

# Child Health and Safety Supplement Guide

*This guide provides a summary of information to keep kids healthy and safe in every environment and meets the Federal CCDF and State requirements for Health and Safety.*



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**





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## Medication Management

Before giving medication to a child get permission to give the medication from the parent.



Many errors are caused by not following the directions on the medication's label. Always read the label and carefully follow instructions.



Ensure the medication is appropriate for the child's symptoms and for the child's age and weight.



Be sure you're giving the correct dose. Use a measuring tool like a measuring cup, syringe, dropper, or dosing spoon. Kitchen spoons are not accurate and should not be used to give medication.



Medication errors are mistakes that harm or have the potential to harm a child. Keep a written log when you give medication to avoid these common errors:

- Giving the medication twice.
- Giving the wrong dose.
- Or forgetting to give the medication.

It's also important to remember to carefully store medication according to the directions on the label as some medication can look like candy to children. Never leave medication unsecured or unattended.



## Water Safety

Children love playing with water and water play is a great way to learn. Anytime a child is around water active supervision from caregivers is needed to keep children safe.



Young children are top-heavy and lack the strength to lift themselves out of a pool, puddle, sink, bucket, or toilet. Drowning is a leading cause of death in young children and can happen in only a few inches of water.

Active supervision is the key to keeping children safe around water.

### Water Safety Tips

- Empty water from buckets and containers when not in use and store items that can hold water upside down.
- When swimming or boating have children wear a life vest. You should always have parent permission for these activities.
- After play, remove toys from the water so children are not tempted to reach for them.
- Drain the water from sinks and bathtubs.
- Keep the toilet seat down and if possible install a seat latch.
- Children can get into trouble in the blink of an eye.



**If a child has stopped breathing immediately begin CPR and call 911!**

## Emergencies

Emergencies can occur anytime and anywhere. Would you be ready if there is a fire or an earthquake, or if the weather became severe? What if a factory down the street has a chemical leak, or police are searching for a dangerous person in the area? How would you and/or your staff know what to do?

Being prepared for emergencies includes **planning** for the types of emergencies you might face and how you will communicate with others during an emergency, learning how to **prepare** supplies, and **practicing** how to react in emergencies, such as a fire or earthquake.



Planning begins by identifying the types of disasters that might occur in your area. For example, areas along the coast need to plan for tsunamis or floods, those close to forests need to plan for forest fires, and earthquakes or flooding can happen anywhere. Man-made disasters such as a nuclear chemical leak or a dangerous person in the area could affect your area. Build a plan that describes the procedures you will take during an emergency.



Facing unexpected and emergency situations in child care is an expected part of your job. By being prepared with appropriate supplies and a plan-of-action, you will be better prepared in case of an emergency. Gather supplies, such as emergency contact information, a first aid kit or a 'grab-and-go' bag, and keep them current and ready in case of an emergency.



By practicing emergency drills regularly in your care environment and knowing an evacuation route, you will be ready to respond. This can be as easy as walking through the care environment and identifying at least two ways to evacuate the area or practicing procedures that keeps a person or child safe in case of an earthquake.

### Always Stay Informed

The following websites and apps for your phone provide important weather and emergency information:

- Ready.Gov/alerts: [www.ready.gov/alerts](http://www.ready.gov/alerts)
- National Weather Service Email and SMS Weather Alert Services: [www.weather.gov/subscribe](http://www.weather.gov/subscribe)
- American Red Cross Mobile Apps: [www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps](http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps)



# Transporting Children

Transporting children in a vehicle is a big responsibility. Before driving make sure you:

- Have a valid driver's license
- Have a current auto insurance policy
- Have not or will not use alcohol, drugs, or any substance that could impair your driving abilities
- Make sure you do not have a medical condition that would compromise safe driving



## Car Seats and Booster Seats

In an accident, a child is much safer when restrained in a properly installed, age and weight-appropriate car or booster seat in the back seat of the car. For safety of children, Washington law requires:

Infants	Required until age 2	Ride in rear-facing infant seat in backseat
Small children	From 2 to 4 years of age	Ride in forward-facing child care seat in back seat
Children	4 years and older	Ride in car or booster seat until they are 4'9" and be in the backseat
Older Children	Up to the age of 13	Ride in the back seat when practical to do so.

## Car Safety



### Never leave children alone in a vehicle.

Running quick errands may seem easier if the children are left waiting in the car.

However, leaving a child unattended in a car is dangerous. Even after a short time, the temperature in a car can rise rapidly and can cause heat stroke or death. After a trip make sure everyone has exited the vehicle.

## Distracted Driving

**1 in 4** crashes involve cellphone use just before the crash according to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission. They also reported an increase in distraction-related crashes and fatalities when drivers are distracted by a phone.



Always pull over to use your cell phone or attend to other items that need your attention.



Never smoke around children, including in the car.



## Vehicular Traffic

### Street and Parking Lot Safety

It is important to teach children not to play in or near the street or parking lots. Active Supervision also means you are aware of the surroundings and ways you need to keep children safe.



- Teach children to watch for cars.
- Explain that children must never go into the street alone and must ask for help if a toy or ball rolls into the street or driveway.
- When crossing the street, have children wait for the group and your permission before stepping off the curb.
- When using public playgrounds, know where the parking lot and nearby streets are. Know the barriers surrounding the park to keep a child safe.

## Food Allergies

According to the Food Allergy Research and Education network, 1 in 13 children in the United States have food allergies. A food allergy is an immune system reaction from eating a certain food or food ingredient. Even a tiny amount of the allergy-causing food can trigger signs and symptoms such as itchy or watery eyes, red, swollen, dry, or itchy skin, upset stomach, cramps or throwing up.



### Severe Allergic Reaction

In some cases, exposure to an allergen can cause a life-threatening reaction known as anaphylaxis. This severe reaction happens when an over-release of internal body chemicals puts the person into shock.

Anaphylaxis symptoms occur suddenly and can progress quickly. The early symptoms may be mild, such as a runny nose, a skin rash or a “strange feeling.” These symptoms can quickly lead to more serious problems.

### Signs of a Severe Allergic Reaction

- Trouble breathing
- Hives or swelling
- Tightness of the throat
- Hoarse voice
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Low blood pressure
- Rapid heart beat
- Feeling of doom
- Cardiac arrest



Call 911 for any severe allergic reaction.



## Immunizations

Immunizations are one of the greatest medical success stories in human history. Immunizations have saved millions of lives and have prevented illness and lifelong disabilities in millions more.

Immunizations protect you, children, families, and the community from diseases that can be prevented.

As an adult who takes care of children, it is especially important that you are healthy, get recommended vaccinations and regular doctor check-ups. This goes for children as well.

Visit your primary care provider to learn more about the immunization schedule.



For more information on immunizations visit the Washington State Department of Health's website at: [www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov).



## Shaken Baby



It's normal for babies to cry several hours a day. This can be very stressful, but an adult taking care of a baby should never shake a baby to try to quiet the baby.

Shaken Baby Syndrome, also known as abusive head trauma, is a preventable and severe form of physical child abuse that results in an injury to the brain of an infant or small child.

It is caused by a larger person violently shaking a baby or by blunt impact to a baby's head. Shaking a baby may cause internal injuries to the brain that leave no visible signs. Even though the shaking may last only a few seconds, it can result in severe injury or death.

As a caregiver, you are a mandated reporter. This means you are **required** by Washington State law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.



If you suspect child abuse or neglect call 1-866-ENDHARM. The ENDHARM intake line is answered by trained staff who can discuss your concerns.

## Trauma and Resilience

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, can have a tremendous impact on healthy development. Research has shown that children who are exposed to ongoing, serious childhood traumas can experience toxic stress that harms their developing brain and overall health.

Frequent exposure to trauma:

- Reduces ability to learn and figure things out
- Lowers tolerance for stress
- Increases difficulty making friends and maintaining relationships
- Increases problems with memory
- Reduces the body's ability to fight infections
- Causes lasting health problems

Resilience can bring back health and hope!



### What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability of an individual or community to recover from stress and return to being healthy and hopeful after bad things have happened. It is the counterbalance of trauma. If caregivers provide their children with a safe environment and teach them how to be resilient, they can reduce the effects of exposure to trauma.

### What Can You Do?

1. Respond to behaviors with empathy
2. Look for underlying causes of behavior
3. Help children identify feelings and manage emotions
4. Create a sense of safety
5. Take care of yourself
6. Support the child in making social connections

### Interested in Learning More?

- ACES 101: [acestoohigh.com/aces-101/](http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101/)
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard: [developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/)
- Resilience Trumps ACEs: [www.resiliencetrumpsACEs.org](http://www.resiliencetrumpsACEs.org)
- CDC—Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acesstudy/](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acesstudy/)

# Homelessness



Did you know that 1 in 45 children in the US is experiencing homelessness? Or that over 50% of children in federally-funded homeless shelters are five years old or younger?

Homelessness is a very serious problem facing Washington state communities and the country.

## Who is Considered Homeless?

Families who are lacking a nighttime residence that is:

- Permanent and not subject to change
- Used on a regular or nightly basis
- Sufficient for meeting physical, social and emotional needs would typically be met in home environments

Homelessness also includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to lack of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.

## Factors that may Contribute to Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Low wages and job instability
- Domestic violence
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Natural disaster
- Chronic family illness



## Impact of Homelessness on Children

- Higher rates of serious illness
- Slower development
- Physical, mental & emotional difficulties

Children who are homeless may be frequently tired, seem overly hungry and may need to be reassured that food will be provided. You may also see changes in their physical appearance, with clothing or shoes that are not clean or ill-fitting. They may also miss more program time, and show gaps in skill development.

## Resources to Share with Families

### 2-1-1 Washington

Information about health and human services, referrals and other types of assistance for Washington residents.

<https://wa211.org>

### ParentHelp123

Information about health care, food benefits, immunization and other resources important to child development and families.

[www.parenthelp123.org](http://www.parenthelp123.org)

## Cultivating Compassion

Children rely on the adults who care for them to be consistent in our behavior, calm and compassionate. When we are hungry, angry, lonely, tired or just stressed out, it is a challenge to be our best.

Taking care of children is very rewarding and very emotional work. Remember, your ability to empathize, show compassion, and model positive behavior molds the way children learn to manage their own feelings and establish meaningful social connections later in life. It is important that you take care of yourself and protect your ability to show up in the best possible way for children. The way you recharge yourself will be unique to you, and it will help preserve your ability to be compassionate.

### What Can You Do?

- Take a few deep breaths – deep breathing helps reduce feelings of stress and tension.
- Follow the 10-foot rule. Place the child in a safe place and walk 10 feet away until you have calmed down.
- Talk to someone. It can help to share your thoughts and feelings.
- Go for a walk with the child. Exercise and physical movement can release stress — for both you and the child.
- Keep a tea bag with cinnamon or chamomile handy, the scent can calm tension.
- Try a mindfulness exercise. For example: find five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, one thing you can taste.
- Rest—take time for your body to relax helps you re-charge.
- Find others caring for children—you can support each other and the children can enjoy and learn from each other.



### Think About It

Self-care can be one of the most effective ways to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout.

- What helps you stay calm and compassionate?
- Who do you know you can turn to when you feel stress?
- What's something new you want to try to manage your stress?

Thank you for the work that you do!



For additional resources, visit:  
[www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-profdev/early-learning-provider/training-library](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-profdev/early-learning-provider/training-library)





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The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families believes that all children and youth should grow up safe and healthy — thriving physically, emotionally and academically, nurtured by family and community.

[www.dcyf.wa.gov](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov)

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