



Child & Infant Care Basics

A guide to help informal caregivers manage child and infant care with greater ease and preparation



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Welcome to Heart in Hand's **Child & Infant Care Basics** – your companion in supporting your child's growth, health, and well-being. Whether you're a new parent, guardian, or caregiver, this guide is designed to give you reliable information, easy-to-follow tips, and space to keep track of your child's milestones and health records.

Inside, you'll find key developmental stages with corresponding caregiving strategies, safety guidelines, and milestone checklists tailored to each stage. You'll also find self-care reminders for caregivers and useful templates, including immunization and medication logs, to help you stay organized and supported throughout your caregiving journey. Each section is designed to help you better understand your child's needs and build routines that foster healthy development in a nurturing environment.

Parenting and caregiving come with both joy and challenges. This guidebook is here to make that journey a little easier – providing knowledge, structure, and encouragement every step of the way!

Checklist for Parents

Basic Information

Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Male

Female

Birthday: _____

Verbal

Non-verbal

Comfort Items: _____

Daily Routine

	Time	Details/Notes
Wake-up time		
Bedtime		
Nap Time		
Meal Time		
Potty/Diaper Routine		

Meal/snack times and portion preferences: _____

Favorite Foods and Drinks: _____

Foods they dislike or refuse: _____

Bathing or hygiene practices (if relevant): _____

Health and Allergies

Allergies (food, environmental, medication): _____

Signs/symptoms of allergic reactions unique to your child:

Medications: _____

Medical conditions (e.g. asthma, eczema, diabetes): _____

Doctor's name and contact information:
_____ No. _____

Emergency contacts (besides parents):
_____ No. _____
_____ No. _____

Immunization Status: _____

Food and Nutrition

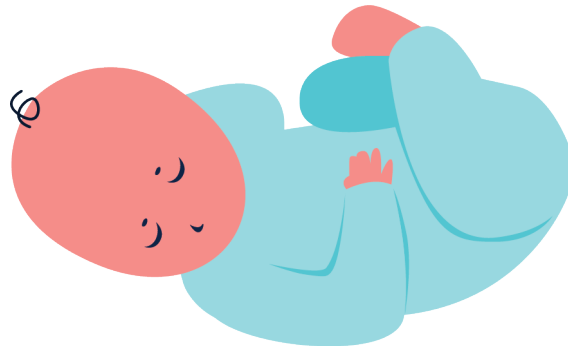
Special dietary restrictions (vegetarian, halal, lactose-free, etc.)

Preferred milk type (breast milk, formula, whole, 2%, 1%, or skim)

Instructions for bottle feeding or meal prep

Typical appetite level (big eater, light eater, picky eater)

Foods to avoid (choking hazards, strong dislikes, cultural restrictions)



Infants (0-12 Months)

Your baby's first year is a time of rapid growth and change. From the first social smile to the first steps, each stage comes with exciting milestones and new responsibilities. Understanding these stages can help you care confidently, support development, and keep your little one safe and healthy.

Stage 1: Newborn (0-3 months)

In the early months, your baby is adjusting to life outside the womb. This stage is all about bonding, security, and gentle routines.

A. Developmental Milestones

Physical: Raises head and chest during tummy time, stretches and kicks, opens and shuts hands, brings hands to mouth, grasps and shakes small toys.

Social & Emotional: Develops a social smile, enjoys interacting with people, imitates some facial expressions.

Sensory: Follows moving objects, recognizes familiar faces from a distance, prefers sweet smells and soft textures.

B. Care Tips



- Do plenty of skin-to-skin contact and set calm routines.



- Respond to cries—this builds trust and strengthens bonding.



- Give daily tummy time to help build neck and upper body strength.

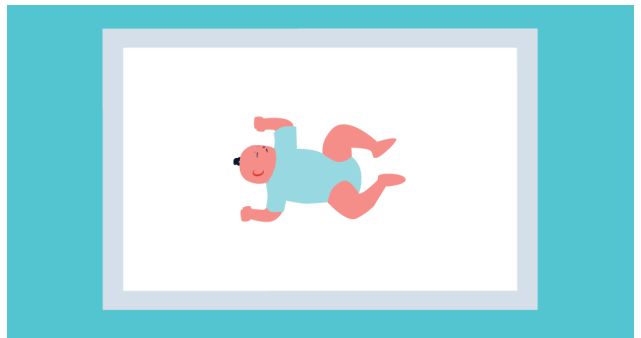


- Talk, sing, and read to your baby—they love hearing your voice.

C. Safety & Health



- Always place your baby on their back to sleep.



- Keep the crib free of soft bedding, pillows, and loose blankets.



- Follow your pediatrician's vaccination schedule and regular checkups.



- Use a rear-facing car seat for all car rides.

Stage 2: Infant (4-7 Months)

Your baby is becoming more mobile and curious. This stage focuses on exploration, interaction, and motor skills.

A. Developmental Milestones

Physical: Rolls both ways, sits with or without support, supports weight on legs, reaches with one hand, transfers objects, uses a raking grasp.

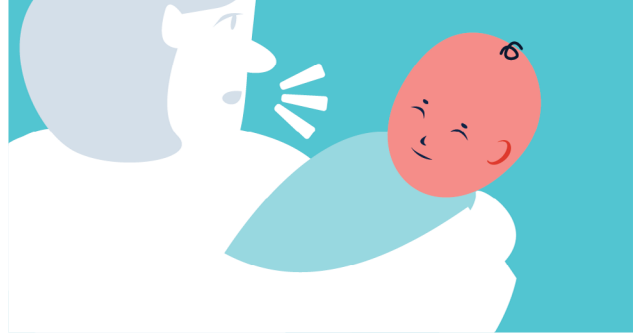
Social: Enjoys social play, fascinated by mirrors, responds to emotional expressions, often joyful.

Cognitive: Finds partially hidden objects, explores with hands and mouth, tries to grab out-of-reach items.

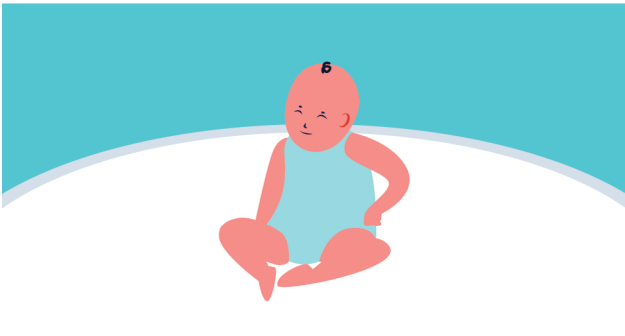
B. Care Tips



- Offer toys that encourage reaching and grasping.



- Talk, sing, and read regularly to support language development.



- Support safe sitting and allow floor play to build strength and balance.

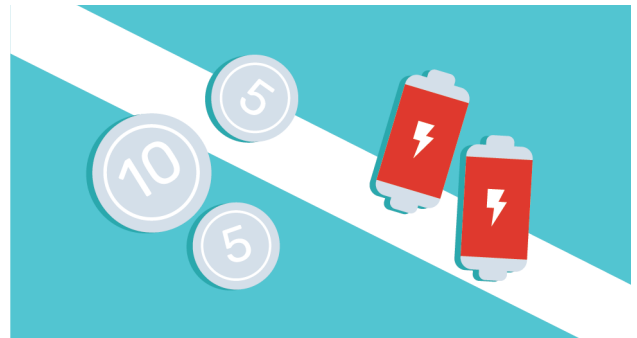


- Start to initiate feeding by offering them soft, pureed, or mashed foods

C. Safety & Health



- Start baby-proofing your home—mobility is increasing.



- Keep small objects and choking hazards out of reach.



- Stick to routine immunizations and health checkups.

Infant Choking Emergency Guide (Conscious Infant)

1. Call for Help

- Shout for help immediately.
- Do not leave the baby, but ask someone nearby to call emergency services.

2. Give 5 Back Blows

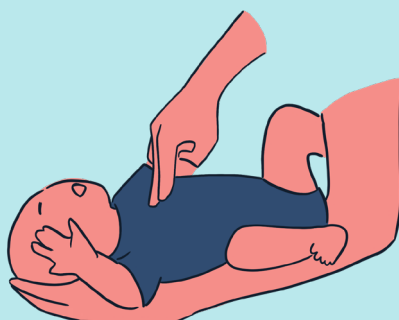
- Sit down and place the baby face-down along your forearm, resting on your thigh.
- Support the baby's head and jaw with your hand. Avoid covering the mouth or putting pressure on the neck.



3. Give 5 Chest Thrusts

If the object is not dislodged:

- Turn the baby face-up on your forearm, keeping the head lower than the chest.
- Place two fingers in the middle of the chest, just below the nipple line.



4. Repeat the Cycle

- Continue alternating:
- 5 Back Blows
- 5 Chest Thrusts
- Push down sharply 5 times

Repeat until:

- The object is removed
- The baby can breathe or cry
- The baby becomes responsive

5. Check the Mouth

Between cycles, check the baby's mouth.
Remove the object only if it is clearly visible.

Do NOT perform a blind finger sweep, as this may push the object deeper.

6. When NOT to Intervene

If the baby is:

- Coughing strongly
- Crying
- Breathing normally

Do not interfere. Let the baby cough, as this is the most effective way to clear the airway. Monitor closely in case the blockage worsens.

Stage 3: Infant (8–12 Months)

At this stage, your baby is on the move and discovering independence. It's a time for encouraging safe exploration and nurturing early communication.

A. Developmental Milestones

Physical: Crawls, pulls up to stand, may take first steps.

Social: May show shyness with strangers, enjoys games like peek-a-boo, responds to “no.”

Cognitive & Language: Understands simple instructions, uses gestures like waving, says “mama” or “dada” (not always referring to parents yet).



Quick Reminder for Parents:

The way you talk, play, and respond during these first 12 months lays the foundation for your child's emotional security, language skills, and physical development. Every milestone is a shared journey—celebrate the little wins and trust your instincts.

B. Care Tips



- Encourage safe exploration—babies learn through movement.

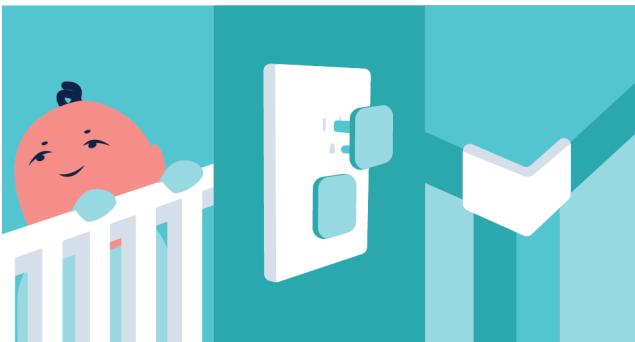


- Offer soft finger foods as they begin self-feeding.



- Read books and narrate daily activities to boost language skills.

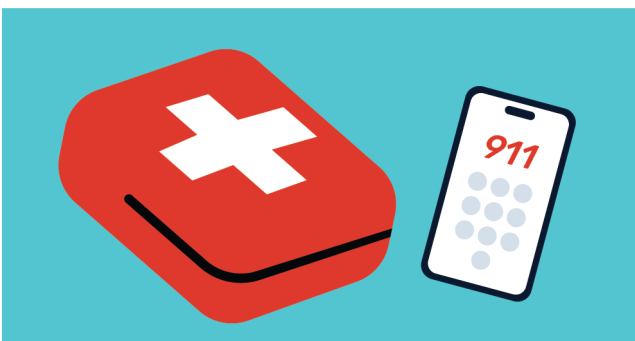
C. Safety & Health



- Install baby gates, cover outlets, and secure furniture.



- Supervise around stairs, water, and climbable areas.



- Keep emergency numbers and a first aid kit within easy reach.



Toddler (1-3 Years)

Toddlers are curious, active, and eager to explore their world. During this stage, children rapidly develop their motor skills, language abilities, and social independence. Caregivers play a key role in supporting this growth through structured routines, safe spaces, and nurturing interactions.

A. Developmental Milestones

Physical Development

- Walks independently; begins to run and climb.
- Uses utensils and starts feeding themselves.
- Improves coordination through active play.

Language Development

- **1–2 years:** Say simple words and phrases, follow basic directions.
- **2–3 years:** Can tell their name and age, use short sentences, and sing simple songs.

Social & Emotional Development

- Shows independence, may have tantrums.
- Plays alongside other children (parallel play).
- Begins pretend play and imitates adult actions.
- Recognizes self in mirrors and photos.

B. Positive Parenting Tips

For 1–2 Year Olds:

- Read to your toddler daily to build language skills.
- Ask them to point to or name objects and body parts.
- Play simple matching games (e.g., shape sorting, puzzles).
- Encourage independence—let them help with dressing and feeding.
- Respond more to wanted behaviors than to punishing unwanted ones.
- Use brief time-outs when necessary.
- Take short “field trips” (e.g., park, bus rides) to stimulate curiosity.

For 2–3 Year Olds:

- Set aside time to read books and teach simple songs or rhymes.
- Encourage pretend play and exploration.
- Help your child express feelings using words.
- Praise good behavior and calmly set limits for defiance.
- Introduce simple routines and chores to build responsibility.
- Encourage them to make choices and explore new skills on their own.

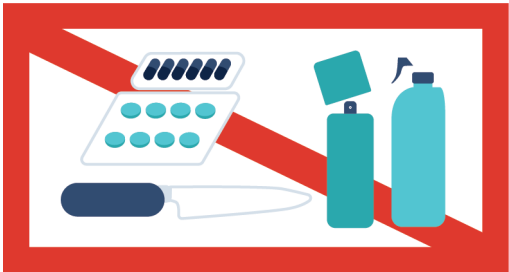
C. Child Safety



- Never leave toddlers unsupervised near water (bathtubs, pools,



- Block stairs with gates and keep doors to dangerous areas locked.



- Toddler-proof your home:
 - Use outlet covers.
 - Lock cabinets with hazardous substances.
 - Keep sharp or hot objects out of reach.



- Always supervise outdoor play.



- Use car seats properly:
 - Keep rear-facing until your child reaches the height/weight limit.
 - Transition to a forward-facing car seat with a harness afterward.
 - Never leave a toddler alone in a vehicle, even briefly.



- Screen time is not recommended for children under 2 years old.

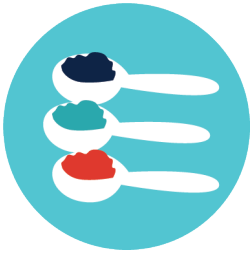
D. Health and Nutrition



Offer water and plain milk instead of sugary drinks.



Toddlers may be picky—offer healthy options and let them choose.



Introduce new foods gradually and without pressure.



Encourage active play to build strength, coordination, and creativity.



Recommended sleep: 11–14 hours per day (including naps).



Keep up with regular checkups and vaccinations.

E. Daily Care Tips

- **Routines** – Keep consistent schedules for meals, naps, and bedtime to help toddlers feel secure.
- **Independence** – Offer simple choices (e.g., “blue cup or red cup”) to build confidence.
- **Play** – Provide safe spaces and age-appropriate toys for imaginative and physical play.
- **Language** – Narrate daily activities and expand on their words to enrich vocabulary.



Preschool

Preschoolers are becoming more curious, talkative, and socially aware. Their growing independence and imagination pave the way for learning new skills, building friendships, and exploring their environment with greater confidence. Caregivers play a vital role in guiding this development through nurturing communication, structured routines, and safe spaces to explore.

A. Developmental Milestones

Physical Development

- Runs confidently, climbs, hops, and rides a tricycle.
- Draws shapes and simple figures.
- Begins dressing and undressing independently.
- Uses safety scissors with supervision.

Language Development

- Holds short conversations and tells simple stories.
- Uses complete sentences and a growing vocabulary.
- Recalls parts of stories and sings songs.

Social & Emotional Development

- Plays cooperatively with other children.
- Begins to understand rules and routines.
- Shows empathy and enjoys group activities.
- Becomes more independent and aware of others outside the family.

B. Positive Parenting Tips



- Encourage Social Play:
 - Allow your child to interact with peers to develop sharing, cooperation, and friendship skills.



- Foster Language Growth:
 - Continue to read together regularly.
 - Visit libraries or bookstores to nurture a love for stories.
 - Speak to your child in full sentences and model proper language use.



- Support independence:
- Let your child help with simple chores.
 - Offer limited, age-appropriate choices (e.g., what to wear, snack options).



- Teach Problem-Solving:
 - Guide your child through identifying feelings and finding solutions when upset.



- Be Clear and Consistent:
 - Explain expectations and appropriate behavior.
 - Follow up "no" with alternative actions they can do.



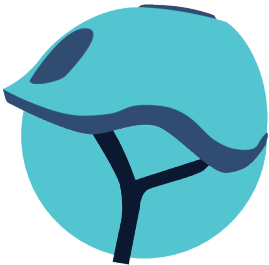
- Encourage Creativity:
 - Provide opportunities for pretend play, drawing, and storytelling to spark imagination.

C. Safety & Health

Child Safety First



Teach basic road safety: never play in the street, stop and look before crossing, and avoid chasing stray balls.



Supervise tricycle or bike use – keep on sidewalks and ensure your child wears a helmet.



Regularly check playground equipment for sharp edges or loose parts.



Always supervise outdoor and water play; even in kiddie pools, constant attention is required.



Introduce stranger safety concepts in a calm, age-appropriate way.

Healthy Bodies:



Eat meals together and model healthy eating habits.



Limit sugary drinks and highly processed foods.



Ensure 10–13 hours of sleep per 24 hours (including naps).

Provide toys that support active play, creativity, early learning, and pretend play.

- Pretend play sets and costumes
- Blocks, simple puzzles, construction toys
- Art and crafts materials
- Tricycles, wagons, bikes (with helmet)
- Balls, frisbees, sand and water toys
- Lacing beads, nesting toys, buttoning/snapping toys
- Books, simple board games, musical instruments



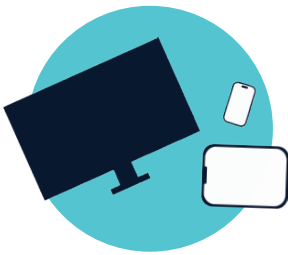
Screen Time Guidelines



Keep TVs and devices out of the child's bedroom.



Limit screen time to no more than 1 hour per day.



Create a family media plan to set clear expectations.

D. Daily Care Tips

Routines & Rules: Preschoolers thrive on consistent routines and clear expectations, which help them feel secure.

Independence: Encourage self-help skills like brushing teeth, dressing, and cleaning up toys.

Imagination & Learning: Provide open-ended materials (e.g., blocks, costumes, drawing tools) to support creativity and early problem-solving.

Conversations: Talk with your child about their day, feelings, and interests to build emotional intelligence and communication skills.

Immunization

Your child's health and development are your top priorities—and your pediatrician's, too! Keep in mind to ask your pediatrician about the vaccination schedule.

A. Why Immunization Matters

Vaccines work best when given at specific ages, timed to match your child's immune system development and their highest risk of exposure to diseases. By following the recommended schedule, you're giving your child strong protection during their most vulnerable years.

When more children are vaccinated on time, diseases like measles and whooping cough have a harder time spreading. This community immunity protects not only your child but also other children around them who may not be able to get vaccinated.

Caregiver Self-Care

Caring for children is rewarding but can be overwhelming. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish—it helps you be a better caregiver. Stress can show up as irritability, fatigue, or trouble focusing. Prolonged stress may lead to burnout, affecting your mood and health. Noticing these signs is the first step to recovery.

A. Simple Stress Management Techniques

You don't need hours to reset—small steps help:

- Take short breaks during the day for a walk, a cup of tea, or quiet time.
- Breathe deeply: Inhale for 5 counts, exhale for 5. Repeat for 2–3 minutes. This calms the body and mind.
- Use gentle movements: Raise your arms as you breathe in, lower them as you exhale slowly.
- Add joy through play: Laughter and play with your child release endorphins that naturally reduce stress.



B. Positive Mindset and Problem-Solving

Challenging days are part of parenting. When problems arise, try:

- Breaking big issues into small, manageable steps.
- Listing possible solutions and their pros and cons.
- Reaching out for support instead of carrying everything alone.
- Remembering that tough stages are temporary—you and your child grow through them.

Avoid comparing yourself to others. Every family's journey is different, and there's no "perfect" parent.



C. Prioritize Self-Care

Self-care doesn't have to be elaborate. It can be as simple as:

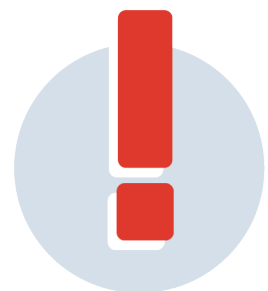
- Listening to music you enjoy
- Reading a book or walking outside
- Scheduling time for hobbies
- Saying "no" to extra commitments that drain you

Treat self-care as a regular part of your routine—plan it, communicate it with those around you, and give yourself permission to rest.



D. When to Seek Help

If stress becomes overwhelming or lasts for weeks, don't hesitate to talk to a trusted professional. Pediatricians, family doctors, counselors, or support hotlines can provide guidance. Seeking help early supports both you and your child's well-being.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What if my child misses a shot?

List tasks by urgency and importance, then allocate time and money to the most critical needs first. This prevents wasted effort and ensures essential care is never compromised.

2. Is it safe for my child to get multiple shots at once?

Map out nearby barangay offices, health centers, and NGOs that provide caregiver support. Keeping a contact list and knowing eligibility requirements saves time when emergencies arise.



Remember! If you're unsure about vaccines or the schedule, it's always best to check in with your pediatrician. They've been with you through every stage and genuinely want what's best for your child and family's journey—celebrate the little wins and trust your instincts.

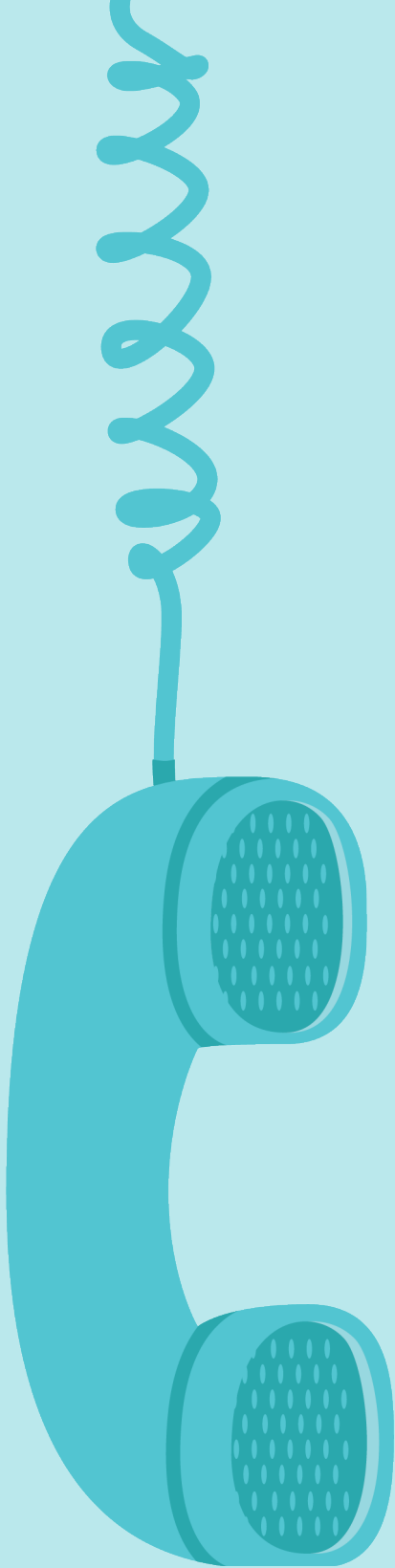
3. Can vaccines cause disease?

No. Vaccines contain either inactivated or weakened germs that teach your child's immune system to recognize and fight real infections—without causing the illness itself.

4. Do vaccines cause autism?

No. Scientific research has confirmed that vaccines do not cause autism. The timing of autism symptoms often overlaps with the vaccine schedule, but the two are not related.





- Philippine National Emergency Hotline: **911**
- DSWD
 - Globe Hotlines: **0917-110-5686** and **0917-827-2543**
 - Smart Hotline: **0919-911-6200**
 - Email: inquiry@dswd.gov.ph
 - Official Website: <https://www.dswd.gov.ph/>
- NCMH Crisis Hotline
 - Landline: **1553**
 - Smart/TNT: **0919-057-1553**
 - Globe/TM: **0917-899-8727** and **0917-899-USAP**

Support and Connection

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our next guidebooks!

