



### Building Strong Families

#### You Can Help Your Child Learn to Write

You might think your child won't start learning to write until she knows her letters and is beginning to learn to read. You might be surprised to learn that children begin learning to write when they are very young as soon as they are given crayons, markers, or a pencil and a piece of paper. What looks like scribbling is really a beginning writing skill and the process of learning to write has already begun.



Here are some ways you can give your child chances to learn and practice writing skills:

- Provide lots of paper of various sizes and types, pencils, crayons, and washable markers for your child to use every day.
- Read stories often to your child, then have him tell you a story that he makes up. Write the story down and have your child illustrate it.
- Make some labels listing objects around your home and see if your child can match the words with the objects.
- When making a shopping list, talk with your child about the things you are writing on the list. Take her shopping with you and have her cross off items on the list after you have selected them.
- You can make a scrapbook about your family, using photos and your child's drawings about family trips and special occasions. Write down what each thing is.
- Keep a journal with your child and encourage him to talk about important things that happened during the day. Help your child write those things in the journal.
- When you are sending a note or an email to a friend or relative, ask your child if she has a message to add to yours.
- Have your child dictate a list to you and go over it together.
- Teach your child to recognize words on street signs and stores.
- When going on a special family outing, such as a trip to a zoo, a park, or sporting event, have your child tell you about it and write down what she says. She can draw pictures to complete the story.

### Child Care Tips for Parents

#### Outdoor Play is Important All Year Long



Children benefit from outdoor time. It keeps them healthy. Dress your child appropriately each day for outdoor play when he is at child care. State child care regulations require that children

go outside every day except in extreme weather. In the cooler weather your child will need a warm jacket or coat, a hat or hood, mittens or gloves, a scarf, and boots. Your child will not be able to stay inside, so make sure you provide the right clothing.

## Is It a Cold or the Flu?

Your child is not feeling well. You think she may have a cold, but maybe it's the flu. How do you tell the difference? It's often difficult. Listed below are the symptoms for you to compare.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	Usual: high (100 – 102 degrees F, occasionally higher, especially in young children: lasts 3 to 4 days
Headache	Rare	Common
General aches & Pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Exhaustion	Never	Usual: at the beginning of the illness
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, Cough	Mild to moderate; Hacking cough	Common; can become severe
<b>Treatment</b>	Antihistamines Decongestants Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines	Antiviral medicines – See your doctor
<b>Prevention</b>	Wash your hands often with soap and water; avoid close contact with anyone with a cold	Annual vaccination; antiviral medicines – See your doctor Wash hands frequently
<b>Complications</b>	Sinus congestion Middle ear infection Asthma	Bronchitis, pneumonia, can worsen chronic conditions; can be life threatening. Complications more likely in the elderly, those with chronic conditions, young children, and pregnant women

### Avoiding the Flu

Children over 6 months of age and adults working with children should have this year's flu vaccine. It is not too late and is the best way to prevent flu. Also, frequent hand washing and coughing/sneezing into your arm away from people is important to prevent the spread of germs. More information is available at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Go to the section on Seasonal Influenza Flu.

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