

5. A guide to your child's growth and development

Treoir le h-aghaidh fás agus forbairt do pháiste

Your child's physical development – posture and movement

Forbairt fisiciúil – staidiúr agus gluaiseacht

Each child develops at their own rate. The information in this section is a guide only. What is important is the general trend of your child's development and not that your child reaches a stage at a fixed time. Spend time bonding and playing with your child as this is an important part of your child's development.



At 7-8 months, your child may:	At 9-10 months, your child may:	At 11-12 months, your child may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sit up without being held or supported, ● twist around from side to side and lean forward while sitting, ● shuffle and wiggle about on the floor while sitting on their bottom, ● attempt to crawl on the floor, ● put their feet into their mouth, and ● look to where a toy has fallen if it is close by.  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● pull themselves up into a standing position by holding on to something solid, such as an armchair, ● fall back down to the ground with a bump as they cannot lower themselves back down, ● attempt walking anytime from 8-20 months, ● use their index finger (next to the thumb) to jab and poke at small things like a dried raisin, ● stretch forward and grasp a toy with both hands while sitting down, without falling over, and ● show that they are annoyed about something by holding their body stiff or rigid when you pick them up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● walk around the furniture while holding on to it, ● start walking without holding on to the furniture but with one hand holding on to your hand,  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● drop and pick up toys, ● help with being dressed by holding out their arm or leg, and ● begin to stop drooling and putting objects into their mouth.

At 13-18 months (1- 1½ years), your child may:

- walk about with their arms slightly out to balance themselves at first,
- carry things like a toy while they are walking,
- fall down while they learn to walk about,
- crawl upstairs and come down backwards,
- hold a crayon in their fist to scribble,
- start to show a liking for using their right or left hand when holding and using a crayon,
- throw toys and objects to the floor and watch where they fall, and
- put things in and out of boxes or plastic jars.

**At 19-24 months (1½ -2 years), your child may:**

- fall down less often when walking or running about,
- push or pull toys along the floor,
- squat down to pick up fallen toys,
- enjoy climbing up on furniture, such as chairs or the table, as they explore and climb with no sense of danger,
- walk upstairs with help and creep downstairs backwards or sit on their bottom and bump down step by step,
- hold small objects like crayons more firmly in one hand when drawing and scribbling, and
- follow you around the house and enjoy helping with everyday chores such as sweeping the floor.

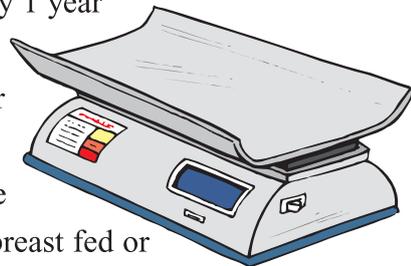
**Your child's growth and weight gain***Fás páiste agus méidiú meáchain*

Growth measurements are only a guide. They help assess your child's overall development.

How much weight should my child gain from 6 months old to 2 years old?

- Most children are about three times their birth weight by 1 year old, but this is only an average measurement.
- Other children gain most of their weight between 1 year and 3 years.

Your child may gain weight slower or faster than this guide says they will. For example, if your child was premature, breast fed or sick and off their feeds, they might not gain weight as readily as outlined above.



What checks of their growth will my child get between 6 months old to 2 years old?

As your young child grows, a health professional such as your public health nurse or family doctor will observe their growth and overall development. These checks take place either in:

- your home;
- your local health centre; or
- your doctor's surgery.

The checks include measuring your child's:

- weight, and
- head circumference (size).

The results of these growth checks are recorded on your child's **Personal Health Record** where it is available. This record plots the growth of your child from birth onwards and shows if there are any changes in the average growth of your child.



Your child's eyes

Súile do pháiste



What can my child see?

Your child's age:	Your child may:
By about 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● look around them with interest, ● notice and reach out for small coloured blocks 2.5 centimetres wide (1 inch) or other objects that are placed 30 centimetres (1 foot) in front of them, and ● recognise familiar toys and people that are about 2 to 3 metres away.
By about 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reach out to touch objects and toys that they see in front of them, ● look at small things such as crumbs of bread that are 30 centimetres (1 foot) in front of them, ● use their hands and eyes to co-ordinate poking at the crumbs, and ● recognise familiar people who are across a street.
By about 1 year onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognise and point to objects and toys that they want, and ● notice people, traffic or animals that are moving about outside and watch them with interest for a while.

What do I do if I notice something wrong with my child's eyes?

Some eye conditions are treatable if they are identified early. If you notice something wrong with the appearance of your child's eyes or with their visual behaviour, contact your

public health nurse, family doctor, practice nurse or area medical officer. They can refer you to the specialist medical eye service. Your child's eyes are also checked at the 7–9 month developmental check.

Your child's hearing

Cloisint



What can my child hear?

Your child's age:	Your child may:
By about 6-8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● turn their head at once towards a parent or carer when they hear a familiar voice, and ● turn towards and locate very quiet sounds made at either side of them if they are not too distracted by what is going on in front of them.
By about 9-12 months onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● search for very quiet sounds, even though they cannot see the object or person making the sound, ● listen to and repeat simple words they hear, ● copy some sounds they hear you making, like coughing or laughing, and ● show pleasure in making babbling noises and hearing themselves making the sounds.



What do I do if I notice something wrong with my child's hearing?

If you are concerned about your child's hearing at any time, contact your public health nurse, family doctor, practice nurse or area medical officer to talk about your concerns. Your child's hearing is also checked at the 7 to 9 month developmental check. In the future, all newborn babies will have their hearing screened with the **neonatal hearing screening test**, but this is not yet in place.

Your child's speech and language development

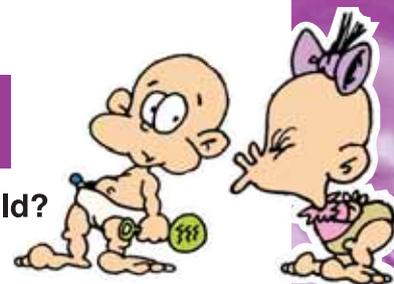
Forbairt cainte agus urlabhra

What do the words 'speech' and 'language' mean for a young child?

Speech means your child makes sounds that are correct for their age.

Language means your child understands and uses words and sentences that are correct for their age.

Children begin to communicate from birth. It is important to realise that there are differences between the rate at which each child's speech and language develops. As a parent, you know your child best. Here are some general guidelines you can look for in your child's speech and language development. If you have any concerns, then contact



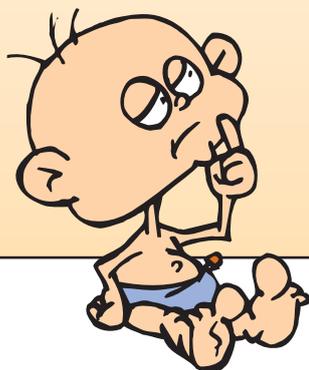
your family doctor or public health nurse for advice or a referral to a specialist speech and language therapist.

A general guide to your child's speech and language development

By 6-9 months, your child may:	By about 9-12 months, your child may:	By about 12-15 months, your child may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● make sing-song sounds in double syllables like 'a-a', 'muh' 'goo', ● babble a long string of syllables aloud, such as 'dad-dad', 'mam-ma-ma', or 'ag-aga', and ● make several sounds such as 'ba', 'da', and 'ma' all in one breath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● say 'no' and shake their head from side to side, ● try to sing along to a rhyming song using their own babbling sounds, ● point at a dog and say 'bow-wow', and ● recognise and respond to their own name. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand and respond to simple instructions such as 'do not touch' or 'give me the ball', ● let you know they want something by standing near it and pointing to it, using their own babble of words over and over again, and ● recognise the names of close family members.



By about 15-18 months, your child may:	By about 18-24 months, your child may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● say 6 to 20 recognisable words and understand even more words, ● practice the new words they learn as well as sing tunefully to themselves during quiet times, such as when they are lying in bed, ● join up words now, such as 'good-bye' or 'all gone', and ● say 'thank-you' if they hear you say it often to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● have a range of up to 50 recognisable phrases such as 'dada gone' or 'more juice', ● say their own name, ● understand much of what you say and try hard to communicate back by talking to you, ● repeat the last word you said in a sentence, ● join in nursery rhymes and sing rhyming songs, and ● let you know when they are hungry or thirsty by asking for food or drink.



Are there tips to help my child learn to speak and understand language?

- Crouch down to your child's level and look at them when you are talking with them.
 - Remove distractions. Turn off the television and give your child all your attention.
 - Set aside 10-15 minutes of your time every day to listen to what they have to say. Allow them to speak without rushing them. This allows them to feel important and it develops their confidence.
 - Keep your sentences short and simple.
 - Talk to your child about everyday things that you are doing and listen to their reply.
 - Play rhyme games with your child such as 'This Little Piggy'. Wiggle each of your child's toes as you say the rhyme. This encourages your child to concentrate on the touch and what to expect with each word.
 - Do not talk baby talk to your child. Speak to them as you would to another grown up.
- A useful website which contains information sheets on early communication and on development on reading and writing from birth to 3 years is www.literacytrust.org.uk

What if we speak a language other than English at home?

Many children grow in a family where more than one language is spoken every day. Young children adapt very well and pick up different languages quickly. The important thing is to speak to your child in the language that you feel at ease with. This might mean you use one language and your partner uses another language when you talk with your child. As your child grows, they will have a head start at school in two different languages.

Your child's social, emotional and behavioural development

Forbairt sóisialta, mothúcháin agus iompair do pháiste

Your child's social, emotional and behavioural development is influenced by the way you listen and respond to them and by the way they respond to you. This relationship between you and your child in the first 2 years of their life provides the foundation for good health and well-being throughout the rest of their lives.

- In your child's first year it is important that you provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for you and your child to develop. The ways you hold your child closely, make eye contact, speak with them, touch them and comfort them are all part of building this loving and trusting relationship between both of you.
- As your child develops from baby to toddler, you will notice how they move from being dependent on you to developing a sense of independence of their own.
- As a parent, it is important to know what to expect during these stages so that you can support your child and help them grow to be as confident and secure as they can be. This also develops the relationship between you and your child.



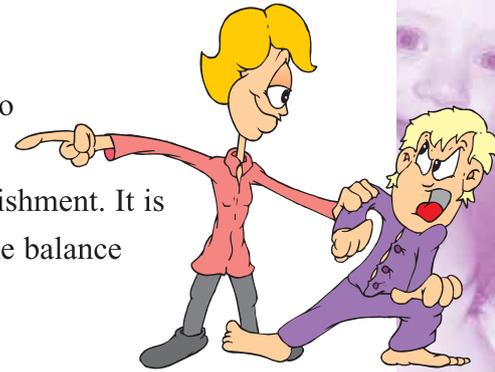
What should I expect in my child's social, emotional and behavioural development?

Child's age:	Your child may:
6-9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● begin to show fear of things that did not bother them before this, such as heights or going for a bath, and ● get very attached to you and upset if you go away, for example when you leave them at your child-minding service or with your babysitter.
9-12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● seek your attention and cry to get it, ● become shy around other less familiar faces and be attached to you, ● develop a close relationship with you and trust that their needs will be met by you, ● show feelings of happiness by laughing and feelings of anger by screaming and feelings of hurt by crying, and ● be able to recognise these ranges of feelings in others. For example, they may get upset easily if they see and hear another small child crying.
12-15 months	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● be easily frightened and cry if they are startled by a sound such as a door banging, ● look for your attention and approval but not always do what you say, ● have developed a safe and secure relationship with you, ● react to changes in their daily routine, and ● be able to soothe and comfort themselves, for example by sucking their thumb, as well as getting comfort from you.
15-18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● get upset when they do not get something they want, ● be unwilling to share toys with other children, or ● enjoy and thrive on getting your personal attention and praise.
18-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● like to have their own way by testing their limits, ● have temper tantrums when they do not get their way, ● become less frightened than they were of things such as heights or people they do not really know, ● learn to deal with short separations from you, ● not be anxious to go to bed at bedtime, ● not like it if you are cross with them and they may cry, ● show resentment of any attention you give to other small children, and ● develop a sense of themselves such as recognising their own face in a mirror.

How can I guide my child's behaviour?

As a parent, you want the best for your child. You want to be able to teach them about good behaviour and give them a guide by setting limits on what is acceptable behaviour for their age. This is not punishment. It is an aspect of teaching your child what is right and wrong. Getting the balance right is not easy. As your child develops, they may misbehave by:

- saying 'no' a lot;
- run away when you try to put on their coat or put them to bed; or
- have a temper tantrum.

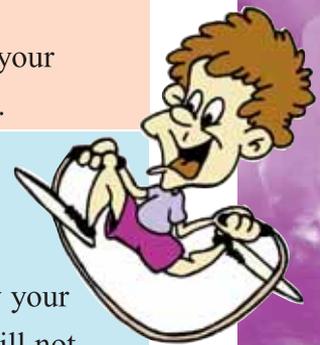


What should I do if my child misbehaves?

You will need a number of different responses and solutions to help your child if they misbehave.

- Stop and think before you do anything. Try and be aware of why your child is misbehaving. For example, are they looking for your attention or do they not want to share their toys with others?
- Understanding what is going on when they misbehave makes it much easier to know how best to help your child.
- Stay as calm as you can and do not get upset or angry. Remember that this is all part of your child's normal growth and development. They are learning from your reaction to their misbehaviour.
- Plan to avoid possible misbehaviour problems. For example, try not to bring your cranky child out shopping if they did not have an afternoon nap and are tired.

- If your child or others are not being put at risk by the misbehaviour, it can safely be ignored. This means you don't give the misbehaviour any attention, such as not getting cross with your child or even looking at them. In this way your child realises that this behaviour is not getting them any attention and they will not continue with it.
- If you feel the misbehaviour is causing harm to themselves or others and cannot be ignored, make it clear that it is the misbehaviour that is wrong and not your child, as this may affect their self-esteem. For example, instead of saying 'you are a naughty boy, why can't you be good', say 'James, pushing Andrea is not nice. It can hurt. Please don't push.'
- It is also very important that you let your child know that you will take action, such as removing them from the play area if they choose to misbehave again.



- Show your love and attention to your child whenever you can. Praise and encourage your child as soon as you see good behaviour. For example, if your child lets another child share their toys, say 'James, it's very nice the way you let Andrea play with your tractor. You are a kind boy'.

What is a temper tantrum?

A temper tantrum is your growing child's way of expressing their feelings. For example, your child may become cross with temper if they cannot make you understand what they want, or you do not let them have their own way. During a temper tantrum, your child may:

- shout,
- scream,
- kick,
- bite,
- throw things about,
- hold their breath, or
- sometimes throw themselves on to the floor.



At what stage could my child show signs of a temper tantrum?

- Your child may show signs of a temper tantrum from their second year of life.
- It gradually tails off by the time they are around three years old.

For many children, these tantrums may only occur a few times, if at all. For other children, these episodes of misbehaviour are more frequent but will ease off as they grow. Watching this temper tantrum taking place in your own home is upsetting enough, but sometimes it may happen out in a public place, such as in a shop or in the street, which can be very distressing for you both.



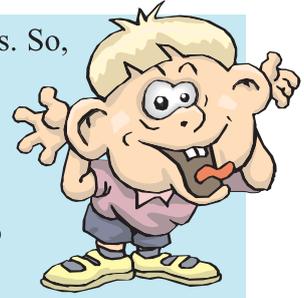
What can I do to manage my child's temper tantrum?

As your child begins to want more independence you need to manage their temper tantrums carefully. It's very important that you stay calm while managing your child's tantrum, as they will be watching to see how you react. Remember that this is all part your child's growth and development so do not punish your child for this behaviour.

The main tips are the same as "What should I do if my child misbehaves" on page 35. Here are some other ideas.

- When you say 'no', say it firmly and calmly and offer your child another option. For example, encourage other good aspects of their behaviour, such as getting them to join in play with you and others. Remember, it is the tone of your voice and their understanding of the word **NO** that is important to learn at an early age.
- Sometimes children will test your limits despite you telling them not to do something. By giving in to this misbehaviour, your child may do it again to get other things they want.
- It is important that your child understands that if they carry on with a behaviour that harms themselves or others, such as pushing or throwing things, then you will take action, such as removing them from the area or taking the object off your child. This lets them know that you are doing this as a result of their unacceptable behaviour.

- As they calm down, the temper tantrum will usually dissolve into tears. So, if possible, hold your child gently but firmly during the tantrum. If your child does not want to be held closely during the tantrum, don't insist on it. Just remove anything that might cause them harm or that they might break, and wait calmly, not too far away, for the tantrum to settle.



- Have patience. If you find yourself becoming angry or upset with your child's behaviour, see if you can get another adult to take over minding them while you take some time out to unwind.

What can I do if my child bites?

Sometimes children of the same age bite each other. Usually, the same child does the biting. The best way of dealing with biting is to remove the child who bites and give them the least attention. In this way, you make the biting seem unrewarding and not worth talking about.

Pick up the child who has received the bite. Give them a few minutes of your full and soothing attention.

If the other child tries to join in, remind them to wait because their misbehaviour of biting was unacceptable.

How can I cope with jealousy among my children?

It is normal for your older child or children to feel jealous at the arrival of a new brother or sister. Many young children:

- go back to 'baby' behaviour, such as a child who is fully toilet trained wetting themselves again; or
- have temper tantrums again.

The time and love you give to your older child or children and the way you deal with their behaviour is important. It is also crucial to how they learn to deal with other emotions as they grow. Here are some tips to help your older child cope.

- The best way to deal with your older child's misbehaviour is to be patient and understanding with them.
- Try to keep the family routine as normal as possible for your older child.
- Encourage your older child to become involved, especially during times of play and reading.
- Do not force your older child to be too involved. They may not want to help.

For more advice about coping with your child's developing behaviour, contact your

- public health nurse; or
- family doctor and practice nurse.

You can also phone Parentline on 1890 927 277.



Health checks for your child

Scrúdaithe sláinte dod' pháiste

When is the health check?	What happens at this health check?
<p>The 7- 9 month developmental check</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your medical officer or public health nurse discusses your child's and family's health issues and concerns with you and your partner. <p>They also check your child's general medical/physical health, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● dental health, ● developmental progress, ● eyes and ears, and ● growth measurement. <p>The results are checked against previous measurements to see that that your child is growing and developing steadily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boys are checked to make sure that both testes have descended. <p>If you or your health professional are concerned about any part of the check, then you and your child will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● invited back for a re-check, or ● referred to a specialist for further assessment.
<p>The 18 - 24 month developmental check</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your public health nurse discusses your child's and family's health and developmental issues and concerns with you and your partner. ● Your nurse also measures your child's growth. The nurse then checks the measurement against the previous measurement to make sure that your child is growing well. <p>If you or your public health nurse are concerned about any part of your child's check, then they may check them again or refer your child to a specialist.</p>

What signs may suggest that my child is not developing as expected?

This list is only a guide to problems with development. Remember, each child is different and will develop at their own pace. Trained professionals can observe your child's behaviour and development. If you are concerned that your child is not developing, let them know.

Possible signs that may suggest your child is not developing as expected

If your child, aged 6-12 months:

- is very reluctant to start solid foods from about 6–7 months on,
- does not hold toys offered to them,
- needs help sitting up,
- does not use both hands equally,
- is not crawling or moving forward in some way,
- does not smile or laugh out loud,
- does not make different sounds when they speak,
- does not turn towards you when you call their name,
- does not make eye contact with you,
- does not show pleasure when seeing you and other familiar people,
- is constantly irritable and unable to soothe themselves or gain comfort from you,
- has difficulty establishing a sleeping, waking and feeding pattern, or
- fails to gain weight even though they seem healthy.

If your child, aged 1-2 years:

- is mainly silent when playing, or does not babble a lot,
- is not able to point to objects and toys that you name,
- is not walking by 18 months, or walks on their toes only,
- does not imitate actions or words,
- is not starting to speak at least 15 meaningful words by 18 months,
- does not follow simple instructions by 2 years old,
- does not listen when others are talking,
- does not show any anxiety or upset when they are separated from you,
- clings to you a lot and does not like changes in their routine,
- has difficulty interacting with you and other caregivers, including not making eye contact with you, or
- is not responding to the limits you set and can be very stubborn or defiant in their contacts with you and others.

Your child with special needs

Do pháiste le riachtanaisí speisialta

As a parent, you have many difficult choices to make to do the best for your family and your child. All of your family needs support at the assessment and planning of care. Here is a broad outline of services for families of children with special needs.





What services and entitlements may be available?

Early intervention team (pre-school developmental team)

This team works with you, your child and your family to develop a package of care to suit your child's individual needs. This team is made up of a range of professionals.

Your specialist public health nurse also visits you at home at different times, depending on your child's and family's needs. These visits are to listen and be supportive.

Day-care services

A specialist playgroup may be available in your local area for your pre-school child.

Respite services

Respite is a break in your routine of caring for your child with special needs. Respite is also an opportunity for your child to be observed by specialists. Respite services are provided by:

- the Health Service Executive
- the voluntary sector, or
- private organisations.

The length of time your child stays in respite and the frequency of respite services may depend on:

- your child's needs
- your family circumstances, and
- the type of service available in your area.

Equipment, aids and home support

The equipment, aids and home support services that are available to you may depend on:

- your child's needs,
- your family circumstances, and
- the type of service available in your area.

Financial support and assistance

You may need information about your rights and entitlements for yourself and your family, including:

- social welfare supports and allowances,
- medical card or long-term illness card, or
- domiciliary care allowance.

Who do I contact for more information?

- Specialist public health nurses.
- Local disability services.
- Counsellor for children with special needs

- Specialist public health nurse.
- Pre-school services officer.
- Your public health nurse.
- Counsellor for children with special needs

- Specialist public health nurse.
- Family doctor.
- Local disability services.
- Your public health nurse.
- Counsellor for children with special needs



- Specialist public health nurse.
- Occupational therapist.
- Social worker.
- Counsellor for children with special needs

- Specialist public health nurse.
- Social worker.
- Community welfare officer.
- Social welfare office.
- Citizen's information centre.
- Counsellor for children with special needs

There are also a number of specialist voluntary support groups that provide information and support. Contact your public health nurse or disability services for more information on the supports in your area.

6. Playing and learning

Ag súgradh agus foghlaim



What is play?

Cad is súgradh ann?

Play is a natural and active process in which your child's thinking, feeling, doing and learning can develop within a safe and secure relationship with you. You can see the quality of your child's play when you see them relax and become absorbed in what they are doing.

As my child plays, how do they learn and develop?

Your child has a natural ability for learning and developing that is present at birth. Learning and developing happens in many ways as children grow and express themselves. Some of the areas of your child's development are outlined below.

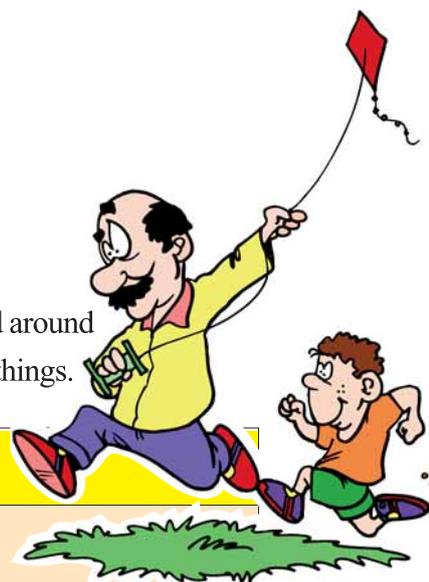
Development area	What does my child learn to do?
Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During their first year, they use their whole body and their 5 senses to play and learn. ● As they become more mobile in their second year, they stretch and grasp things by using their eye and hand movements together, and balance as they move. This movement includes going up and down, pushing and pulling, moving in and out, and playing hide and seek.
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They begin to experiment and test out their developing thinking, reasoning and memory skills. For example, they explore a soft toy as they play with it to discover what will happen if they squeeze it, taste it or drop it.
Emotional and Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They express their feelings by laughing, smiling or crying. ● They use play to express themselves. For example, during 'peek-a-boo' they are interacting with you and learning that you are there even when they cannot see your face. ● They respond to the warmth of your praise and your cuddles.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They play with you and others, as well as play happily on their own while you are near. <p>Encourage your child to mix with other children by visiting a parent and baby/toddler group.</p>



Learning through the senses

Ag foghlaim trí na ceádfá

You can help your child to develop and learn about themselves and the world around them by encouraging them to play and use their senses to explore different things.



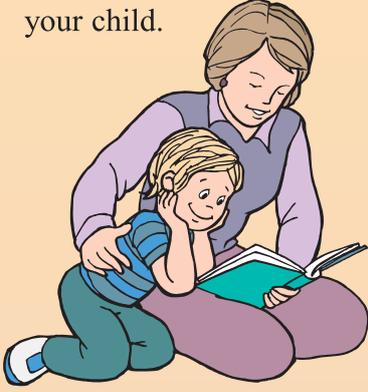
Sense	Your child learns by:
Sight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● seeing the different colours of playthings, ● seeing people or toys as they move about, and ● noticing if things are big or small, long or short, and shiny or dull looking.
Smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● smelling different odours such as perfume on mammy, the smell of dinner cooking, or the smell of freshly cut grass.
Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● hearing loud and soft noises, laughter and voices, ringing bells, banging drums, and ● listening to you read to them out loud every day. <p>Go to a busy place such as the town centre with your child to hear the sound of traffic moving and horns making noise.</p>
Taste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using their mouth to explore and recognise things, such as tasting new foods, or putting a toy up to their mouth to explore it, and ● making funny faces when they taste sweet or sour things. 
Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● touching the smoothness of a rubber toy, the coolness of a mirror, or the roughness of a furry floor rug and ● feeling the wind on their face. <p>Encourage your child to touch your face, grasp your hair and clutch your finger.</p>

If your child has difficulty using one of their senses, such as hearing or sight, their other senses help them continue to learn and develop through play.



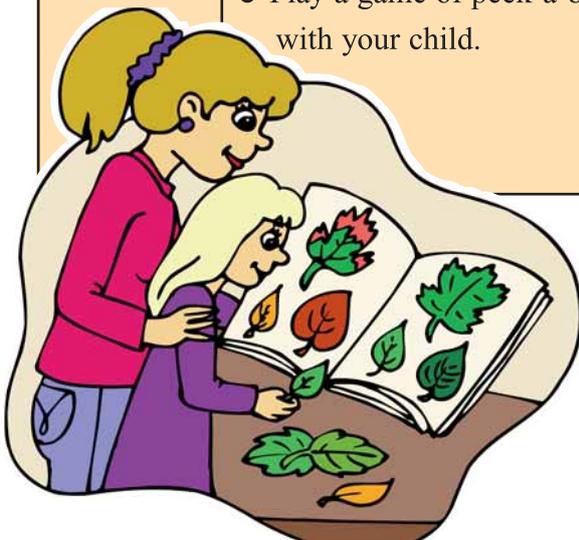
Developing through play

Ag forbairt trí súgradh

My child's age	What should I do with my child?	How does my child respond and learn?
<p>6-12 months</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give your child a few large blocks and toys with wheels to play with.  ● Show your child their image in a mirror. ● Sit down, talk and read with your child.  ● Spend time holding and cuddling your child. You can do this during daily routines such as nappy changing. ● Point to your body parts, such as your eyes and ears, and say each name out loud. ● Praise your child and give them lots of your attention. ● Make different funny faces when you play with your child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your child likes to pick up things and shake them, listening to the sounds they make, especially when they drop them. ● Your child likes to touch and kiss their image in the mirror. ● This helps your child to understand speech and language. ● Your child is also soothed on hearing your voice and is able to tell if you are happy by the way you look at them and speak. ● Your child loves being close to you on your lap and touching the colourful pictures on the book. ● They get excited when they see pictures of other babies in books or photos. ● Your child feels secure and bonded to you. ● Your child shows interest in what you are doing with them. You can see this in their eye contact with you and their smiles and babbling. ● Listening and watching you point to your eyes and ears helps your child understand the parts of their body. ● Your child loves to be praised for the things they do and may clap their hands to show their happiness. ● Praise and love builds their self-esteem and confidence. ● Your child laughs at your funny faces and tries to copy them. 



My child's age	What should I do with my child?	How does my child respond and learn?
12-18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hide a toy in front of your child while they are watching you do it.● Gently throw a soft ball towards your child.● Introduce different things for your child to play and learn with, such as a cardigan with a large zip, to encourage your child to grasp small objects.● Play a game of chase with your child.● Play with blocks that stack on top of one another.● Allow your child some time to play alone while you are near.● Play a game of peek-a-boo with your child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Your child enjoys the game and will quickly find the hidden toy.● Your child tries to copy you by picking up the ball and throwing it back while they are sitting or standing.● Your child may be able to unzip a large zipper using their thumb and index finger to hold the zip. ● Your child loves you to chase after them and will laugh and squeal with pleasure as they move about with you following them.● Your child will try to stack up a few blocks after you show them how to do it a few times. They learn to use their hands and eyes together to build the blocks.● Your child learns to play contentedly on their own for a while, knowing that you are nearby.● They will show great enjoyment by giggling and smiling and making eye contact with you.



My child's age	What should I do with my child?	How does my child respond and learn?
<p data-bbox="209 304 316 371">18-24 months</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play football with your child using a soft ball. ● Play with a tricycle to help your child's movement. ● Divide your child's toys into two different boxes and switch the boxes around each week. ● Use an old shoebox and tea towel as a bed for your child's teddy or doll. ● Make a game out of doing routine things like washing and drying your child's hands before mealtimes. ● Sit your child on your lap and read stories to them. ● Encourage your child to mix with other children of their own age by visiting a parent and toddler group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your child learns to balance on one foot while they try to kick the ball with the other foot. ● Your child can sit on a small tricycle and move about by pushing their feet forward on the floor, but they cannot use the pedals yet. ● Your child stays interested in the range of toys in the two different boxes. ● Your child likes to copy what they see and hear you do with them, such as putting their toy into the bed, fixing the blankets, and singing a song to their teddy or doll. ● Your child likes routines and will recognise that washing hands happens before eating. They also learn to do things for themselves like drying their hands, with a little help from you. ● Your child may be able to turn over the page to continue the story you are reading to them. ● If you turn the picture book upside down, they may recognise this and try to turn it upright again. ● At this stage your child plays happily on their own while in the company of other children. ● They are not yet ready to share their toys with other children. 



Playing with toys

Ag súgradh le breágaín



Here is a mix of toys and everyday household items that encourage your child's development as they grow. Only use a few of the toys or household things at one time so your child has time to explore each one. What is important is that you and your child work together during the play.

Suitable toys from 6 months to 1 year old

- Toys with different textures such as crinkle foil or rough and smooth materials.
 - Rattles and other toys that make a range of noises and tunes.
 - Mobiles (toys that safely hang over your child's cot). They enjoy reaching and grasping at these toys.
 - Soft colourful balls and toys to push, roll and catch.
 - A soft blanket or activity mat with mirrors for your child to touch and 'goo' and toys that make sound and move about.
 - Colourful books with thick pages that have everyday pictures such as faces, cars, tractors or animals.
 - Tapes or compact discs (CDs) of gentle relaxing music, stories or nursery rhymes.
 - Blocks that stack on top of one another, or small shapes that fit into a larger box.
- Make sure the block or toy is large enough so your child does not accidentally choke on it. Do not give your child a block or toy that can fit through the centre of a toilet roll. The toy is too small.
 - Check for the CE mark. (Safety Symbol)
 - Throw out broken toys



Suitable toys from 1 to 2 years old



- Empty toilet rolls or large spools of thread tied together to make a pull along snake.
- Simple insert puzzles and duplo or stickle blocks.
- Chunky non-toxic crayons and blank pages for your child to draw and scribble on.
- Play-dough to let your child mould and create things.
- Books with thick cardboard pages with short stories made up of a sentence on each page.
- Toys for pretend play, such as a plastic tea set, or an old hat and shoes for playing dress up.
- Big wheeled toys that move about on the floor and can be pushed or pulled along.
- Household things such as a saucepan to place smaller shapes into, and a wooden spoon to bang on it.
- A low-sided box that has some everyday things or treasures such as a lemon, a natural sponge and a soft hairbrush. **Make sure the objects in the box are safe before you give them to your child.**
- Plastic jugs and a basin for pouring, filling and emptying sand and water.



You or another adult must watch your child all the time while they play.



7. Keep your young child safe

Ag coimeád do pháistí sábhálta

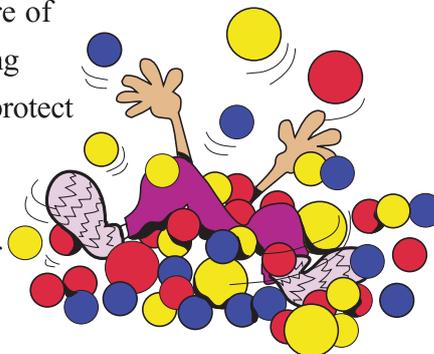


How to keep your child safe from 6 months to 2 years old

Conas do pháiste a choimeád sábhálta é 6 mhí go 2 bhliain daois

Watch your child at all times as they are not aware of danger. When your child starts crawling and moving about, they will begin to explore around them. To protect your child from danger, follow these tips.

- Get down on your own hands and knees and look around each room in your house from your child's level. This will help you to see any potential risks that your child may discover.
- Fit childproof locks on doors and cupboards that contain cleaning liquids, medicines and other harmful materials.
- Fit childproof socket covers on electrical sockets that your child can reach.
- Move glasses and breakable cups, saucers and plates up to higher cupboards in the kitchen.
- Move pot plants off the floor, unless you like a messy floor.
- Fit stair gates at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Secure all windows with window restrictors that don't require tools for opening.
- Never let a small child play or sleep on the top bunk of a bed, in case they accidentally fall down.
- Cover or fence off garden ponds or exposed slurry pits on a farm to stop your child falling in.
- Close the front and back gates to prevent your child getting out on the street or road.
- **Make sure your child cannot squeeze through the bars on the gate and get out.**
- The cords of window blinds and curtains are a danger to babies and children. Babies and children can be strangled by cord loops. Contact the National Consumer Agency and National Standards Authority of Ireland for information on safe products in the home. Their contact numbers are on the back of this booklet.






national consumer agency
aghlannach na t-ábhair na hÉireann
putting consumers first

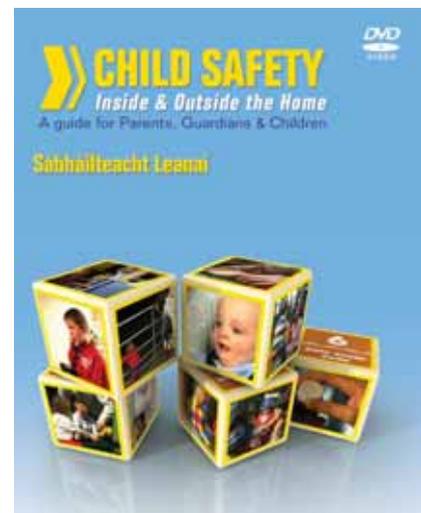
Consumer Guide to the Safety of Window Blinds



Your home should be a place where your children are safe and protected, but it can harbour many unforeseen dangers.

The cords of window blinds and curtains pose a particular risk to children. Babies and young children, particularly those under the age of three, can be injured or strangled by cord loops on roller blinds, venetian blinds or vertical blinds.

Phone your Local Health Promotion Office for a copy of the DVD Child Safety Inside and Outside the Home or order online at www.healthpromotion.ie.

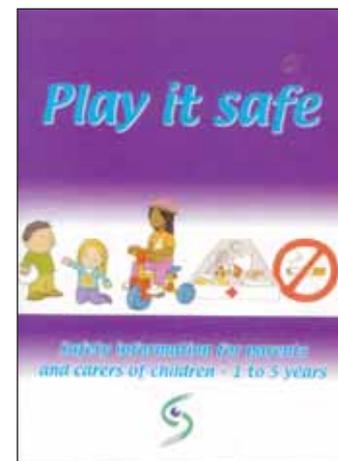
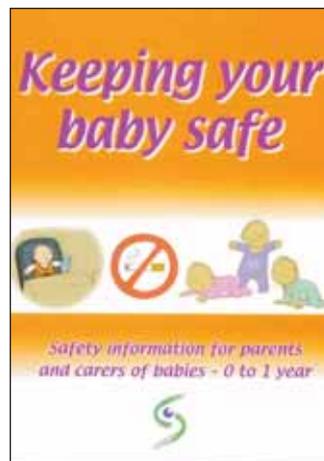


There is more detailed safety information in the two booklets from the Health Promotion Unit called:

- **Keeping your baby safe: Safety information for parents and carers of babies - 0 to 1 year;** and
- **Play it safe: Safety information for parents and carers of children - 1 to 5 years.**

These booklets contain useful information on:

- safety as your child grows,
- burns and scalds,
- poisoning,
- suffocation, and
- basic first aid.



Phone your local health promotion office for a copy of these useful information booklets.

How can I keep my child safe in the sun?

Conas a choimeádfaídh mo pháiste sábháilte faoin grian

Always protect your child from the harmful rays of the sun. They may get sunburn or sunstroke.

- Keep your child out of the midday sun and in the shade if possible, especially on very sunny days. For example, shade them under a tree and attach a sun shade cover over their pram or pushchair (buggy).
- Use a layer of sun block on the exposed areas of your child's skin, such as their face, arms and legs.
- Use a sun hat on your child's head and cover their body with a T-shirt.
- Protect your child's eyes with sunglasses that have a coating on them to protect against the rays of the sun.

What should I do if my child has an accident?

Cadagh dhéanfaidh mé má bhíonn timpist ag mo pháiste

The best advice we can give you is to keep a first aid kit in your home. Also, learn basic first aid skills so that you know what to do in an emergency. It could make the difference between life and death. For more information on first aid courses in your local area, contact the organisations that are listed on page 54.



If an accident looks serious, do not waste any time.

- Phone 999 or 112 and ask for an Ambulance, Fire Brigade or Gardaí.
- Let the service know if your child is conscious or unconscious. They will advise you what to do while you wait for them to arrive.
- Do not move your child unless you have to.

How can I keep my child safe outside the home?

Conas a choimfeáfaidh mé mo pháiste sábháilte fén aer?

- Make sure an adult you trust always watches over your child when they are out and about.
- Let your childminder or service know the names of the people who can collect your child if you can't make it.
- Never leave your child on their own in a car.
- Never leave your child unattended in a pram or pushchair outside a shop.
- Be alert and keep your child close by your side while you are in public places such as shopping centres, food outlets, public parks or football stadiums.

Travelling in the car with your child

Ag taistil sa chearr leis mo pháiste



What type of a car seat should I choose?

Choose a car seat that:



- conforms to a recognised safety standard mark (check the label on the seat);
- is suitable for your child's weight and height;
- is a suitable fit for your car; and
- is correctly fitted into the car according to the manufacturer's instructions.

How can I keep my child safe in the car?

- Drive carefully.
- The back seat of the car is a safer place for your child to travel.

- **Never** put a rear-facing baby car seat into a front passenger seat where a passenger air bag is fitted.
- Secure your child in their correct car seat every time they go into the car, no matter how short the journey.

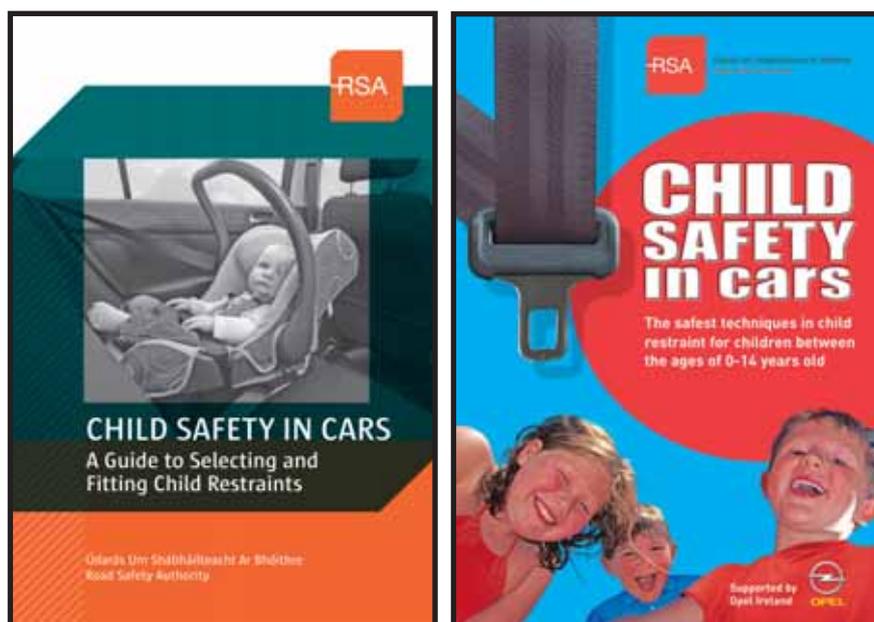
What are the types of car seats for my child's weight and age?

Type of child car seat:	Your child's weight:	Your child's age:
Group 0: Rear-facing baby seat	For babies up to 10 kgs (22lbs)	Birth to 6–9 months
Group 0+: Rear-facing baby seat	For babies up to 13 kgs (29 lbs)	Birth to 12–15 months
Group 1: Forward-facing child seat	9–18 kgs (20 – 40 lbs)	9 months–4 years

For more information about keeping your baby and child safe in the car, read the booklet or watch the DVD on '**Child Safety in Cars**'. Contact the Road Safety Authority for a copy of both. The phone number and web address are at the back of this booklet. This booklet and DVD gives useful information on:

- types of child seats;
- fitting and using child seats;
- buying a child seat;
- problem behaviour; and
- choosing a family car.

Contact the Road Safety Authority for a copy. Their phone number and web address are on page 54.



DVD

8. Childminding arrangements

Socraithe cúram leanaí

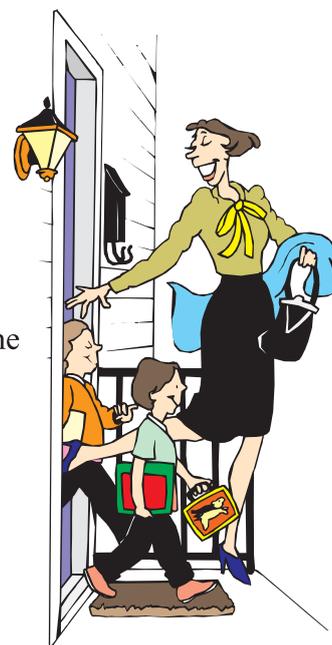
Childminding arrangements

Socraithe cúram leanaí

We discussed good childminding arrangements in the booklet **Caring for Your Baby: Birth to Six Months Old**. The information included:

- childminding options; and
- what to look for before you make good childminding arrangements.

Read section 8 of the first booklet again. Or listen again to track 8 of the audio CD that comes with the booklet. If you do not have a copy of the first information pack, ask your public health nurse or local health promotion office for a copy.



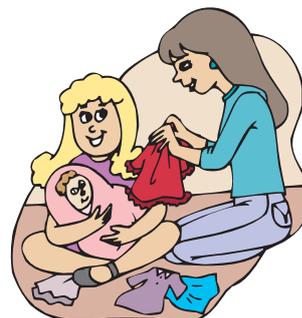
Babysitting arrangements

Socraithe feighlí páistí

Choosing a babysitter to care for your child now and then is as important as choosing a day care service. You want a good babysitter who will put the safety and welfare of your child first. Think about it and discuss the options with your family and other people you trust.

Are there any tips to help me choose a good babysitter?

- Consider a babysitter's level of experience, sense of responsibility and ability to care for your child.
- Meet with other parents in your area to see what babysitters they have and how they went about making that suitable choice.
- Some parents that you trust may have teenagers and younger children. The teenagers will be used to minding younger sisters and brothers. They may be interested in babysitting for you.
- Find out the local rate for babysitting before you hire someone. Discuss pay with your sitter so that you are both comfortable with the payment beforehand.
- Have a reserve babysitter in case your usual person is unable to make it.
- You know you have chosen a good babysitter when your child looks forward to seeing them and appears comfortable and relaxed with them.



What points should I discuss with my babysitter?

- Chat about your child's night time routine so your babysitter is familiar with it. This includes looking in on your sleeping baby about every half-hour and an older child every hour.
- Show your babysitter the layout of your home, including:
 - where the fire exits and door keys are;
 - where first aid equipment is kept; and
 - how equipment such as cookers and the heating system works.
- Discuss security issues with your babysitter so that they know what to do if:
 - the telephone rings while you are out; or
 - someone calls to the door.

What should I expect of my babysitter?

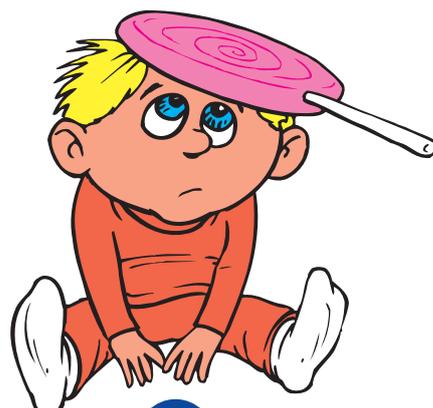
Discuss with your babysitter what you expect of them. For example, you may not want the babysitter to:

- leave the house at any time while you are away;
- let other people into your home, unless you are aware of it, and approve;
- smoke or drink alcohol in your home;
- fall asleep while babysitting unless they are staying over for the night;
- have loud music or wear headphones that would prevent them from hearing your child crying; or
- use the telephone, unless you are aware of it, and approve.



What should I prepare for my babysitter before I go out?

- Let your babysitter know to the nearest half hour when you are due to come home.
- Write down the following numbers and give them to your babysitter:
 - emergency telephone numbers, such as 999 and Gardaí;
 - your mobile phone number, if you have one;
 - the address and telephone number of where you are going; and
 - another contact number, such a local member of your family, or a local friend, in case your babysitter cannot contact you in an emergency.



9. Your benefits and leave entitlements

Do chuid sochair agus socraithe saoire

There are different state benefits and leave entitlements for parents, adoptive parents and adults legally acting in the place of a child's natural parents. Read section 9 of the booklet called **Caring for Your Baby: Birth to Six months Old** again for information on:

- maternity benefit and adoptive benefit;
- maternity leave and adoptive leave;
- paternity leave for fathers;
- parental leave for mothers and fathers;
- child benefit;
- the early child care supplement;
- one-parent family benefit; and
- other benefits you may qualify for such as **domiciliary care allowance** which is available from birth or the date of applying up to 16 years. Subject to all eligibility criteria being met.

For more information on these benefits and leave entitlements contact your local:

- Health Service Executive-Local Health Offices;
- Social Welfare Office;
- Citizens Information Centre; or your
- employer.

You can also contact:

- Department of Social and Family Affairs (Child Benefit Section) on LoCall 1890 40 04 00;
- Department of Social and Family Affairs (One Parent Family Section) on LoCall 1890 50 00 00; and
- The Equality Authority, (Public Information Service) LoCall 1890 24 55 45.



10. Useful web pages and phone numbers

Leathnaigh idirlíon úsáideach fón uimhreacha



Information on:	Web address	Phone number
Accident prevention and safety		
Child Accident Prevention Trust	www.capt.org.uk	
Civil Defence	www.civildefence.ie	(0505) 25310
Irish Red Cross	www.redcross.ie	(01) 642 4600
National Consumer Agency	www.consumerconnect.ie	1890 432 432
National Standards Authority	www.nsai.ie	(01) 807 3800
Order of Malta	www.orderofmalta.ie	(01) 614 0035
Road Safety Authority	www.rsa.ie	1890 50 60 80
St. John's Ambulance		(01) 668 8077
Breastfeeding support		
Breastfeeding Support Network	www.breastfeeding.ie	
Cuidiú (Irish Childbirth Trust)	www.cuidiu-ict.ie	(01) 872 4501
La Leche League of Ireland	www.lalecheleague.org	
Child health and parent support information		
Barnardos (working with children and families)	www.barnardos.ie	1850 222 300
Centre for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov	
Dental Health Foundation	www.dentalhealth.ie	(01) 478 0466
Family Support Agency		(01) 611 4100
Irish Multiple Births Association	www.imba.ie	(01) 874 9056
Health Promotion Unit –	www.healthpromotion.ie	(01) 635 4099
Health Protection Surveillance Centre (information on immunisation and disease)	www.hpsc.ie	(01) 876 5300
Information on immunisation for children and adults	www.immunisation.ie	
Life Start	www.lifestart.ie	071 915 1114
Meningitis Research Foundation (information and support on meningitis)	www.meningitis.org	1890 413 344 24 hour helpline
National Literacy Trust	www.literacytrust.org.uk	
Parentline (for parents under stress including post natal depression)	www.parentline.ie	1890 927 277
Parenting support (to help parents be their best)	www.parenting.sa.gov.au	
Parenting resource on the first years	www.zerotothree.org	
The whole child (for information on child development from birth to 5)	www.pbs.org/wholechild	
Treoir (information for unmarried Parents and their children)	www.treoir.ie	LoCall 1890 252 084

Information on:	Web address	Phone number
Health and personal social services		
Health Service Executive	www.hse.ie	1850 20 1850
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensinformation.ie	1890 777 121
Social welfare information	www.welfare.ie	1890 928 400
The Equality Authority	www.equality.ie	1890 24 55 45

These websites and phone numbers were correct at the time of going to print.

References

Tagairtí

The information in this booklet came from:

- The organisations mentioned in this booklet;
- the websites listed in Section 10;
- the references and websites on the first and third information packs listed on the back cover of this booklet; and
- the following books and reports:
 - Department of Health (2005). Birth to Five. London: Department of Health.
 - Health Education Board for Scotland (2002). Ready Steady Baby: A guide to pregnancy, birth and early parenthood (2nd edition). Edinburgh: Health Education Board for Scotland.
 - Health Service Executive - Midlands Area (2005). Child Safety Awareness Programme (CSAP).
 - National Core Child Health Programme Review Group (2005). Best Health for Children Revisited. Report from the National Core Child Health Programme Review Group to the Health Service Executive. Dublin: Programme of Action for Children. (www.pacril.ie)
 - Sheridan, M. (2003) From Birth to Five Years: Children's Developmental Progress. (Revised and updated by Frost, M. and Sharma, Dr. A.) New York: Routledge.



Notes

Nótaí