs.ne.gov or **(800) 383-4278**

Feeding: 6 Months to One Year

When your baby is about 6 months old, you may want to begin slowly giving them new foods. Wait about 5 days between each new food that you give your baby. This will help you know if your baby is allergic to a certain food. Give your baby foods without added salt or sugar. Start with purees and soft, mushy foods. As you introduce harder foods, cut all foods into small pieces to avoid choking.

Look for these signs to know when your baby is ready to start trying solid foods:

- They can hold their head upright and steady on their own
- They can sit with support
- They show desire for food by opening their mouth or leaning in
- They chew their hands and toys

While giving your baby new foods, continue to provide breastmilk or formula until their first birthday. Doctors do not recommend cow's milk until your baby is 1 year old. You should also not give your baby honey until they are 1 year old.



For information on common food allergies and signs and symptoms of allergies, visit foodallergy.org or medlineplus.gov/foodallergy.html

Highchair Safety

When your baby starts to lean forward out of their infant seat, it is time for a highchair. Do not leave your baby alone in a highchair. Here are some things to look for to be sure the highchair is safe for your baby:

- It should be sturdy, with a wide base so it will not tip over.
- It should have a seat belt with a strap to go between your baby's legs.
- The tray should lock securely on both sides and have no sharp edges.
- Belt buckles and tray locks should not be easy for your baby to use.
- It should be easy to clean.

Visit healthychildren.org and search “highchair” for other important highchair safety information.



Food and Nutrition: 1 to 2 Years

- By 12 months of age, most infants like to feed themselves.
- It is important to start and finish each meal with good handwashing. Teach your child to rub and scrub their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Ensure your baby is sitting whenever eating and drinking to help prevent choking. Continue using a highchair with your baby secured with a buckle.
- By this stage, your baby should be eating a variety of foods and typically eat whatever is served to the rest of the family.
- Cut or tear foods into tiny bites (1/4-inch square) and place them in front of your child. You may want to place a small variety of choices on the tray or table so your baby can begin to choose what to eat and when.
- Your baby will look to you for what to do. Be encouraging, not demanding, when it comes to eating. As you eat with your baby, talk about the different foods. Describe their color, texture, and taste.
- Most babies should be eating a variety of vegetables (cooked, chopped, or mashed), fruits (soft, chopped, or mashed), and grains (such as soft crackers or pieces of bread).
- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables when available. If using canned or frozen, check the label for no added syrup, sugar, or salt.
- Make sure your baby has several teeth before you begin serving small portions of meat. If your baby does not yet have several teeth, puree the meat or serve a different source of protein such as eggs or tofu.
- Breastfed babies may continue to nurse before or after meals. During meals, encourage your baby to drink breastmilk or vitamin D milk from a cup.
- At this age, you should not offer your baby hard foods, large chunked foods, or round foods such as: hot dogs, whole grapes, popcorn, pretzels, or raw carrots. These foods are high-risk for choking. Use caution if you offer these foods. Have your child sit down while eating and cut or break the food into small pieces.



MyPlate can help you plan healthy meals for your whole family within your budget and dietary preferences. They also provide recipes, recommendations for how much your child should eat, and how to feed picky eaters.

Visit [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)





Food and Nutrition: 2 to 5 Years

Family meals are important for everyone. Families who eat together every day, or almost every day, tend to eat more vegetables and fruits and less snack foods. You can help your child learn to like different foods by serving a variety of foods during family meals. Your child may not try all of the foods right away or like them all, but seeing them on the table and watching you eat them will help them feel comfortable tasting new foods.

- Eat together as a family as often as possible.
- Do not force your child to eat all the food on their plate. Healthy kids usually eat when they are hungry and stop when they start to feel full.
- Young children like to show their independence. It is helpful if you decide what foods to offer and plan regular times to eat and let your child pick from foods you offer and decide how much to eat. Letting them choose foods can help them feel independent and avoid struggles.

- Around 2 to 3 years old, let your child begin serving themselves. They are capable of lifting and scooping with child-sized utensils.
- When your child resists eating something you have prepared for the family meal, do not prepare another meal just for them. Instead of giving in to your child's demands, such as eating macaroni and cheese for every meal, encourage your child to eat the family meal.
- Your child is probably eating enough if they are full of energy, growing, and seem healthy. If your child is losing weight or has special food needs, get help from a doctor.



Although most children grow out of food allergies, some do not. For information on common food allergies and signs and symptoms of allergies, visit foodallergy.org or medlineplus.gov/foodallergy

Food Jags

Toddlers often go on “food jags” and want to eat certain foods all the time, then change and eat other foods. This is a way for them to explore their independence. Continue to make a variety of foods available. Visit medlineplus.gov and search “food jags” to learn more about food jags, recommendations, and supporting your child’s health.





YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH



Caring for a child is a lot of work. It is normal to feel exhausted and to feel overwhelmed sometimes. It is important for you to take care of yourself and to spend time alone to rest, especially during the first year. In order to provide the best care for your child, you must take care of yourself.

There is a lot of truth in the saying “It takes a village to raise a child.” No one comes to the parent role an expert. The strongest parents seek trusted, reliable advice from experts and support from family and friends. You can seek resources in your local community such as your child’s pediatrician, parent support groups, and faith-based organizations.



POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Many parents suffer from postpartum depression during the first year of their child's life. Some symptoms are:

- Feeling sad or depressed
- Feeling irritable or angry with those around you
- Having difficulty bonding with your baby
- Feeling anxious or panicky
- Having problems with eating or sleeping
- Having upsetting thoughts that you can't get out of your mind
- Feeling as if you are "out of control" or "going crazy"
- Feeling like you never should have become a parent
- Being worried that you might hurt your baby or yourself

If you experience these symptoms, reach out for help. Here are resources:

- Postpartum Support International (PSI):
(800) 944-4773, #1 for Español or #2 for English or text (503) 894-9453
 - In Nebraska, you can contact the PSI coordinator by calling or texting (402) 577-0773 or emailing omahabutterfly@gmail.com.
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies: call 2-1-1
- Mental Health America: mhanational.org
- If you are in crisis, call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255).



CHOOSING QUALITY CHILD CARE



Finding the child care program that is right for your family is one of the most important decisions that you will make as a parent. It can be helpful to identify what is important and relevant to you and your family. Remember that your child's early experiences create the foundation for lifelong learning and affect how they think, feel, act, and play with others.

Start Early

If you are pregnant and plan to return to work after your child is born, you should start looking into child care options early. There are limited options in some areas, and you may need to get on a wait list before your baby is born.



If You Need Financial Assistance for Child Care

The Department of Health and Human Services may be able to help your family with the cost of child care through the Child Care Subsidy Program.

To learn more, call **(402) 471-9152** or apply at dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/ACCESSNebraska

Learn More about Selecting Quality Child Care

A great resource to learn more about selecting quality child care in Nebraska is Step Up to Quality. Step Up to Quality can help you find providers and teachers who are committed to providing quality child care. Step Up to Quality gives providers and programs resources, tools, and professional learning opportunities so they can help children develop and learn. Visit stepuptoquality.ne.gov or call (844) 807-5712 to learn more.

Questions to Ask When Looking for Quality Child Care

- ☐ How many adults are there for the number of children in their care? In center-based care, look for the following:
 - ✓ Infants: 1 adult to 4 babies
 - ✓ Toddlers: 1 adult to 6 toddlers
 - ✓ Preschool (3 years): 1 adult to 10 preschoolers
 - ✓ Preschool (4-5 years): 1 adult to 12 preschoolers
- ☐ How many adults are there for the number of children in their care? In family child care, look for the following:
 - ✓ Babies: 1 adult to 4 babies
 - ✓ All ages: 1 adult to 8 children
 - ✓ Mixed age group: 1 adult to 8 children, no more than two infants at a time
- ☐ How does the caregiver and other staff interact with children?
 - ✓ Do caregivers speak to children and babies?
 - ✓ Do they answer children's questions?
 - ✓ Do caregivers read and sing to children?
- ☐ Are there plenty of interesting activities? Is time scheduled for free play? What is the policy on screen time?
- ☐ Do they provide healthy beverages and foods throughout the day?
 - ✓ Is food prepared and stored safely?
- ☐ Do children have multiple daily opportunities for physical activity both inside and outside?
- ☐ How do the children look?
 - ✓ Are they engaged in the activities?
 - ✓ Are caregivers and staff engaged with the children?
- ☐ Are the tables, sinks, chairs, play equipment, and other items child-sized?
 - ✓ Is the child care environment safe and clean?



Licensed Child Care

Visit the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to see a list of licensed child care providers. In Nebraska, anyone who provides child care to four or more children from different families must be licensed. dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Child-Care-Licensing.aspx

Ask for a Family Handbook

Family handbooks are important so you understand what a program offers for your child and family. When reading the

family handbook, ask yourself if the following policies and guidelines work for you and your family:

- Child care mission statement
- Sickness and health policy
- Policies for visiting the center and family involvement
- Positive discipline policy
- Severe weather policy
- Holidays and other closures
- Daily procedures, such as: hours of operation, mealtimes, toilet training, parent/teacher conferences
- Policies regarding behavior problems and expulsion



Sometimes children are asked to leave their childcare program. For information on preventing this from happening to your child, or what to do if it does, visit childmind.org and search “suspension” or visit childcare.gov/consumer-education/preventing-exclusion-and-expulsion-from-child-care-programs



Additional Resources

- For resources for choosing quality child care, visit child.unl.edu/quality-child-care. The website includes a checklist you can download and print to take with you as you visit child care programs. The checklist includes five areas of quality child care: relationships, health & safety, curriculum & approaches to learning, learning environment, and policies & administration.
- Nebraska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) are helpful when searching for quality child care or preschools. You can download the Early Learning Guidelines at education.ne.gov.
- Zero to Three provides resources for choosing quality child care: zerotothree.org
- Check to see if your child care provider meets the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) program standards: naeyc.org

ROUTINES TO LOOK FOR

Infants

- Caregivers follow the individual needs of infants
- Each infant has an individual schedule according to child and family preferences
- A warm, responsive environment
- Children are taken outdoors two times or more for a full day of care and one time or more for a half day of care

Toddlers

- There is a consistent routine
- Caregivers are flexible and responsive to each child's interests and needs throughout the day
- When they can, caregivers are willing to adapt their schedules and be flexible to meet the individual needs of children
- Children are taken outdoors 60 minutes or more for a full day of care and 30 minutes or more for a half day of care

Preschoolers

- A combination of a child's free choice and caregiver-directed activities
- Children are actively engaged in activities and conversations with peers and caregivers
- Routines are consistent and flexible
- Children are taken outdoors 90 minutes or more for a full day of care and 45 minutes or more for a half day of care

RESOURCES

Tips for Finding Online Resources

The internet offers a way to access information quickly and easily. You may want to use Google to find information about your pregnancy or your child. It is important to consider the source of the information. These are some helpful tips for finding accurate information online. When in doubt, always check with a healthcare provider.

- Ask yourself who wrote or published the information. What are their qualifications? What are their motives?
- Look at how recently the website or article was created. Old information is not necessarily wrong, but it is best to use recent sources. Sometimes recommendations change.
- If the website includes references to studies or other websites, check the original source. You want to be sure that the information is correct.

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
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Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

American Pregnancy Association	Information on unplanned pregnancies and health during pregnancy	(800) 672-2296	americanpregnancy.org
Break Time for Nursing Mothers	Information on laws regarding breastfeeding at the workplace		dol.gov/agencies/whd/nursing-mothers
Breastfeeding — NDHHS	Benefits of breastfeeding and helpful resources	(402) 471-0165	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Breastfeeding
Breastfeeding — Office of Women's Health	Practical tips and resources for challenges; pumping and storing breastmilk; and breastfeeding at home, work and in public	(800) 994-9662	womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding
Diabetes during Pregnancy — Guide	A patient's guide to healthy pregnancy when managing gestational diabetes (PDF)	(800) 370-2943 National Institute for Child Health	das.nebraska.gov/emprel/FamilyMedical.html
Family Medical Leave	Outlines state provisions; provides forms and Frequently Asked Questions		das.nebraska.gov/emprel/FamilyMedical.html
La Leche League of Nebraska	Mother-to-mother support and education about breastfeeding		llofne.org

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Lactation Support at the Worksite	Resource guide to help Nebraska employers learn about laws, benefits, and tools to support breastfeeding		nesafetycouncil.org/images/stories/WorkWell/Resources/Nebraskas%20Guide%20to%20Lactation%20Support.pdf
Nebraska Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting	Support for pregnant or parenting families of children birth to 5 yrs. Old who may struggle with significant life stressors such as poverty; exposure to violence or substance abuse; teen parenting or military families with one or both parents in service.	(402) 471-1938	dhhs.ne.gov/pages/maternal-infant-early-childhood-home-visiting.aspx
MilkWorks — Breastfeeding	Basic breastfeeding information	Check website for numbers	milkworks.org
Teen and Young Parent Program (TYPP) — Nebraska Early Childhood Collaborative	TYPP is designed to support and empower young parents. They offer services to connect parents to education and support to remain in school.	(531) 301-3021	nebraskaeearly.org/community-services/teen-young-parent-program
Text4Baby	Text4baby is a free app to that sends text messages timed to due date or baby's birth date, through pregnancy and up until the baby's first birthday. Additional app provides info about baby's development, pregnancy, and new baby care.		text4baby.org
Vital Records	Provides information to obtain a birth or death certificate	(402) 471-3121	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/vital-records.aspx

Health Care and Medical

Bright Futures	Support for families about working with healthcare providers and making healthy decisions		brightfutures.aap.org/families/Pages/default.aspx
Eye Care Council	Offers free vision assessments to 3-year-olds	(800) 960-3937	seetolearn.com
Every Woman Matters	Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening for Women with Low Income	(800) 532-2227	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Every-Woman-Matters.aspx
Family Voices	Supports for families to engage in health care and finding resources for children with special healthcare needs		familyvoices.org
Healthcare	Find a pediatrician; ask pediatricians questions; immunization schedule; symptom checker; prenatal and infant care	(630) 626-6000	healthychildren.org

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Healthy Children — American Academy of Pediatrics	Find a pediatrician; ask pediatricians questions; immunization schedule; symptom checker; prenatal and infant care	(630) 626-6000	dhhs-access-neb-menu.ne.gov/start/?tl=en
Immunization Program - DHHS	Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program; Immunizations for schools and childcare providers; immunization records and forms	(800) 798-1696	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Immunization.aspx
Immunizations	Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule	(402) 471-6423	dhhs.ne.gov/Immunization/Immunizations-and-your-New-Baby.pdf#search=Immunizations

Childcare

Child Care Assistance	Apply for Child Care Assistance through ACCESSNebraska	(800) 383-4278	dhhs-access-neb-menu.ne.gov/start/?tl=en
Child Care Aware of America — Nebraska Resources	Provider licensing, complaint line, and link to background check for childcare providers in Nebraska	(800) 424-2246	childcareaware.org/state/nebraska
Child Care Aware of America — Military Families	Find DOD approved child care providers and assistance in paying for child care for military families.	(800) 424-2246	childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families
Child Care Subsidy Information	Child Care Subsidy program information	(402) 471-9152	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Child-Care-Subsidy-Information-for-Parents.aspx
DHHS Child Care Info for Parents in Nebraska	Search for child care providers, guidance on choosing Child Care providers, parent resources and regulations	(800) 600-1289	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Search-for-Child-Care-Providers.aspx
Resource and Referral for Childcare	Childcare roster, subsidy information, and other prospective childcare provider evaluation tools	(800) 892-4453	education.ne.gov/oec/child-care-resource-and-referral
The Right Place Child Care Finder	The Nebraska Resource and Referral System (NRRS) is a statewide database that provides child care information and resources; search for child care centers, resources, and services throughout the state	(800) 746-8420	nrrs.ne.gov/therightplace

Food and Nutrition

Choose MyPlate	Resources for parents with customizable growth charts and food group information; tips for picky eaters; and food safety		choosemyplate.gov
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RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE)	Information on food allergies, including support groups		foodallergy.org
Food Safety	Information on Food Safety for Children under five.		foodsafety.gov/risk/children
Supplemental Food and Nutrition Program (SNAP)	The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps recipients buy food, to raise nutrition for low-income households.	(800) 221-5689 (Natl. USDA) (402) 472-3121 (Nebraska)	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/SNAP.aspx
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	Provides healthy food at no cost, breastfeeding support, nutrition information, and referrals	(402) 471-3121	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/WIC.aspx

Early Childhood Development and Education

5 Steps for Brain-Building Serve and Return	5 steps to building a strong foundation in a child's brain for all future learning and development through serve and return interactions		developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return
Ages & Stages — Healthy Children	Information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on development from prenatal to 21 years		healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/Pages/default.aspx
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — Child Development	Resources for child safety and development	(800) 232-4636	cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/index.html
Center on the Developing Child	Evidence-based information about child development and learning	(617) 496-0578	developingchild.harvard.edu
Early Childhood Development-Nebraska Extension	Provides information and resources about early child development.	(402) 727-2775	child.unl.edu/family-resources
Early Childhood Training Center	Library resources and parenting information, quality child care, and other early childhood resources.	(800) 892-4453	education.ne.gov/oec/early-childhood-training-center
Early Learning Foundations	Parent Companion Piece to Early Learning Guidelines		cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/ELG-PDF.pdf
Early Learning Guidelines	Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards are a resource to assist families in supporting learning and development for young children		education.ne.gov/oec/early-learning-guidelines

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Head Start and Early Head Start	Head Start has provides quality, comprehensive services—in education, nutrition, family support, and parent involvement—to prepare low-income children and their families for school and give them a “head start” in breaking the cycle of poverty		neheadstart.org education.ne.gov/oec/hssco-head-start-state-collaboration-office
Milestone Moments — CDC	Reference guide to check the milestones your child has reached at each age	(800) 232-4630	cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	Research-based resources, tips and ideas for families—from child development to reading, writing, music, and math		naeyc.org/our-work/for-families
National Sleep Foundation	Information on children’s sleep, including routines and how much sleep your child should get		sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/children-teens-sleep
Public Broadcasting Service — Kid Appropriate resources	The most trusted place to explore and discover the big, wonderful world around them: PBS KIDS		pbskids.org
Ready for Success — Nebraska Department of Education	What Families Want to Know about Starting School in Nebraska		education.ne.gov/oec/ready-for-success
Staying on Track	A website and mobile app to track developmental milestones		edn.ne.gov/cms/resources/staying-on-track-as-your-child-grows-and-learns
Step Up to Quality	Find a high-quality early childhood program	(844) 807-5712	education.ne.gov/stepuptoquality
Vroom	Vroom offers free tips on supporting young children’s brain development. Tips are available online or by text message		vroom.org
Zero to Three	Resources to build healthy relationships with infants and toddlers		zerotothree.org/early-learning

Parenting and Family Life

Boys Town Hotline	Support for parents from child behavior experts	(800) 448-3000	boystown.org/parenting/Pages/default.aspx
Circle of Security-Parenting	Program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children.		necosp.org/home

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Co-Parenting for Successful Kids	Educational program for families in the process of divorce, custody modification, or separation	(855) 308-8037	child.unl.edu/coparenting
Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and Preschoolers — CDC	Tips for handling common parenting challenges for 2 to 4 year olds; includes information on communicating with your child, creating rules, using time-out, and more		cdc.gov/parents/essentials
Fussy Baby Network	Free phone consultations to help families struggling with infant crying, sleeping, or feeding	(888) 431-2229	erikson.edu/fussy-baby-network
Just in Time Parenting	Just in Time Parenting is a free parenting newsletter that is delivered by email and specific to a child's age and needs.		jitp.info
Nebraska Extension — The Learning Child	Resources on childcare and child development	(402) 727-2775	child.unl.edu
Nebraska Library Commission	Parent resources for children and youth		nlc.nebraska.gov/youth/parents.aspx
PBS Parents	Educational games and activities. Filled with information on child development and early learning		pbs.org/parents
Positive Parenting Tips — CDC	Positive parenting tips for parents of children birth to 17 years old		cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/index.html
Ready Rosie -Parent Resources	Ready Rosie provides resources to support family engagement	(940) 243-5300	readyrosie.com

Disabilities and Special Needs

AbleData	Information on tools and technologies to assist people with disabilities	(800) 227-0216	abledata.acl.gov
Answers for Families	Provides information and opportunities for dialogue, education and support to Nebraskans with Special Needs and their Families	(800) 746-8420	answers4families.org
Autism Information	Information about signs; screening and diagnosis; research; publications; and supporting organizations		hhs.gov/programs/topic-sites/autism/index.html

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Early Development Network	Provides information about services and support for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; free developmental milestones app available for download	(888) 806-6287	edn.ne.gov/cms/families
Early Hearing Detection and Intervention- NDHHS	The Nebraska Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (NE-EHDI) Program provides information and resources about newborn hearing screening, diagnostic evaluations, early intervention, medical home, family support, and periodic hearing screenings	(402) 471-6733	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Hearing-Detection-and-Intervention.aspx
Medically Handicapped and Disabled Children Program	Provides assistance to youth with special health care needs. May help pay for medical costs not covered by insurance, Medicaid or other resources		dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medically-Handicapped-Children.aspx
My Baby's Hearing - Boys Town National Research Hospital	A website to answer questions about newborn hearing screening and steps to take after diagnosis of hearing loss		babyhearing.org
National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability	Five Steps on raising a child with a disability	(800) 900-8086	nchpad.org/1416/6300/Steps~for~Raising~a~Child~with~a~DisabilityNational
Nebraska ChildFind	Information for parents of children with disabilities about their rights, and available resources	(888) 806-6287	childfind.ne.gov
Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Referral service; resources and assistive devices for deaf and hard of hearing Nebraskans	(800) 545-6244	ncdhh.nebraska.gov
Parent Training and Information (PTI) Nebraska	A statewide resource for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs	(800) 284-8520	pti-nebraska.org

Safety and Emergencies

Car Seat Safety Information — Safe Kids Nebraska	Information about how to correctly secure a child's car seat. Find a qualified Child Passenger Safety Technician	(800) 745-9311	safekidsnebraska.org/carseats
Child Abuse Hotline	Report suspected child abuse cases to Health and Human Services or local law enforcement	(800) 652-1999	nebraska.networkofcare.org/aging/services/agency.aspx?pid=ChildProtectiveServicesCPS_1454_1_0
Child Care Aware	Emergency preparedness resources and planning	(703) 341-4111	usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/crisis-and-disaster-resources/

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Child Injuries are Preventable — Center for Disease Control	How parents and caregivers can play a life-saving role in protecting children from injuries	(800) 232-4636	cdc.gov/safechild/index.html
Childproofing Your Home — National Safety Council	High risk zones, safety tips, and assistive devices		nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics/child-safety/childproofing
Department of Transportation	Information on child passenger safety and correctly installing car seats	(402) 471-4567	dot.nebraska.gov
Lead Hotline	Protect Your Family from Exposures to Lead	(800) 424-5323	epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead
National Button Battery Ingestion Hotline	Prevention and steps to take if button batteries are ingested	(800) 498-8666	nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics/child-safety/button-batteries
National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome	Information and resources for preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome		dontshake.org
National Library of Medicine	Multiple topics including crib safety, bathroom safety, and topics based on age		medlineplus.gov/childsafety.html
National Safety Council Nebraska	First aid and CPR classes	(402) 896-0454	safenebraska.org
Poison Control	Confidential call center to nurses, pharmacists, and physicians to assess the situation and give treatment recommendations	(800) 222-1222	poison.org
Red Cross	Tips for child safety and CPR classes; free smoke detector installation		redcross.org getasmokealarm.org
SafeHome	Tips for making your home safe for your child		safehome.org/resources/childproofing-guide
Safe Kids Nebraska	Directory of safety tips and local events statewide promoting children's safety	(402) 471-8749	safekidsnebraska.org
Safe Sleep and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)	Precautions that can be taken to reduce the risk of SIDS and other helpful resources		dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/SIDS.aspx
Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome — CDC	Learn about safe sleep practices and other recommendations to reduce the risk of SUID and SIDS		cdc.gov/sids/Parents-Caregivers.htm

Emotional Health and Violence Prevention

Abusive Head Trauma Prevention	A variety of resources listed to help parents learn more about infant and family safety to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome	(402) 471-0165	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Resources.aspx
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RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Child Protective Services (CPS) Nebraska	Report suspected child abuse cases to Health and Human Services or local law enforcement	(800) 652-1999	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Child-Abuse.aspx
Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline	Help with discipline problems and parent stress; child abuse prevention	(800) 422-4453 (call or text available)	childhelp.org/hotline
Depression and Pregnancy	Understanding pregnancy-related depression and helpful resources	(402) 471-0165	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Post-Partnum-Depression.aspx
Domestic Violence Hotline	A safety net of services available 24-hours a day	(800) 799-7233	nebraskacoalition.org/get_help/help.html
Mental Health America	Information on mental health, including screening and self-help tools	(800) 969-6642	mhanational.org
Nebraska Family Helpline	A free resource for parents with kids of all ages, who have any type of question regarding their child's behavior.	(888) 866-8660	dhhs.ne.gov/pages/Nebraska-Family-Helpline.aspx
Nebraska Family Support Network	Helps families with children who have behavioral, mental, or emotional disabilities	(800) 245-6081	nefamilysupportnetwork.org
Postpartum Support International	Essential info about perinatal mood & anxiety disorders, including risk factors, symptoms, & treatments.	(800) 944-4773	postpartum.net
Sexual Assault Hotline	Information and resource directory of programs offering support services	(800) 656-4673	nebraskacoalition.org/get_help/help.html
Suicide Prevention Lifeline — National	The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress	(800) 273-8255	suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Suicide Prevention - Nebraska	Nebraska website with information about state sponsored suicide prevention resources	(800) 273-8255	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Suicide-Prevention.aspx

Substance Abuse

Al-Anon	Free support groups for family and friends of people who abuse alcohol or drugs	(888) 425-2666	al-anon.org
Nar-Anon	Free support groups for family and friends of people who abuse alcohol or drugs		nar-anon.org
National Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Information Center	Listing of drug and alcohol treatment centers	(800) 784-6776 Available 24/7	nationaltoolkit.csw.fsu.edu/resource/national-alcoholism-and-substance-abuse-information-center-1-800-784-6776

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Nebraska Tobacco Quitline	Resources to assist in quitting tobacco use	(800) 784-8669	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Get-Help-to-Quit.aspx
Treatment and Recovery	Listing of local service agencies statewide for Adult and Children's Treatment and Recovery Programs	Family Help Line: (888) 866-8660 Rural Help Line: (800) 464-0258	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Addiction-Treatment-and-Recovery.aspx

Basic Needs and Economic Assistance

2-1-1 Nebraska/Iowa	Provides information about health and human services for pregnant women, children and families	2-1-1	211iowa.org
Child Support Hotline	Frequently Asked Questions and contact information for Child Support in Nebraska	(877) 631-9973	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Child-Support-FAQs.aspx
Diabetes Management	Healthy lifestyle and healthcare tips for managing Diabetes	(800) 232-4636	cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/index.html
Earned Income Tax Credit - Nebraska	Community Action of Nebraska lists offices throughout the state that may help parents file for the Earned Income Tax credit (EITC)		canhelp.org/get-help
Economic Assistance	AccessNebraska central service access for state sponsored public assistance	(800) 383-4278	dhhs.ne.gov/pages/accessnebraska.aspx
Free Income Tax Preparation	Family Service Coordinators are trained to help prepare tax forms and answer tax questions for individuals with low income		nencap.org/services/free-income-tax-preparation
Health Center Association of Nebraska	Lifesaving information about prevention, testing and treatment resources	(800) 232-4636	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/HIV-Prevention.aspx
HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care	Locations and contact information for centers providing Nebraskans with quality, affordable, integrated primary care and preventative services including medical, dental, and behavioral health services	(800) 232-4636	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/HIV-Prevention.aspx
HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care	Lifesaving information about prevention, testing and treatment resources	(800) 232-4636	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/HIV-Prevention.aspx

RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION	PHONE	WEBSITE
Legal Aid — Family Law	Information and assistance for low-income families related to custody, divorce and domestic violence	(877) 250-2016	legalaiddofnebraska.org/how-we-help/what-we-do/children-and-families
Medicaid — Health Insurance Eligibility Guidelines	Anyone can apply for benefits and handle their Medicaid and Economic Assistance needs on the ACCESSNebraska website from a computer anywhere, at any time.	(855) 632-7633	dhhs.ne.gov/pages/accessnebraska.aspx
National Diaper Bank Network	The National Diaper Bank helps to provide diapers to families in need.		nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/member-directory
Nebraska Local Health Departments	Local health departments offer low and no-cost community-based services for children and families.		dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Local-Health-Departments.aspx
Planned Parenthood	Vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information	(800) 230-PLAN	plannedparenthood.org
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Cash assistance to low income families with children	(800) 383-4278	dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/TANF.aspx
United Way	United Way may provide information about a variety of free programs in communities		unitedway.org/local/united-states/nebraska
Visiting Nurses Association — Parenting Support	VNA offers four voluntary home visitation programs for at-risk families with infants or small children	(402) 930-4082	vnatoday.org/services/community-care/parenting-support

Foster and Adoptive Parents

Lutheran Family Service of Nebraska, Inc.	Offers adoption, foster care, and home study services		lfsneb.org
Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (NFAPA)	NFAPA provides resources and information for adoptive and foster parents in Nebraska.	(402) 476-2273	nfapa.org
Nebraska Friends of Foster Care (NFFC)	NFFC aims to improve the lives of foster children by accepting and funding requests for items and experiences normally out of reach for foster care families with limited budgets.		ne-friends.org

NOTES



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