

# Parent Blocks

## NEWSLETTER



"Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia"

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## Why It's Important to Take Care of Baby Teeth

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Oral Health, [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

Seeing your baby's first tooth is an exciting milestone! Most little ones will get their first (primary) teeth around 6 months of age, though tiny teeth can emerge as early as 3 months.

Did you know that cavities can develop as soon as your baby has teeth? Since baby teeth will eventually fall out, it might not seem all that important to take good care of them. But as it turns out, your child's first teeth are essential to the health of their permanent teeth—and the foundation for lifelong health.

These are just some of the reasons to

take extra-good care of your child's first (primary) teeth. Read on to learn more.

How do cavities develop in baby teeth? Cavities can form when the shiny surface of our teeth—the enamel—is harmed by common bacteria living in our mouths. The bacteria feed on sugary substances left behind from what we eat and drink. In the process, they create acids that attack tooth enamel, opening the door for tooth decay to start.

Even the natural sugars in breast milk and formula can kick-start the process of tooth decay. And even though primary teeth start falling out when kids are around 6 years old, what happens before then will influence your child's dental health over the long term. Research shows that diet and dental hygiene habits during a child's infant and toddler years reduces the risk of tooth decay as they become older.

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# How to Get Your Child To Eat More Fruits and Veggies

Source Adapted from Pediatric Obesity: Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Strategies for Primary Care  
www.healthychildren.org

We all know that eating fruits and vegetables is important. But how do you get kids to eat more of these foods?

## Tips for Parents:

Provide fruits and vegetables as snacks. Keep fruit washed, cut up and in plain sight in the refrigerator.

Serve salads more often. Get prewashed, bagged salad at the grocery store. Teach your child what an appropriate amount of salad dressing is and how it can be ordered on the side.

Try out vegetarian recipes for spaghetti, lasagna, chili, or other foods using vegetables instead of meat.

Include at least one leafy green or yellow vegetable for vitamin A such as spinach, broccoli, winter squash, greens, or carrots each day.

Include at least one vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable, such as oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, melon, tomato, and broccoli each day.

Add a fruit or vegetable as part of every meal or snack. For example,



you could put fruit on cereal, add a piece of fruit or small salad to your child's lunch, use vegetables and dip for an after-school snack, or add a vegetable or two you want to try to the family's dinner.

Be a role model—eat more fruits and vegetables yourself.

## More Things You Can Do:

Be sure your child is getting the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables each day. Visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) to find out how much of each food group your child should be getting.

When shopping for food, start in the area of the store where they keep fresh fruits and vegetables.


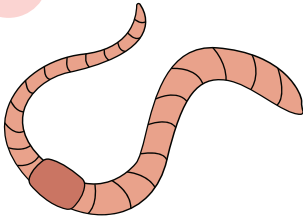










Stock up. That way you know you always have some on hand to serve your child.

Avoid buying high-calorie foods such as chips, cookies, and candy bars. Your child may not ask for these treats if they are not in sight.

Limit or eliminate how much fruit juice you give your child and make sure it is 100% juice, not juice "drinks."

Eat as a family whenever possible. Research shows that kids eat more vegetables and fruits and less fried foods and sugary drinks when they eat with the entire family.

# GARDENING SCAVENGER HUNT

 <p>Plant</p>	 <p>Worm</p>	 <p>Butterfly</p>
 <p>Flower</p>	 <p>Seed</p>	 <p>Lady Bug</p>
 <p>Snail</p>	 <p>Rock</p>	 <p>Ant</p>
 <p>Watering Can</p>	 <p>Gardening Tools</p>	 <p>Gloves</p>

# Planting Seeds for Healthy Eating

## Benefits of Gardening

- Increased Fruit and Vegetable Consumption
- Nutrition Knowledge
- Adds Responsibility
- Sensory Experience
- Math, Science, and Nature
- Physical Movement
- New Words
- Teamwork

## Plants to avoid with children

- ✓ Nightshades-Tomatoes, peppers, and potatoes
- ✓ Rhubarb
- ✓ Jicama
- ✓ Beans - Kidney, Lima
- ✓ Eggplant

**\*These plants pose a toxicity risk**

[www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org)



## Types of Gardens



### In-ground\*

Planting directly into the ground. This is typically the most labor intensive.



### Raised Beds\*

Grown in raised beds. Less labor due to less weeds and not being ground level. Increased growing season as the dirt warms faster.



### Containers

Grown in containers. Eliminates most weeds and is more controlled since plants can be moved around. Produces less. Make sure to use food grade containers



### Indoor Garden

Grown indoors in pots. Requires a good light or a growing lamp. Can help with short growing seasons.

\*Check with licensing for space requirements. 12.3