

WEST VIRGINIA  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
**PROVIDER**  
QUARTERLY



**WV Breastfeeding Friendly  
Child Care Designation Initiative**

**Celebrating Milestones and Sharing  
Sensitive Information with Families**

**Water Safety for Children**

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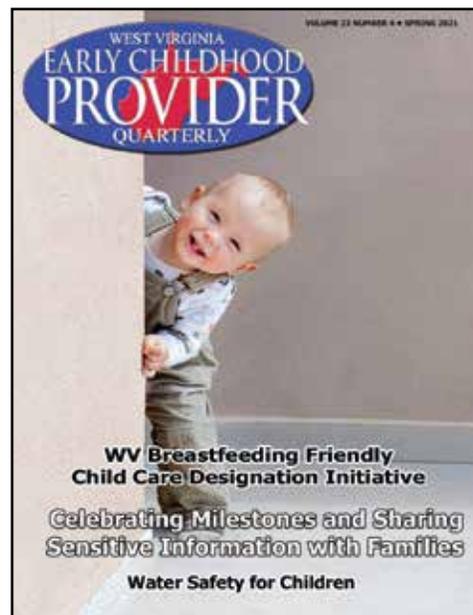
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# Quality and Preschools in West Virginia

A Capstone Article submitted by Sierra Dixon, student of Dr. Janet Dozier at Marshall University

It's no secret that West Virginia is a state that suffers financially, and this often impacts employment and education of residents. In 2020, West Virginia was ranked the 6th highest rate of poverty among the nation. However, we have not let this hinder us in the quality of our preschool classrooms (O'Leary, 2020).

## Poverty Impact

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, West Virginia is the 5th lowest paying state when comparing average salaries within education. In the 2019-2020 school year, our average salary in education was \$50,238, while Mississippi sat at the least paying with \$45,192 and New York was the highest paying at \$87,543. While there are cost-of-living differences, there is still a significant difference when comparing to the national average of \$61,730 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2020). This pay difference is impacted by our poverty levels, but it doesn't stop the state from compensation based on your degree and years of experience as well as other benefits (§18A-4-2, 2020).

## Importance of Quality

Foundation of Knowledge. As edu-



cators, we understand and acknowledge that the first five years of life are crucial in terms of a child growing and developing. In preschool, children are learning the basic skills needed to create a foundation for future academic success. This includes physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. It is important that children are given a quality education because what and how we teach, in that preschool environment, impacts the rest of their academic growth. This is the same for the relationship that is established with each child in your classroom and their family (Why

Is Early Childhood Education Important?, 2021).

Beyond Basic Skills. While preschool is all about creating the foundation of basic skills in children's development, the experiences go well beyond that. This is especially true if the classroom is one of high quality. For most children, this is their first large group interaction with peers, and this is the time they start learning social skills and empathy for others. Emotional regulation and communication are a large component of this area of development. Critical thinking

starts young and is often introduced to children around this time (What Do Children Learn in a High-Quality Preschool Program?, 2021). Outside of development, this is also a time that children may be allowed the freedom to explore the world and their interests. For other children, this may be the only time they have the opportunity to eat a nutritious meal or play outside in a safe environment.

**Interventions.** Many children in West Virginia can be considered at risk due to poverty levels, which makes this time period of development even more sensitive than it already is. By giving the opportunity for children to attend a program, it provides more chances for interventions to be presented to the child and family as a support in their development and growth. Depending on the severity, the earlier this intervention is introduced, the more favorable it will be in the child's success and achievement. There are a range of interventions depending on the need of the child and family, but all show benefits. These benefits can include increased academic achievement, school-ready behavior, educational progression and attainment, and reduced delinquency and crime (Karoly et al., 2005).

### **Qualifications**

Every state is different when it comes to the qualifications of educators, but in 2013 West Virginia started making changes to ensure that children are

being taught in quality classrooms. One of these changes was that all new, non-public lead teachers in a classroom must have a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Beginning in 2014, all assistant teachers must apply for the Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher Authorization, which the West Virginia Board of Education states as a Child Development Associate or equivalent to even be qualified to apply (The National Institute for Early Education Research, 2021). This does not include additional requirements that might be required by the county, state, or program of which you are applying.

### **Training, Licensing, and Other Resources**

On top of the qualifications that West Virginia and the program you are applying for requires, there are also other training and licensing regulations that must be completed and approved. Some of these trainings may be one or two times a year, where other trainings may be required year-round. There are also additional trainings in conferences that can be attended for professional development (Conferences and Events, 2021). In addition, there are licensing and regulations that are required of programs in the state of West Virginia. Some of these include the state level licensing through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources or a national level

through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Some programs might even go beyond that and determine their quality through national accreditation, which is also done through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Accreditation, 2021).

In addition to these trainings and licensing, there are also other resources available to educators to increase their quality of work in the classroom, as well as the environment itself. One of these resources is E-learning opportunities for educators provided through the West Virginia Department of Education (Early Childhood E-Learning Opportunities, 2021). Other resources that may be on a more personal level are blogs, YouTube channels, and magazine articles. It is now possible to learn and interact with educators around the country, and also internationally (Lynch, 2019).

### **Universal Preschool**

One thing that every county in West Virginia has, that not every state does, is Universal Pre-K. This means that all four-year-olds and three-year-olds with a disability are given the opportunity to attend free, public preschool. This legislation was passed in 2002 and fully expanded across the state by the 2012-2013 school year. In combination with this, it is required that at least 50 percent of the Universal Pre-K programs collaborate with

private kindergartens, child care centers, and Head Start Programs (Universal Pre-K, n.d.).

This is extremely important in West Virginia due to our poverty levels and lack of opportunity for some children. Fortunately, with additional funding this is an area that West Virginia does extremely well. We are ranked 6th in providing access for 4-year-olds to an education, with 68 percent of that age group being enrolled. West Virginia is also 15th for 3-year-olds, with 6 percent being enrolled. Our collaboration across the state within the community is at 82 percent. Based on the Quality Standard Checklist, West Virginia ranked 9 out of 10, making us a top state (The National Institute for Early Education Research, 2021).

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# Watch Me!

## Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns

A FREE Online Training Course



Early care and education providers play a critical role in the health and wellbeing of children in their care and their families.

**“Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns”** is a free, 1-hour online CEU course that helps early care and education providers better identify and monitor developmental milestones; recognize signs of potential delays; and share observations with parents. This training offers tools and best practices to support professionals and help children reach their full potential.

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

Learn the Signs.  
Act Early.



# West Virginia Announces Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation Initiative

Submitted by Joyce Tucker, Division of Early Care and Education

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), Division of Early Care and Education (ECE) is pleased to announce the Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation initiative. ECE in partnership with KEYS 4 HealthyKids, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the WV Breastfeeding Alliance recognizes the many benefits of breastfeeding and the important role it serves in obesity prevention.

As most employed mothers return to work during their baby's first year of life with limited or no support from employers with the breastfeeding process, child care providers can play a critical role in providing breastfeeding support. Through this initiative, child care providers will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of breastfeeding in order to better support mothers and families in their choice of infant feeding plans.

## West Virginia's Goals for Breastfeeding

Within DHHR's Bureau for Pub-



lic Health, the Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease set state-level goals regarding breastfeeding. The Division's Healthy People program reports 20.9 percent of infants in WV born in 2017 were breastfed exclusively through six months, compared to the national average at 25.6 percent. The goal for 2030 has been set at 42.4 percent. The same report shows 25.3 percent of West Virginia infants were breastfed at one year of age, compared with the national average at 35.3 percent. For the year 2030, it is hoped that this number will increase to 54.1 percent.

These goals can be achieved through education surrounding the many benefits for the child, family, community, and child care provider.

## Benefits of Breastfeeding

Benefits for both the mother and nursing baby are immediate and long lasting. The incredible bonding and sense of attachment that are formed through breastfeeding lay the foundation for future growth and emotional well-being for the child.

## Benefits for the Child

Breast milk provides the ideal nutrition for infants with the perfect mix of vitamins, protein, and fat. It is easy for the baby to digest and contains antibodies to help fight off viruses and bacteria and lowers the risk of asthma and allergies. Breastfed infants are noted as having fewer ear infections, respiratory illnesses, and bouts of diarrhea. Research also shows that breastfeeding reduces the

risk of diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and obesity.

### **Benefits for the Mother**

One of the most important benefits of breastfeeding for the mother is developing a special bond with her child. This quiet time provides opportunities for eye-to-eye and skin-to-skin contact, allowing both mother and child to feel more connected. Research also suggests that mothers who breastfeed often recover more quickly from pregnancy and have a faster return to pre-pregnancy weight. Long-term health benefits include decreased risk in certain types of breast and ovarian cancer, and a decreased risk of type 2 diabetes.

### **Benefits for the Community**

The community as a whole benefits from families who choose to breastfeed. The multiple health benefits

mean fewer doctor and hospital visits, as well as fewer prescriptions, leading to lower medical costs for both the employee and the employer. An added advantage of not using formula is less waste and trash accumulation from packaging, making for a cleaner environment.

### **Benefits for the Child Care**

#### **Program and Provider**

The child care provider, whether in a center, a facility or a home, will benefit from supporting families who choose to breastfeed. Healthier babies will have more regular attendance. As breastmilk is easier for the baby to digest, caregivers will notice less spit-up and less odor from bowel movements, making their job a little more pleasant.

By achieving the Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation and

supporting the mother's choice to breastfeed, prospective families will find the transition from home to work easier. It shows a commitment by the child care provider to the care and well-being of the child. Staff who are well informed on breastfeeding, the safe handling of breastmilk, and being in-tune to infant hunger cues will allow families to feel confident leaving their little one in care.

### **Sources**

- <https://www.babyfriendlyusa.org/for-facilities/practice-guidelines/10-steps-and-international-code/>
- <https://health.gov/healthypeople>
- [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)
- [www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)
- <https://scpitc.org> South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care, Breastfeeding Initiative



# The Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation

This voluntary program is open to all licensed child care centers, registered facilities, and family child care providers who choose to participate. Achieving this designation requires completion of ten steps. Each step is further explained on the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Professional Development Program website, [www.wvit.org](http://www.wvit.org), which also includes the eligibility application and other helpful information. There is help for each step along the way: Child Care Nurse Health Consultants, Child Care Health Educators, and Infant/Toddler Specialists are available to lend their expertise and support. Training, educational materials, and resources to create a breastfeeding space will be available. These steps do not have to be completed in order. Some steps you may already have in place; others will take some time and effort. Remember, the breastfeeding area does not have to be a dedicated space used solely for this purpose. It may be a separate room or simply a nook in the infant room created with a privacy screen. Always check with your licensing or regulatory specialist for approval before making changes to your space.

## The Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation

- Create a policy supporting breastfeeding.
- Train the staff about breastfeeding.
- Inform families of the importance of breastfeeding.
- Provide learning and play opportunities normalizing breastfeeding.
- Provide proper storage and handling of breastmilk.
- Provide a breastfeeding friendly environment.
- Support breastfeeding employees.
- Ensure that each infant has a feeding plan.
- Contact and coordinate with local breastfeeding support.
- Continue updates and learning about protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

Upon completion of the Ten Steps, each site will be awarded a bonus stipend, a certificate of designation and recognition during Great Beginnings Infant/Toddler Conference or the Celebrating Connections Conference. All centers, facilities, and family child care providers are encouraged to reach out to their local Infant/Toddler Specialists for more information.

# SAVE THE DATE

August 10 and 11, 2021 @ 8:00am for the release of

WV Behavior/Mental Health TAC Presents

## KEYNOTES FOR KEY PEOPLE

Take advantage of this virtual opportunity to hear from world renowned speakers and leaders on the topics of trauma, leadership, social/emotional learning, and self-care. The WV Behavior and Mental Health Technical Assistance Center in collaboration with the WVDE and the WV Autism Training Center is proud to bring Dr. Bruce Perry, Principal Linda Cliatt - Wayman, Dr. Marc Brackett, and WV's very own Erin Browning.



### COMING SOON

- Registration via Eventbrite
- YouTube link to the pre-recorded sessions (August 10 & 11, 2021 @ 8:00am) that will be accessible to **counties, schools, or individuals** at your convenience for 90 days
- Professional Development Packet (including a facilitator viewing guide) to share during PLC's, faculty training, or beginning of the year professional development
- Additional resources and information on how to obtain follow-up technical assistance

### SURPRISE SPECIAL GUEST!

Questions?  
Please Contact  
Amy Kelly  
[kelly9@marshall.edu](mailto:kelly9@marshall.edu)  
304.633.9365



West Virginia  
Behavior/Mental Health  
Technical Assistance Center

For speaker bio's please  
visit [www.marshall.edu/bmhtac](http://www.marshall.edu/bmhtac)

# West Virginia Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Train-the-Trainer Workshop

Submitted by Jodi Giancola, MS, CLC - WVIC State Office  
Breastfeeding Coordinator

On Wednesday, April 28, 2021, a three-hour West Virginia Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Train-the-Trainer virtual workshop was provided by Dr. Jamie Jeffrey MD, FAAP, Director of Keys 4 Healthy Kids; Molly McMillion RN, BSN, IBCLC, LCCE, CPST, Director of West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance and Special Projects Consultant for West Virginia Perinatal Partnership; Joyce M. Tucker, ITSN Coordinator, Division of Early Care and Education for WV DHHR; and Jodi Giancola MS, CLC, WVIC Breastfeeding Coordinator.

The training was adapted from The Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute and is part of a statewide workgroup intervention to help normalize breastfeeding in early child care centers to help increase initiation and duration of breastfeeding in West Virginia. The training served to educate on the benefits of breastfeeding for mother and infant, address personal feelings about breastfeeding, discuss proper storage and handling of breastmilk, how to normalize breastfeeding in the child care setting, paced bottle feeding, the Ten Steps for Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Center Designation, and how to access local community resources, including West Virginia WIC.

The training was a big success with 33 attendees, including Infant/Toddler Specialists, Quality Improvement Specialists, Nurses and Health Educators, and Traveling Resources and Information Library Services providers.

West Virginia WIC is excited to be a part of this statewide initiative.

# Putting Breastfeeding Support into Practice

Submitted by Helen Post-Brown, Sunbeam Early Learning Center



Research shows that breastfeeding is best for the growth and development of infants and offers many health benefits. As a caregiver, we play a vital role in supporting breastfeeding mothers.

At Sunbeam Early Learning Center, we support nursing mothers by:

- Talking with the mother to begin to understand her ideas and goals for breastfeeding.
- Reassure breastfeeding moms that they are doing the best thing for their baby.
- Encourage them to breastfeed as long as possible.

We have found that developing policies to encourage and support breastfeeding mothers help make the mother more comfortable. We discuss breastfeeding arrangements when a family enrolls at Sunbeam. We want families to know that we are breastfeeding friendly.

Mothers are encouraged to breastfeed at the center. We offer them a comfortable place to nurse or express milk. Because of our location, we have had very few mothers breastfeed at the center.

These policies and support are also extended to our teachers at the center. If a teacher wants to breastfeed, we give them the same encouragement as we would any of our families. They are offered time and a place to breastfeed.

# Learn the Signs. Act Early. (LTSAE) Digital Toolkit

CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program encourages parents and providers to learn the signs of healthy development, monitor every child's early development, and act early when there is a concern. The program offers free checklists and other tools to make developmental monitoring practical and easy.

## CDC's Milestone Tracker App

CDC's Milestone Tracker app, available in English and Spanish, provides a fun and easy way for parents and caregivers to track and support their child's early development from ages 2 months to 5 years.

[Click here to learn more >](#)



## Milestone Checklists

How a child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Families can use these checklists to track and celebrate their child's development and learn what to do if they ever have concerns.

[Available in Spanish >](#)

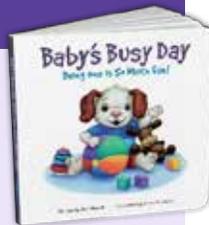
[Click here to download >](#)



## Information for Families

LTSAE has free tools to help families track their children's milestones. Visit this website for children's books, milestone checklists and more.

[Click here to learn more >](#)



## Concerned About Your Child's Development?

It is important to act early and talk to the doctor if there are ever any concerns about a child's development. This website provides information on how families can get help if they have concerns.

[Click here to learn more >](#)

## Developmental Monitoring and Screening

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends both developmental monitoring and developmental screening for all children. This fact sheet provides information in English and Spanish on the importance of both.

[Click here to learn more >](#)



## Early Intervention Information by State

Each state and territory has an early intervention program that provides free or low cost services and supports to children under age 3. This website provides more information on how families can have their child evaluated.

[Click here to learn more >](#)

## Videos, Social Media, and Web Buttons

These videos and digital assets from "Learn the Signs. Act Early." can be shared on your website, posted to social media, shown in waiting rooms, and included in presentations.

[Click here to learn more >](#)



## Milestones Matter with CDC and Vroom

This free poster from CDC and Vroom shares the importance of tracking children's development and using brain building tips to add learning to everyday moments.

[Available in Spanish >](#)

[Click here to download >](#)



For a list of all LTSAE's free materials, visit [www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Materials)



U.S. Department of Health  
and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention



# Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Sensitive Information with Families

Submitted by Kristy Stout, MS, LGSW and Sheila Zickefoose, MA, IMH-E

Developmental milestones are behaviors or skills that illustrate a child's growth in a number of areas. These milestones have been established based on what most children can do at a certain age. Examples are the age at which a child smiles for the first time, takes his first steps, or says his first words. Developmental delays exist when a child does not reach their milestones at about the same time as other children the same age. All children develop at their own pace. Some children achieve their developmental milestones earlier and some later than other children. Some are able to speak earlier than others, but walk later. Some children skip certain milestones, for example bypassing crawling almost completely and proceeding directly to walking. In spite of the many variations in child growth, failure to achieve developmental milestones at the expected times is an important "early warning" sign that should not be ignored.

In 2017, Zablotzky, et. al reported that 17.8 percent of children aged 3-17 in the United States, have a developmental or behavioral disability, and many more have delays in language or other areas. This equals to 1 in 6 children having 1 or more developmental disabilities (Zablotzky, et. al, 2017). Fewer than half of these children are identified before starting school. Recognizing when a child has missed a developmental milestone allows the parent to seek additional information, screening, evaluation, and if necessary, treatment for her child. Most developmental delays in children are not serious, and children eventually catch up with their peers. However, if a more serious delay or a disability is present, providing help early is important in helping the child reach his full potential.

As an early childhood educator, you recognize that early identification of developmental challenges and early intervention can make the most important impact on the growth and development of the young child. You are in a unique position to identify and monitor the development of children in your care. You may be the first one to identify potential developmental delays or you may have families asking you if you are concerned about their child's development. When you have a strong foundation in child development you are better able to support the child's learning, while also being able to answer questions the family may be asking of you. So, how do you build that foundational knowledge?

## Building Your Knowledge of Child Development

Developmental growth for children is understood through five domains:

- Adaptive – how children learn to participate in daily life skills, including meal times, hygiene, dressing, toileting, and sleeping
- Cognitive – how children learn new things and solve problems, including exploring their environment to figure things out as well as more academic skills like counting, learning letters, and numbers
- Communication – how children express their needs and share what they are thinking, as well as understanding what is said to them
- Physical – how children use their bodies, use their hands, and use their vision and hearing to understand and explore the world
- Social Emotional – how children interact with others and show emotion

- Each of these domains are as important as all others and it is essential for you to remember that development occurs in an integrated fashion, with children developing and mastering skills across all five domains at the same time. We learn about child development through life experience and through our professional development, and these authors believe that learning about child development should be a career long endeavor for early childhood professionals. What we need is to move beyond an initial level of competence as early childhood professionals (Katz, 1997). New research is published that assists us to understand more about how our little ones are learning and growing. Our practices in engaging and supporting them should also change in reaction to increasing research.

To stay abreast of current research there are many ways you can do this. Joining professional associations such as ZERO TO THREE, the National Association for Young Children, or the Council for Exceptional Children – Division of Early Childhood can be a few to consider. Each of these groups provide Online and print reports, resources, and tools to support you furthering your education and understanding of child development. Another option you have is to do some research on your own. Maybe you are interested in a specific area of development, a specific diagnosis, or individual approach to supporting a young child. Start on the Internet, relying on highly reputable websites to guide your reading and research. Finally, connecting with trusted colleagues and resources here in West Virginia can assist you to gather information, but to also have an opportunity to discuss with other professionals what you are reading and learning, and the implications for your work with children and families.

## Supporting Parents to Understand Child Development

As early childhood professionals, we also have a responsibility to inform families about child development. As previously mentioned, many of us learn first about child development from our life experiences. However, as an early childhood professional you have probably learned that experiential knowledge is not sufficient to truly support the development of young children. Many of our parents are in just that position, having little more than life experience information about child development. As a trusted care provider for their child, you are in a position to talk with families about child development and help them to understand their child's development over time.

Of course, to do this successfully you need to have that strong foundation in child development we previously discussed. That will give you the confidence to engage families in conversation when they ask questions about development and to simply provide information to all families. It also pays to be proactive in having resources to share with families. They may have only a few moments to talk with you and it may take a few days to arrange for time to sit down and have a conversation. So, ensuring the family has something at the tips of their fingers is critical. Regardless we want families to feel confident in asking questions and in acting early to address any concerns they have with their child's development.

First, it is important to support a family in monitoring their child's development. They will be gathering information from their child's physician, from you, and more specific information if they are participating in a WV Home Visitation program or WV Birth to Three. But most families will want to be proactive in keeping an eye on things. Milestone checklists from Learn the Signs -Act Early (2021) can be a great option to do this, as well as the free CDC Milestones Tracker app. These resources can also support a family in talking with their child's physician about their concerns. However, how should you approach talking with a family when you have concerns or need to share sensitive information with them?

### Sharing Sensitive Information with Families

Being a parent can be exciting and joyful, but there can also be times of stress. For parents, learning about their child's developmental delays or disabilities can be hard. It can bring up a variety of emotions and for some parents it might even be a time of a grieving. Part of our role in the early childhood field may be talking to families about concerns we have about their child's development or

developmental delays. Some parents may not be ready to hear this and some may not know how to process the information.

As early childhood professionals, we can make this process easier for families. In order to engage families, we need to have built trust with families first. Many times, we only have a short amount of time to do that. That means our first impressions with the family are incredibly important and will begin to build that trust. Our first phone call, our first conversations, and our first interactions will set the stage for building trust. We should listen to families and let them share their story with us. We can use open-ended questions and reflection to allow them to do most of the talking and let them know we are listening. Setting the stage in this way will allow for trust to develop and they will be more open to what we might have to share with them.

When we talk to families about concerns we might have about their child or their child's development, we should always begin by talking about the child's strengths. This gives the family a chance to see that you noticed what their child is doing and begins the conversation on a positive note. Point out specific things that you were able to see the child do or things the family told you. We always want to remember that this is their child, their baby, and this information may be hard to hear. We may even find it challenging ourselves to share this with families, unsure how they might react or respond. The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center identifies several ways to begin sharing this sensitive information with families. We can begin by asking parents their permission to share the information. We can also let them know that they can stop us at any point and ask questions. We should also be flexible. We may have an agenda, or a plan and we need to be ready to change that plan. The family may need to process the information you are sharing so keep checking in with them to ensure they are okay.

Sharing this type of information in person can be challenging and when we are sharing virtually it can be even more difficult. When we are able to talk to families in person about concerns or delays, we have a chance to engage with them and interact with their child. We may not feel as connected with families if we have only engaged with them via phone or video so we may not feel we have that same level of trust or rapport built. Families may feel this as well and may be anxious about what we will say. It can be challenging to observe the stress levels of the family as we are sharing so we have to ensure we are checking in with the family as we are talking. If we are sharing information virtually, we should try to use video as much as we can so that we can observe how the family is reacting

and acknowledge when they might need a break. We can use open ended questions to see how they are doing as we share and allow them time to process and ask us questions. We still want to ask permission to share and be as flexible as possible. There may be technology hiccups and parents may have to attend to their child's needs. If we can be observant and flexible, it will be a less stressful experience for everyone (Brookes Publishing, n.d.).

Families want what is best for their children, but that does not mean that it is always an easy process. It can be hard learning about how your child is not meeting their developmental milestones or other concerns. For those of us working in the field of early childhood, while we may not be able to understand what families are going through, we can provide empathy to families and let them know that we are a support for them and their child and make the experience as positive as we can (Brooks Publishing, n.d.).

### Resources for Learning About Child Development

- WV Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) - <https://www.wvacds.org/>
- WV State Training and Registry System – <http://www.wvstars.org>
- Professional Organizations/Associations
- Council for Exceptional Children – Division of Early Childhood - <https://www.dec-sped.org/>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children – <https://www.naeyc.org/>
- WV Association for Young Children - <http://www.wvayc.net/>
- Southern Early Childhood Association - <https://www.seca.info/>
- ZERO TO THREE – <http://www.zerotothree.org>

### Resources for Sharing Information with Families

- Centers for Disease Control - Learn the Signs Act Early – <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/>
- Developmental Milestones Information - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- Free materials about Child Development - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/freematerials.html>
- Milestone Tracker App - <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center - <https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/ti-service.asp>
- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs>

- gov/publication/engaging-families-conversations-about-sensitive-topics
- WV Help Me Grow - <https://dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow/Pages/default.aspx>

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# Do you know a child who is not \*moving \*hearing \*seeing \* learning or \*talking like others their age?

By 3 months,

Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,

Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,

Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,

Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,

Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,

Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

**Every child deserves a great start.**

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

To learn more about the  
WV Birth to Three services  
in your area, please call:

**1-866-321-4728**

Or visit [www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

# Water Safety for Children

A Capstone Article submitted by Brooke Belcher, student of Dr. Janet Dozier at Marshall University

Summer is the time of the year that many look forward to as it gives us the chance to take a break, get rest, and have fun alongside our families. However, unlike people, danger doesn't take a break or go on summer vacation, so parents and child care providers should always be alert about the safety of children, especially when they are around swimming areas such as pools, lakes, and beaches (Gaida & Gaida, 2016). Thus, the safety of children around water is an important concern, especially during summertime.

## General Safety Measures

### Around Water

The most important precaution around any water source is not leaving any child of any age unattended around water (Merkel et al., 2012). It doesn't matter how good of a swimmer the child is (Moran, 2009). Even the best professional swimmers could make mistakes, could have muscle cramps, or might experience accidents (Moran, 2009). Do not forget that even professional swimmers in competitions get in the pool under the surveillance of healthcare professionals (Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2000).

The following measures are general precautions to keep children safe around water:

- Never leave children of any age unattended around water
- Apply a buddy system in order not to lose control over children
- Never leave an older child to supervise the younger child in or around water
- Take your child with you if you have to leave the venue
- Empty small swimming pools when not in use
- Make sure to be able to swim good enough to rescue a child or two in case of an emergency or have someone who can in case of need for help
- Teach children how to swim or enroll them in swimming courses/lessons
- Don't swim in dangerous or restricted areas

- Do not let your children dive into water
- Always have rescue items such as inflatable swimming armband, inflatable swimming rings or lifebuoys, diving goggles, and swimming snorkels
- Make sure to know how to perform basic CPR or have someone around who can
- Do not encourage children to play dangerously around water, falsely claim they need help, or act to be in an emergency situation
- Always be alert about allergic reactions to pool chemicals

Swimming pools are often surrounded by tiles which can be slippery when wet. Therefore, around swimming pools, the most important issue could easily be considered to be balance (Burd, 1986). The "don't leave children unattended" rule is always valid (Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2000). In addition, running, pushing, and dunking should be strictly forbidden for everyone, and these rules should be taught to children as well (Moran, 2009).

### Safety Around Lakes

Safety around lakes is quite similar. However, there are some important additions. Lakes contain the danger of sudden deepening and quicksand (Committee on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2000). Therefore, in addition to the precautions at pools, parents and child care providers should be aware of the danger caused by these two factors. Quicksand is a real danger even for grownups (Gaida & Gaida, 2016). Thus, it is highly recommended not to take the risk and go swimming near areas that include the risk of quicksand.

Being cautious is of utmost importance while around water, especially if you have children with you. Abiding with these precautions and being aware of the dangers are the best ways to avoid dangerous situations.

One other important point is an allergic response of infants/children, which could cause a panic situation. It is possible for some children to have an allergic reaction to pool water since it contains chemicals. The most efficient way to keep children safe is taking them to swim only to places that offer emergency health services.

Again, the best precaution is to never leave children unattended around water.

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



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

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

## Why should I pursue Endorsement?

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

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

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

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

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## The IMH Competencies® naturally align with Early Childhood work

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

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

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

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**For more information, please contact the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association or visit [www.nurturingwvbabies.org](http://www.nurturingwvbabies.org)**

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



## Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

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

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

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

**Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522**  
**[www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow)**



# Help Me Grow

West Virginia



# Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

Volume 17, Issue 3, Spring 2021

## The Benefits of Breastfeeding

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, breastfeeding is good for both infants and mothers. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants. As an infant grows, breast milk changes to meet

the infant's nutritional needs. Breastfeeding can also help protect the infant and mother against certain illnesses and diseases.

### Benefits to Infants

Infants who are breastfed have a lower risk of:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Type 1 diabetes
- Severe lower respiratory disease
- Acute ear infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome
- Gastrointestinal infections

### Benefits for Mothers

Mothers who breastfeed their infants have a lower risk of:

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

- Reprinted from [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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

Permission to photocopy



# CDC'S WORK TO SUPPORT & PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING IN HOSPITALS, WORKSITES, & COMMUNITIES

## THE PROBLEM

**1 IN 4**

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

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



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



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

### BENEFITS FOR INFANTS

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

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



### BENEFITS FOR MOTHERS

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of:

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



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

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

## MOTHERS NEED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THEIR BREASTFEEDING JOURNEY

**60%** of mothers stop breastfeeding sooner than they planned.



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

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

# What are developmental milestones?

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

Developmental milestones are guidelines for skills a child may develop around particular ages. Milestones are developed around **movement** (ex. raises head and neck when lying on stomach), **visual** (ex. grasps

objects dangling in front of him), **language** (ex. points to object or picture when it's named for her), **cognitive** (ex. begins to sort shapes and colors), and **social/emotional** (ex. demonstrates increasing independence). It is important to remember that each child develops differently (even within families) and in his or her own way. Being aware of milestones, will help you track your child's development and growth.

Daily learning opportunities don't require a lot of special equipment or

detailed planning. Just take advantage of learning opportunities that happen naturally. You can turn these times into teachable moments. When you use daily events and routines that have meaning to your children, the impact is very powerful.

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

## Help your child grow and thrive

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

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

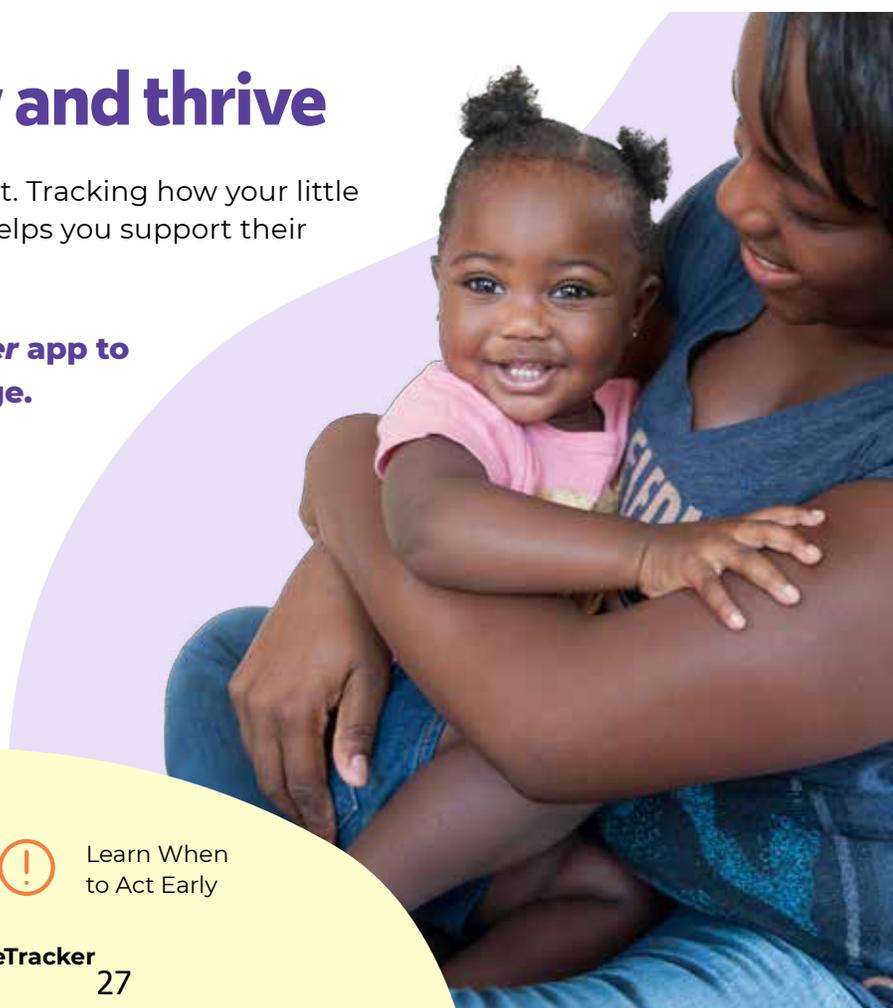


 Track & Share Milestones

 Get Tips & Activities

 Learn When to Act Early

Learn more at [cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker](https://www.cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker)



## Concerned about Development?

# How to Get Help for Your Child



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

### 1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

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

### 2 Complete a milestone checklist

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

### 3 During the doctor's appointment

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

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

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

## You Know Your Child Best

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

Talk with another doctor to get a second opinion

### AND

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

- **If your child is under age 3:**

Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at [www.cdc.gov/FindEI](http://www.cdc.gov/FindEI).

- **If your child is age 3 or older:**

Call the local public elementary school.

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

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit [www.cdc.gov/Concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).

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



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

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



Download CDC's  
Milestone Tracker App



Learn the Signs. Act Early.