

Welcome to Our Program!



Our Commitment to Your Family

Early Head Start and other programs that serve infants and toddlers offer your child a safe place to learn. We know you are your child's first teacher and want to work with you to care for him. As your partner in your child's education and care, we are dedicated to:

- Valuing your culture, beliefs, and traditions in raising your children.
- Listening to your concerns and sharing ideas on healthy child development.
- Supporting and encouraging you throughout your child's time in our program.
- Communicating about your child's progress in our program through daily reports.
- Helping you find community resources, such as those for food, housing, and medical care.
- Contacting you in case of an emergency. You can help us by keeping your baby's emergency contact phone numbers updated.

Our Commitment to Your Child

We care for your 4-month-old baby by meeting their physical needs, but also following to health and safety guidelines, supporting her in meeting milestones, and creating strong bonds between your child and her caregivers. We encourage you to do these things at home, too. We are always available to answer any questions you may have.

Feeding

Babies should be fed when they seem hungry. Your health care professional can help you identify the different signs of hunger for your baby. [Healthy Feeding From the Start: A Resource for Expectant Families](#) provides more strategies for building healthy feeding habits for your baby. Healthy eating habits start early, and we work with your child during the day to get them on the right path. We hold your baby during feeding to help her feel safe and connect with her.

Bottle Feeding

- We never prop up bottles using a pillow or any other object.
- Your baby will be fed your breast milk or the same formula you use at home.
- We prepare, heat, and store breastmilk and formula safely. We never heat bottles in the microwave.



AT HOME TIP!

Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. Sleeping with a bottle can increase your child's risk of choking, tooth decay, and ear infections.



Solid Foods

Breast milk or formula is all your baby needs until he is about 6 months of age. Talk to your health care professional to learn when your baby is ready for solid foods. We do not give your baby solid foods until you let us know he is ready.

Safe Sleep

At 4 months of age, your baby still may not have a regular sleep schedule. Throughout the day, she may sleep only one or two hours at a time. We use many strategies to help your baby establish a healthy sleep routine and stay safe while they sleep.

- We always place your baby on her back to sleep. This is the safest position for her!
- For her safety, cribs are kept free of toys, stuffed animals, and extra bedding.
- We carefully watch babies while they are sleeping.
- Our cribs meet current safety standards.



AT HOME TIP!

Always place your baby on his back to sleep. Remember the phrase “back to sleep” every time you put your baby down for sleep.

Diapering

Diaper changing is an important part of your baby's daily routine. In our program, we use these opportunities to talk and interact with your baby.

- We change diapers often and as needed. We always make sure we keep diaper areas clean and healthy.
- We maintain physical contact with her (putting our hand on her tummy) to make sure she is safe and secure.
- Our caregivers sing songs and talk to your baby to connect with her and help build meaningful relationships.



AT HOME TIP!

When diapering your baby at home, always make sure to keep your hands on her. This will prevent her from falling from the changing area.

Immunizations (Shots)

Immunizations help your baby stay healthy. Your baby's health care professional provides routine immunizations based on the recommended schedule. There are many ways that we work with you to support your baby's health.

- We support you in working with your health care professional to ensure your baby gets up to date on all her shots and gets them when she needs them.
- Our program's Health Managers or Health Consultants are readily available to answer your health and medical questions. We can also assist your family in finding a health care professional in your area.
- We can offer you more information. The [Health Tips for Families Series](#) from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness offers valuable information on a variety of health topics.

Environment

We have a clean, safe, and cheerful space that encourages your baby to play and be active. This is a great way for him to practice movement, explore objects, and imitate sounds.

- We place your baby on his tummy two to three times a day to play while strengthening his neck and back muscles.
- We use colorful toys, brightly colored books, and floor gyms to engage him in playing.
- Babies are comforted by regular routines and a comfortable, safe space. Our spaces and daily routines are set up to meet your baby's needs.
- We practice good handwashing to protect your baby from illness. We wash and sanitize all toys, bottles, and pacifiers daily.

Development

A 4-month-old can typically: hold her head up; roll over from her tummy to her back; raise her body on her hands when she is lying on her tummy; and begin to babble, smile, and laugh. Your baby learns by exploring with her five senses

(seeing, smelling, hearing, touching, and tasting). Our program is designed to support your baby's learning.

- We encourage early language and communication skills by talking, singing, and reading to your baby.
- We help her learn by letting her safely explore her environment.
- Remember, each child is unique and develops at her own rate. Talk to us and your health care professional if you have any concerns.



AT HOME TIP!

It's never too early to read to your baby. He loves hearing your voice and being held by you!

Relationships

As your baby learns to sit up, use his hands, and move about, he's likely to become more aware of objects and people around him.

- Your baby will learn new skills by interacting with the people around him. He may show a clear preference for his parents and caregivers. If he has connected with a specific caregiver, we offer them more time together when possible.
- We are friendly and respond to his cues. We enhance our relationship with him by reading books, singing songs, and holding him.

Questions to ask your health care professional at your 4-month well-child visit:

- How can I create a routine and schedule with my baby?
- What are ways I can bond with my baby?
- How can I tell when my baby is hungry? Tired?
- How can I help my baby be safe while she sleeps?
- What are ways to keep my home safe for my baby?
- Use the [Well-Visit Planner](#) to help get organized and learn more about what to expect at your baby's well-visit!

Adapted from *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition, Copyright 2017. Published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.