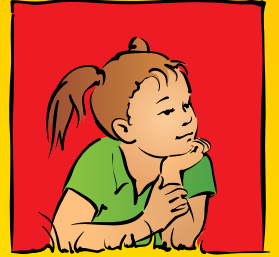


# From Birth to Kindergarten:



How to Make Sure  
Your Child is Healthy  
and Ready to Learn



The booklet is provided by the  
Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County  
through a partnership with the  
Winter Park Health Foundation.

# From Birth to Kindergarten:

How to Make Sure Your Child  
is Healthy and Ready to Learn



## New babies are a joy!

It's only natural for your joy to be mixed with worries about how to make sure your baby grows up to be as healthy, smart and happy as possible.

Families play an important role in making this happen. You are your baby's first and most important teacher, and the teaching begins as soon as your baby's eyes open.



You probably know how to take care of basic needs such as feeding your baby and changing diapers. But it's also important to help your baby's body, brain and feelings develop. The things you do in these early years will help your child get off to a good start the first day of kindergarten.



Babies who don't get the love and attention they need may fall behind before they ever start school. And they may never catch up.

Your child's success in school is tied to YOU! You can make sure your child is "Healthy and Ready to Learn."

We hope this booklet will help.

It will show you:

- signs that your baby is developing well
- ways to help your baby grow
- where to find information and places to get help

- where to call to find an economical source of medical care

- where to call for help finding good child care

Don't forget to check out the resources at the back of the book. They tell you who to call if your child is not developing as fast as you think he or she should, where to get affordable medical care, where to learn about good child care and preschool programs, and where to find information on the Internet.

We hope you will refer to this book over and over again as your baby grows up.

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# How to Use This Book

Each section covers a time period in your child's life: Newborn to 6 months; 6 months to 1 Year; 1 to 2 Years; 2 to 3 Years; 3 to 4 Years; and 4 to 5 years of age.

Read the section that applies to your child's age and share this information with everyone who helps take care of your child.

In each section you will find the kinds of things most children are able to do by that age.



	<b>Healthy Child:</b> Throughout this book, when you see this symbol representing a healthy child, you will find a list of things most children are doing at each age. You will also find ways you can help your child grow up healthy.
	<b>Smart Child:</b> When you see this symbol representing a smart child, you will find a list of things most children are doing at each age. You will also find ways you can help your child grow up smart.
	<b>Happy Child:</b> When you see this symbol representing a happy child, you will find a list of things most children are doing at each age. You will also find ways you can help your child grow up happy.

All of this will help your child be successful in school.

Not all children do the same things at the same time. If your child isn't doing a lot of the things mentioned, you may want to talk to your doctor.

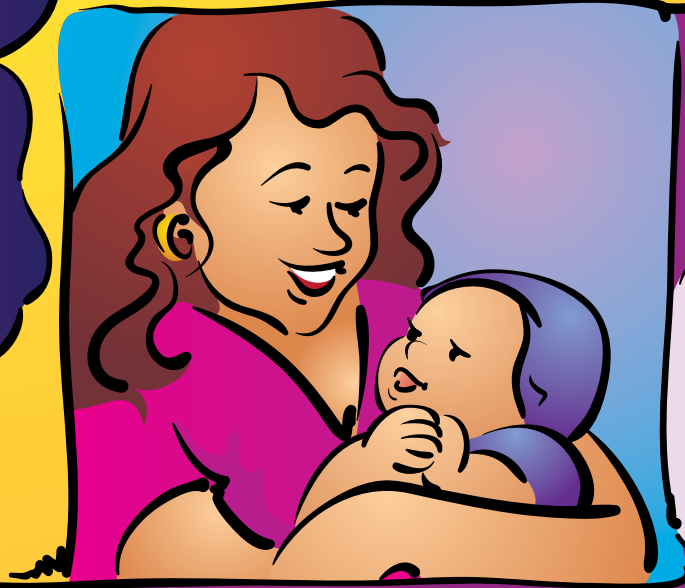
# 0 to 6 Months

The first six months are some of the most exciting for mom and dad and the rest of the family. Your baby seems to change daily.

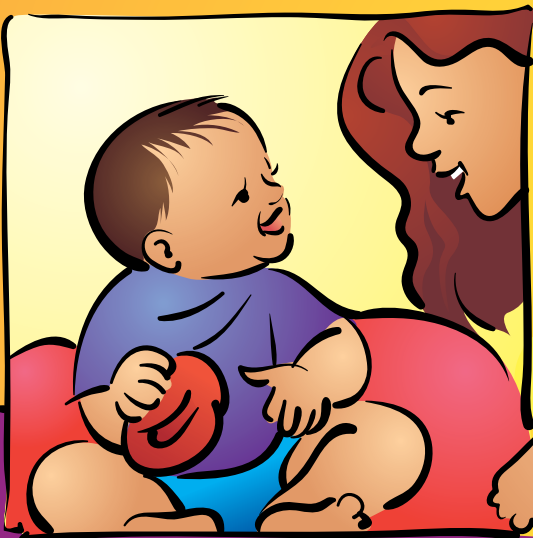


By the age of six months, you may see your baby...

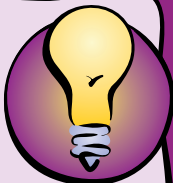
- Sit up with a little help
- Start to crawl
- Pick up toys with one hand
- Smile



# 0 to 6 Months



- React to his name
- Babble using lots of sounds
- Look to see where a dropped object lands

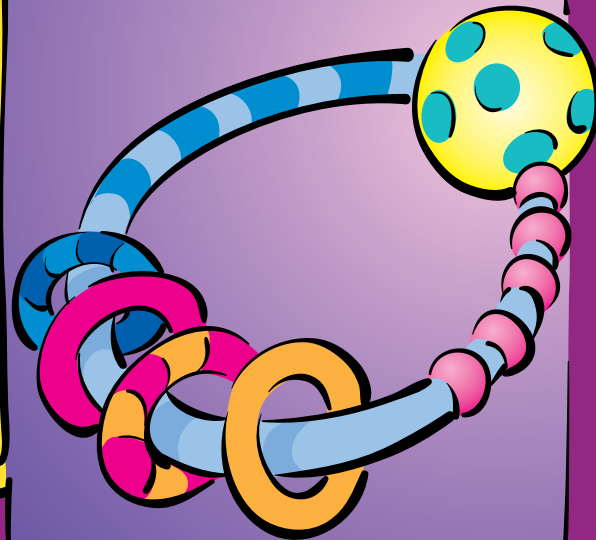


- Get excited when he sees you
- Frown or cry when he is scared
- Look serious or frightened when a stranger gets close

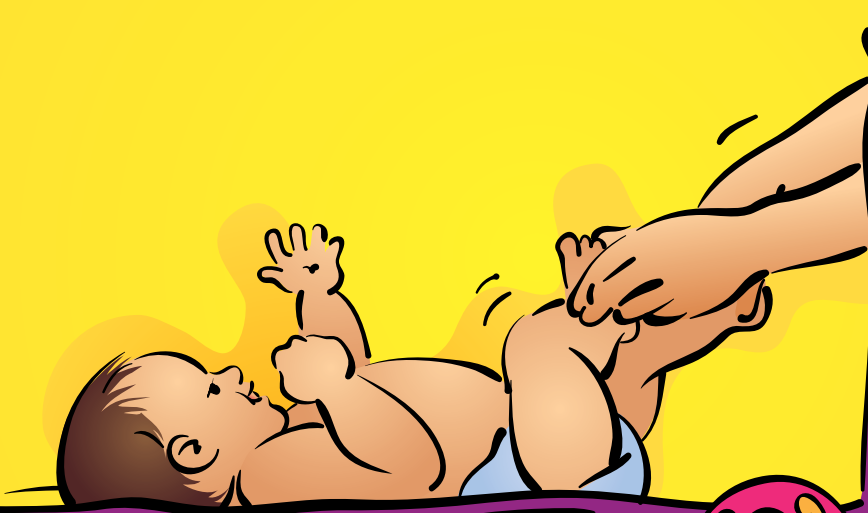


## Some toys for learning:

- Rattles with handles
- Toys that make sounds
- Cloth and cardboard books
- Activity centers



# You can help...



- Give him safe things to grab and hold
- When awake, place him in different positions
- While on his back, pedal his legs gently



- Talk to him face-to-face
- Sing to him
- Have "conversations" with him, giving him time to babble a response







Talk to your doctor if your baby:

- Can't roll over
- Has trouble lifting his head
- Doesn't turn his head in the direction of sound

Safety Tip:

Take a course in safety and infant CPR

- Laugh and smile with him
- Hold and talk to him at feeding time
- Play peek-a-boo



# 6 Months to 1 year

Babies are on the move as they reach their first birthday.



What your baby may do by age one...

- Sit without help
- Creep or even walk with help
- Feed herself with finger foods

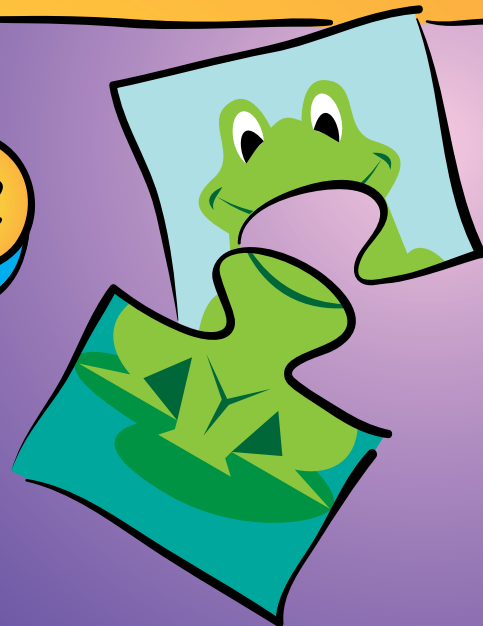




- Say short words like "mama" and "dada"
- Like being read to
- Enjoy songs
- Drop things on purpose
- Try to build with blocks
- Copy actions like blowing a kiss



- Get upset when you leave
- Be interested in other children
- Recognize when you are pleased and not pleased



Some toys for learning:

- Push and pull and pop-up toys
- Washable cloth toys and dolls
- Simple two- and three-piece puzzles

6 Months to 1 year

# You can help...



- Provide clean, safe areas for crawling and exploring
- Provide an area with sturdy furniture so she can practice standing up
- Set out action toys such as busy boxes



- Talk to her often
- Read short books to her
- Make a sound and encourage her to copy you

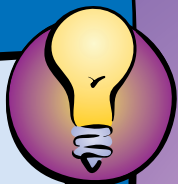




Talk to your doctor if your baby doesn't:

- Make eye contact
- Babble
- Crawl
- Use single words like "mama" or "dada"
- Point or use gestures like waving bye bye

- Give her buckets and cups for dumping and filling
- Play games by dropping and hiding toys
- Ask her to do simple things like come to you



Safety tip:

Closely watch her near animals, lawnmowers, driveways, garage doors and streets.

6 Months to 1 year

# 1 to 2 years

As babies grow into toddlers they are up and running! And they become more independent all the time. But they like to have a routine.



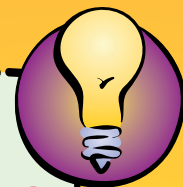
By two years, you may see your toddler...

- Walking without help
- Dancing to music
- Helping dress himself



- Put two word sentences together
- Ask "why?" a lot!
- Understand sentences and answer simple questions
- Imitate you when you make a face

- Point to objects to show interest
- Refer to himself by his own name
- Can name his favorite things

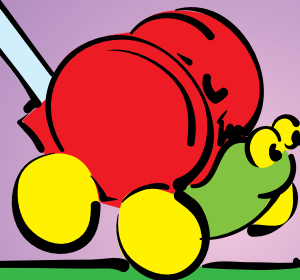


- Likes being around children, but mainly to watch them
- Notices when others are upset
- Is more comfortable with strangers



## Some toys for learning:

- Large push and pull toys
- Sand and water play materials
- Shape sorters and containers to nest
- Toy tool bench or kitchen
- Picture books



1 to 2 years



# You can help...



- Dance and clap with him
- Help him build with blocks
- Let him try dressing himself



- Give lots of hugs, smiles and praise
- Let him help with easy chores
- Set up regular routines to provide structure



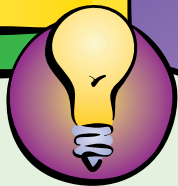




## Talk to your doctor if your child:

- Doesn't use two-word sentences
- Doesn't pretend play
  - Can't push a wheeled toy
  - Doesn't respond to his name
  - Doesn't point or bring objects to you

- Read at least one picture book a day
- Sing songs that use hands and feet
- Provide toys like things grown-ups use
- Provide things that can be used for make-believe play
- Name and point to his body parts



## Safety tip

Be sure to cover all electrical outlets and keep poisonous items locked up. Keep handbags out of reach.

# 2 to 3 years

Toddlers grow into friendly, talkative three-year-olds. If they aren't in day care or a preschool program, parents should think about finding a program. See the Resource section for a list of preschools.



By three years, you may see your child...

- Running, jumping and galloping
- Using left and right feet while climbing stairs
- Catching a ball with both hands



# 2 to 3 years



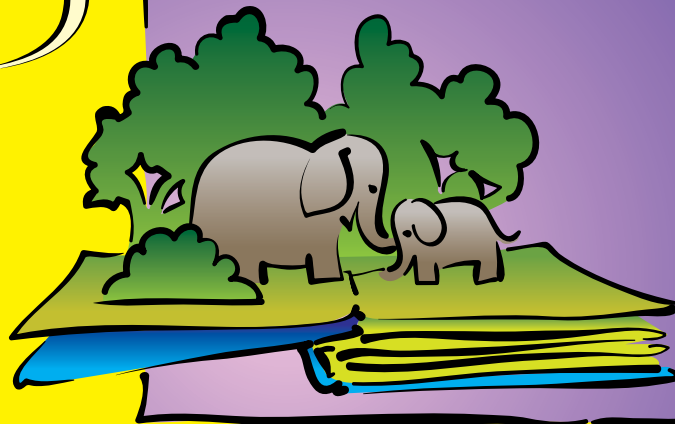
- Play side-by-side with children
- Ask for grown-up help to solve problems
- Show concern for and help a friend who falls



## Some toys for learning:

- Wooden and hollow blocks
- Puzzles with eight to 20 pieces
- Lots of picture and pop-up books

- Know her favorite book by its cover
- Scribble on paper and tell about what she wrote
- Use short sentences to ask and answer questions
- Sort blocks by color
- Identify several shapes and colors



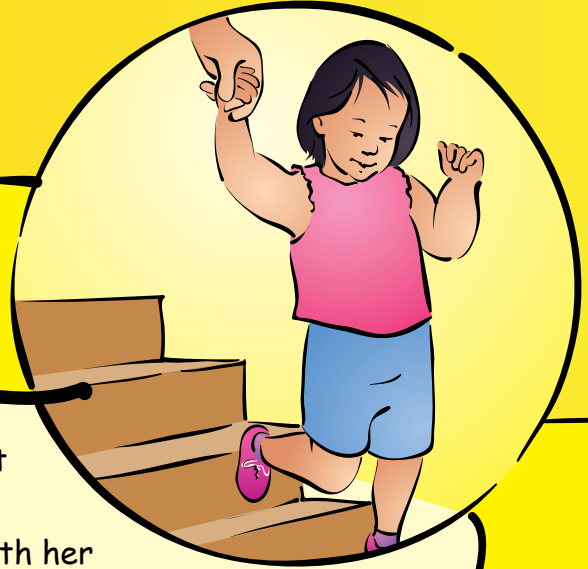
# You can help...



- Give her time to play outside
- Bounce a large, soft ball back and forth
- Hold her hand walking up and down stairs



- Talk with her about what she is doing
- Read to and sing with her
- Point out familiar words
- Give her dress-up clothes
- Play games finding colors and shapes
- Give her one- and two-step directions





## Talk to your doctor if your child

- Has poor balance or can't climb stairs
- Is unable to build a tower of four blocks
- Has unclear speech
- Has little or no interest in other children

## Safety tip:

Have your child wear a safety helmet when riding a tricycle or sitting in a seat on an adult bicycle.

- Make plans for her to play with other children
- Avoid anger and violence at home and on television
- Make sure she has time to play alone under adult supervision



# 3 to 4 years

Energetic four-year-olds are just a year away from kindergarten. There is still time to help your child prepare.



By four years, your child may...

- Use the toilet without help
- Use scissors to cut on a line
- Hold a pencil correctly





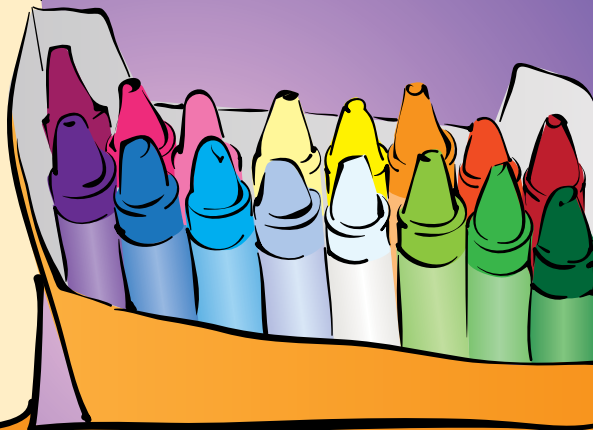
- Need help trying new things
- Get upset when things are not routine
- Play well with one or two other children

- Follow two- or three-step directions
- Ask and answer questions
- Begin to write several letters
- Recognize some letters, particularly those in his name
- Point and count five to 10 objects correctly
- Match and sort shapes
- Understand position words like "above" and "under"



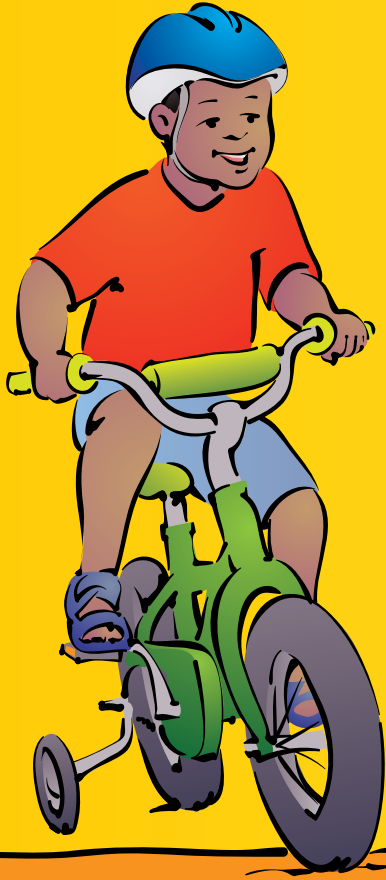
## Some toys for learning:

- Puzzles with 15 to 30 pieces and card games
- Musical instruments
- Art materials like crayons, paper and clay
- Books, books, books!

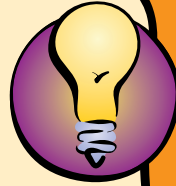




# You can help...



- Talk with him any chance you get
- Read a favorite book to him daily
- Ask questions about the story
- Play games that teach him colors, shapes and numbers
- Sing, dance and draw with him



- Provide space to run, play ball and ride a bike
- Let him pick out clothing and try to dress himself
- Show him how to cut paper with scissors







## Talk to your doctor if your child is:

- Very aggressive or withdrawn with other children
- Doesn't with others
- Speaks unclearly or isn't talking in sentences
- Can't follow verbal instructions
- Doesn't have the physical abilities like others his age
- Doesn't talk during play

## Safety tip:

Set safety rules for riding a tricycle, crossing the street, playing on the playground and swimming. Get a good first aid book for treating children.

- Take him to new places with new people
- Help him learn to settle fights with words rather than hitting and screaming
- Make time for him to play with other children



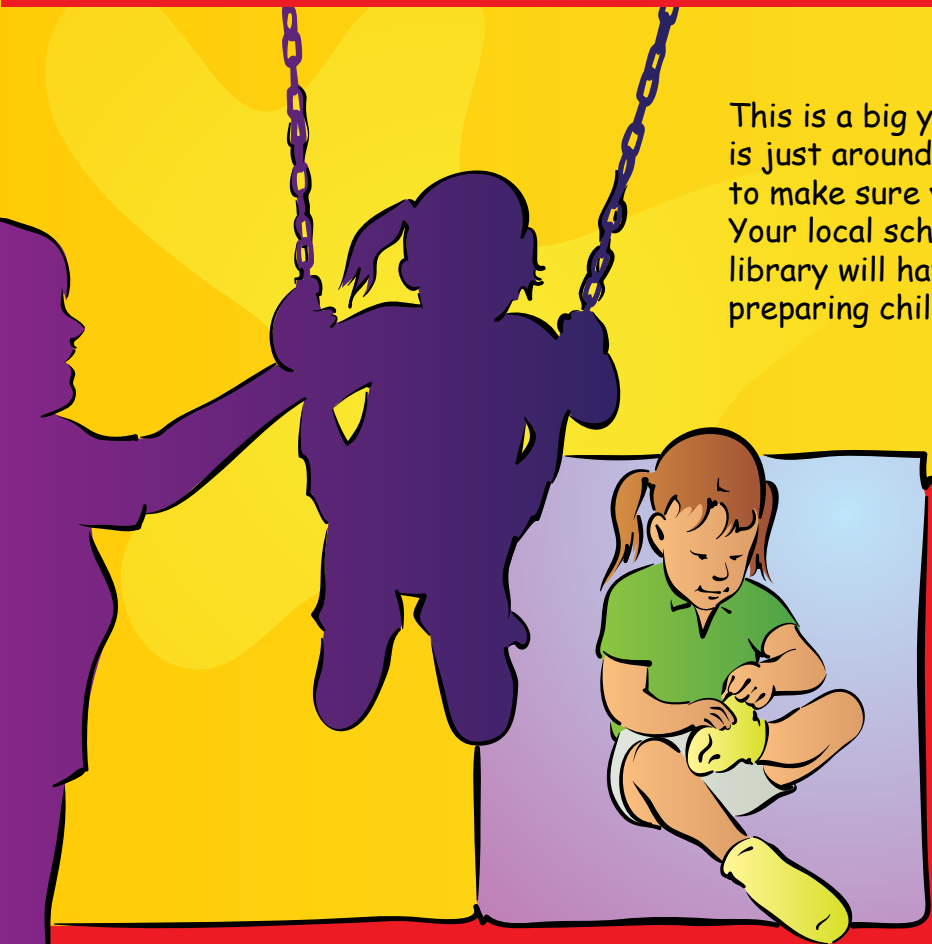
# 4 to 5 years

This is a big year—kindergarten is just around the corner. Want to make sure your child is ready? Your local school district or library will have guides for preparing children to enter school.



By five years old, your child may...

- Be able to dress
- Clean up messes
- Use pencils and paint brushes and hold them correctly
- Write her name





- Be able to follow group rules
- Go between home and school without being anxious
- Be willing to try new things



- Use longer sentences
- Begin to sound out simple words
- Listen carefully and understand what you are saying
- Count up to 20 objects and may be able to count to 100
- Like to make patterns and sort things



## Some toys for learning:

- Simple board games
- Art supplies including glue and collage materials
- Ride-on equipment with pedals, wagons and scooters
- Books!



# You can help...



- Encourage her to pick out clothing and dress herself
- Eat with your child and teach her how to use a spoon, fork and knife
- Teach her safety rules



- Get her a library card and start using it
- Encourage her to draw pictures and then tell a story about them
- Give her quiet time, for playing or just thinking



- Help her prepare for unexpected events, like getting lost
- Encourage her to play make-believe games





- Show her how to get along with others by setting a good example
- Talk about friendships
- Expect good behavior and praise her for it

# Congratulations!

Now it's time for kindergarten.



## Here's how you can keep helping:

- Be excited about the start of school
- Take her to visit the new school
- Talk to her each day about what happened during school
- Praise her for trying new activities
- Help her do school work
- Encourage her to do the best that she can



# Resources:

## Child Care and Preschool

### Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C)

This organization is a central source of information for families seeking child care services. 4C can help you locate child care services that are best for your family.

For more information, call 407-522-2252.

[www.4cflorida.org](http://www.4cflorida.org)

### Orange County Head Start

Head Start provides multi-generational, high quality comprehensive services to low-income children and their families, so that children leave Head Start "ready to learn" and families become self-sufficient.

For more information, call (407) 836-6590.

[www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/DEPT/hfs/headstart](http://www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/DEPT/hfs/headstart)

### Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Information - The Early Learning Coalition of Orange County

The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program in Florida prepares four-year-olds for kindergarten. This program is free to parents regardless of income.

For more information, call 407-841-6607.

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

## Childhood Development

If you are worried your child is not developing properly, talk with your child's doctor. Here are other places to call:

### The Developmental Center for Infants & Children at the Howard Phillips Center (Also known as Central Florida Early Steps)

This program, for children from birth to age three, helps families learn about their child's development and ways to get community services and support.

For more information, call 407-317-7430 ext. 2121.

[www.orlandohealth.com/ArnoldPalmerHospital/HowardPhillipsCenter/HowardPhillipsCenter.aspx](http://www.orlandohealth.com/ArnoldPalmerHospital/HowardPhillipsCenter/HowardPhillipsCenter.aspx)

### The Early Intervention Program for Orange County Public Schools

Families can get help with developmental screenings and services for children from age three to five who are not already enrolled in public school.

For more information, call 407-317-3503.

[www.ocps.net/cs/eae/support/ei/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ocps.net/cs/eae/support/ei/Pages/default.aspx)

### Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)/Action Resource Center

FDLRS/Action Parent Services provides information, resources, training and support to families with children with special needs.

For more information, call the Child Find Specialist, 407-317-3665 or Parent Services, 407-317-3674.

[www.fdlrs.ocps.net/parentservices\\_generalinformation.htm](http://www.fdlrs.ocps.net/parentservices_generalinformation.htm)

### Orange County Public Schools - Tiny Tots Infant-Toddler Program

Tiny Tots Early Literacy Program conducts a playgroup including parents on Fridays to help develop a child's early reading skills.

For more information, call 407-317-3500 ext. 5612.

[www.ocps.net/cs/services/Curriculum/programs/Pages/ITEC.aspx](http://www.ocps.net/cs/services/Curriculum/programs/Pages/ITEC.aspx)

### UCP of Central Florida

UCP of Central Florida provides all kinds of support, education and therapy services to everyone touched by a disability from birth to age 21.

For more information, call 407-852-3300.

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

## Medical Care

If you don't have a doctor and need to find affordable medical care for you or your child, here are some places to call:

### Primary Care Access Network (PCAN)

PCAN helps Orange County residents who are underinsured or uninsured find a medical home where they can get regular health care.

For more information, call 407-836-PCAN (407-836-7226).

[www.pcanorangecounty.com](http://www.pcanorangecounty.com)



### **The Community After-Hours Medical Clinic at Florida Hospital**

For those uninsured and not covered by Medicare or Medicaid, this clinic is open on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to Noon.

For more information, call 407-303-7298.  
2604 N. Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32804  
[www.flhosp.org/services/afterhoursclinic](http://www.flhosp.org/services/afterhoursclinic)

### **Orange County Health Department**

Orange County Health Department offers a variety of services to Orange County residents including immunizations; dental care for children; family planning; prenatal care; and HIV/AIDs, Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and tuberculosis testing and treatment.

For more information, call 407-836-2600.  
[www.orchd.com](http://www.orchd.com)

### **Shepherd's Hope**

Shepherd's Hope offers non-emergency care for children and adults at various locations. Prenatal care or immunizations are not available.

The staff will treat your illness and refer you to a permanent medical home.

For more information, call 407-876-6699.  
[www.shepherdshope.org](http://www.shepherdshope.org)

## **Other Community Resources**

### **2-1-1**

Anyone who needs any type of community assistance can dial 2-1-1 for free information and referrals.

For more information, call 2-1-1.  
[www.211oc.org](http://www.211oc.org)

### **Autism Society of Greater Orlando**

For more information, call 407-855-0235.  
[www.asgo.org](http://www.asgo.org)

### **BETA Center**

BETA provides a wide range of services focused on parenting, teen moms and at-risk families.

For more information, call (407) 381-0907.  
[www.betacenter.org](http://www.betacenter.org)

### **CARD Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (University of Central Florida)**

For more information, call 407-737-2556.  
[www.ucf-card.org](http://www.ucf-card.org)

### **Orlando CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)**

For more information, call 407-578-6200 ext 209.  
[www.chadd.net/template.cfm?affid=173&p=about](http://www.chadd.net/template.cfm?affid=173&p=about)

### **Communication Disorders Clinic (University of Central Florida)**

For more information, call 407-882-0468.

### **Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida**

For more information, call 407-540-1121.  
[www.dsacf.org](http://www.dsacf.org)

### **Family Network on Disabilities of Florida**

For more information, call 1-800-825-5736.  
[www.fndfl.org](http://www.fndfl.org)

### **Florida KidCare**

Florida KidCare is the state's children's health insurance program for uninsured children under 19.  
For more information, call 1-888-540-5437.  
Apply online by going to [www.floridakidcare.org](http://www.floridakidcare.org)

### **Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services**

For more information, call 1-800-654-4440.  
[www.centraldirectory.org](http://www.centraldirectory.org)

### **Healthy Start Coalition**

The Orange County Healthy Start Coalition offers medical and social services, education and referrals to pregnant women and infants in order to ensure healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.  
For more information, call 407-741-5240.  
[www.healthystartorange.org](http://www.healthystartorange.org)

### **Lighthouse Central Florida (which helps adults and children with low vision and blindness)**

For more information, call 407-898-2483.  
[www.lcf-fl.org](http://www.lcf-fl.org)

### **March of Dimes, Florida Chapter**

For more information, call 407- 599-5077.

<http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/pnhec.asp>

### **Threshold Center for Autism**

For information, call 407-671-7060.

[www.threshold-center.org](http://www.threshold-center.org)

## **Useful Websites**

### **The American Academy of Pediatrics**

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

### **Bright Futures for Families**

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

### **CDC, Learn the Signs & Act Early**

[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm)

### **Florida Department of Education (FDOE)**

[www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/vpkparent.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/vpkparent.asp)

### **Orange County Library Services**

Kindergarten Readiness—step by step guide to help prepare your child for kindergarten.

[www.ocls.info/Children/kindergarten/math.asp?bhcp=1](http://www.ocls.info/Children/kindergarten/math.asp?bhcp=1)

### **PBS - The Whole Child**

[www.pbs.org/wholechild/](http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/)

### **U.S. Department of Education**

The DOE site provides information on readiness for school, reading resources, children's special needs.

[www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml](http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml)

### **Washington Learning Systems Guide**

The guide features parent-child learning and play activities.

[www.wlearning.com/Guide.html](http://www.wlearning.com/Guide.html)

### **Zero to Three**

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

