

All in for Kids

A Birth to 3 Program Family Newsletter

All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program is a newsletter created to keep you and your family informed about the services available through the Birth to 3 Program. The newsletter is published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.



The importance of family engagement

The Birth to 3 Program supports you in helping the child in your care grow, learn, and develop to their fullest potential. Family engagement—the participation and involvement of family members and caregivers in the supports and services the child receives—directly improves the child’s growth and development.

What is family engagement?

Family engagement means building relationships between the child, you and other family members, caregivers, and providers. It brings people together to work toward family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of parents and children. Family engagement in the Birth to 3 Program is designed to reflect your family’s beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors

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and happens in your home, early childhood settings, schools, and the community.

The benefits of family engagement

Strong family engagement has major benefits for the child, including:

- Improving their social-emotional and behavioral development. This means helping the child learn who they are, manage their feelings, build relationships with others, and show attachment to important people in their life.
- Preparing them for school by learning to get along with others, follow rules, and trust adults.
- Improving learning outcomes by helping the child be a confident and involved learner.

Ways families can best engage with the Birth to 3 Program

The Birth to 3 Program wants to connect and engage with you. Service visits are most effective when parents or caregivers are active participants. Activities that take place during service visits are based on your family's unique needs and on the child's age and development, so they will be different for every family. The provider will guide and support you in these activities. Below are some suggestions for ways to be engaged in the child's supports and services.

- During the visits:
 - Join the child in a common activity. For example, read a book with the child and ask the provider to watch and give ideas on how to develop the child's pre-reading skills.
 - Watch as the provider does an activity with the child. You can then try it yourself with guidance from the provider until you feel comfortable and confident.
 - Ask the provider questions such as "Can you show me how to do that again?" or "How can I support my child's learning?"
 - Be ready to answer questions the provider asks you (for example, "What developments have you seen in the child since the last visit?").
- Communicate with the rest of the team by:
 - Giving feedback. Let providers know which activities worked well and which ones did not. As the expert on your family, the child, and your lives together, it is important for you to express your thoughts and feelings.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

For faster delivery, sign up to receive the electronic version of this newsletter and other emails about the Birth to 3 Program. Go to www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aboutdhs/alerts.htm and then scroll down and click the "Birth to 3 Program Information for Families" link on the left side.

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- Making sure you understand the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and its goals. If something is unclear, ask team members to explain.

Family engagement is an important way to boost the child's growth and development. Let us know if you would like more tips on engaging with the Birth to 3 Program.

Natural environments help children learn and develop

The Birth to 3 Program uses the term “natural environments” to mean places that your family and the child normally spend time. This includes your family’s home, community, and other places you go in your day-to-day life (for example, the child’s day care center or the park). Natural environments are not only places but also include the people, activities, toys, and other objects that are part of the child’s everyday life. Your family’s beliefs, values, and culture are also part of the natural environment.

The benefits of using natural environments

Providing services in natural environments is helpful because children learn while:

- In familiar places.
- Using their own toys and familiar objects.

It takes time for children to get used to new places and figure out new objects. Sticking with what is familiar means they are ready to learn right away—they do not need to get comfortable or used to the situation first.

When activities take place in natural environments, your family can add them to your regular routines. Then the child can practice those skills throughout their day, not just when the provider is there.

How services are provided in natural environments

Your family and the child have your own everyday routines, activities, and places. These will be identified as you talk with the provider about what happens during your typical day, such as visiting family or friends, going grocery shopping, walking the dog, or washing dishes.

REMINDER

The Birth to 3 Program team (which includes your family) works together to create an IFSP. An IFSP is a written plan that guides and supports the efforts to boost the child’s development up to age 3. This plan is based on identified needs to help meet the unique goals of your family and the child.

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Think about the child's likes and interests to decide what activities will engage them best. For example, you might:

- Leave two rattles within reaching distance of the baby and let them grab their favorite.
- Use a toy phone to help the child "talk" to you or other family members.
- Help the child climb up and go down a slide.

While the child is doing these activities, you and the provider support them as they build new skills, learn new things, and explore how their own actions make things happen.

Talk with the Birth to 3 Program if you would like more information about receiving services in natural environments.

Announcing the First 1,000 Days Outreach Campaign

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) wants to support families with young children who have a delay or disability. To spread information about the Birth to 3 Program, we have launched the First 1,000 Days Outreach Campaign.

What is the First 1,000 Days Outreach Campaign?

The First 1,000 Days Outreach Campaign is based on the idea that every child should get a good start in their first 1,000 days of life. Our main goals are to:

- Help families understand the Birth to 3 Program and what services are available.
- Boost awareness of the early signs of delays or disabilities and encourage families to act early if a child may need extra support.
- Encourage doctors, child care professionals, and others who work with children to talk with families about the Birth to 3 Program.

New and improved materials about the Birth to 3 Program

New materials have been created for the First 1,000 Days campaign, with more to come over the next few months. These materials include:

- Improved web pages with new and clear information:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/family/index.htm
- Digital brochure: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02928.htm
- Digital postcard: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/p-02929.htm



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You can help spread the word to friends, family, and social groups. Feel free to:

- Share social media postings from the DHS Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram feeds.
- Share our outreach information with online or in-person groups you belong to who might want to spread the message. Find it at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/outreach-campaign.htm.
- Share links to the digital brochure and postcard mentioned above.

You could improve a child's or family's life by sharing this information. Thanks for helping!

Helpful resources for families

Updated information about COVID-19 in Wisconsin, including vaccine information:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm

Information about the Birth to 3 Program:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/family/index.htm

Previous issues of All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program newsletters:

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3-2021.htm

SPREAD THE WORD

If you know of a child who might be helped by the Birth to 3 Program, spread the word! Tell other parents about the program, pass along this newsletter, or share the website address with them.

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All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program is a newsletter published by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services for children and families in the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program.

The Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention program committed to serving children under the age of 3 with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The program partners with families to assist the child's development and support the family's knowledge, skills, and abilities as they interact with and raise their child. For more information, visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/children/index.htm.

Para leer este boletín en español, visite www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3.htm.

Xav nyeem tsab ntauv xov xwm no ua Lus Mev, mus xyuas www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/akidsb-3.htm.

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