

## Tips for Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

### Your Child's Behavior

- Praise your child for behaving well.
- Play with your child each day by doing things your child likes.
- Parenting classes can help you understand your child's behavior and teach you what to do.

### Toilet Training

- If your child is ready for toilet training, your child may:
  - Be able to stay dry for 2 hours
  - Know if he or she is wet or dry
  - Pull pants down and up
  - Want to learn
  - Tell you if he or she is going to have a bowel movement
- Read books about toilet training with your child.
- Have the parent of the same sex as your child or an older brother or sister take your child to the bathroom.
- Praise sitting on the potty or toilet even with clothes on.
- Take your child to choose underwear when he or she is ready.

### Preventing Accidents

- When backing out of the garage or driving in the driveway, have another adult hold your child a safe distance away so he or she is not run over.
- Lock away poisons, medications, and lawn and cleaning supplies. Call Poison Help if you think your child has eaten something harmful. (1-800-222-1222)
- Never have a gun in your home. If you have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Prevent burns by keeping your child away from hot liquids, matches, lighters, and the stove.

# HEALTHY *and* SAFE at 18 Months



### Your Child and Family

- Make time for your family to be together.
- Keep outings with a toddler short — 1 hour or less.
- Ask your child's doctor or nurse for help in finding programs to help your family.
- Help your other children by reading books about being a big brother or sister.
- Spend time with each child.
- Make sure you are also taking care of yourself.

## Feeding Your Child

- Give your toddler many chances to try a new food. Allow your child to mouth and touch new foods to learn about them.
- Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you need help with getting enough food for your family.

## Home Safety

- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Put guards on windows on the second floor and higher.
- Move furniture away from windows.
- Watch your child closely when he or she is on the stairs.
- Have a working smoke detector on every floor.

## Sharing

- Do not expect a toddler to share.
- Give older children a safe place for toys they do not want to share.
- Tell your child when he or she is doing a good job.

## Disciplining Your Child

- Be consistent with your toddler.
- Keep time-outs short. Tell your child in simple words what he or she did wrong.
- Tell your child what to do in a nice way.
- Change your child's focus to another toy or activity if he or she becomes upset.
- Set limits that are important to you and ask others to use them with your toddler.

## Your Child's Feelings and Actions

- Teach your child not to hit, bite, or hurt other people or pets.
- Your child may go from trying to be independent to clinging. This is normal.
- Consider joining a parent-toddler playgroup.

## Talking To Your Child

- Read and sing to your child often.
- Talk about and describe pictures in books.
- Use simple words with your child.
- Tell your child the words for his or her feelings.
- Ask your child simple questions, confirm answers, and explain simply.
- Use simple, clear words to tell your child what to do.

## Car Safety

- Keep your child's car safety seat facing backwards until your child is at least 2 years old or reaches the seat's weight or height limit for backwards-facing use.
- Read the instructions about your car safety seat to check on the weight and height requirements.
- Never put your child's backwards-facing seat in the front seat of a vehicle. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride.
- Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.

## What to Expect at your Child's 2 Year Visit:

Your child's doctor will talk about -

- Your talking child
- Your child and TV
- Car and outside safety
- Toilet training
- How your child behaves

### To Learn More

- **Poison Control Center** 1-800-222-1222
- **Child Safety Seat Inspection** 1-866-SEATCHECK, 1-866-732-8243 or [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org)
- **Immunizations** at [aap.org/immunization](http://aap.org/immunization)
- **MaineHealth Learning Resource Center** 1-866-609-5183 or <https://mainehealth.org/healthy-communities/learning-resource-center>
- **Barbara Bush Children's Hospital** [www.bbch.org](http://www.bbch.org)
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- **2-1-1 Maine** (a directory of local services) 211 or 1-877-463-6207 or [211maine.org](http://211maine.org)
- **MaineHealth** [mainehealth.org](http://mainehealth.org)