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Helping you and your baby start out right.



file: ParentStart

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Anytown, MA 02314

ParentStart™ is brought
to you by the Department
of Health & Human
Services and Imagitas



Congratulations on your new baby!

This Newsletter is designed to help you make the most of your child's earliest days. Inside you'll find:

- Frequently asked questions from new parents just like you.
- Tips on quality child care, health care and early childhood development.
- Important phone numbers and web sites where you can find answers to your questions.

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Dear Parent:

This is an exciting time for you and your growing family. There are so many questions and things to do when you have a baby. From keeping them on track with their immunizations to stimulating their brain development, there is so much to learn.

The Department of Health and Human Services is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans. And, we have a special interest in making sure all children get off to a healthy start. This ParentStart newsletter brings together valuable information from the government on child care, immunizations, free and low-cost health care as well as safety tips for your home.

We wish you all the best during this exciting time and hope this ParentStart newsletter helps you and your child start out right.

Sincerely,

Donna E. Shalala,
U.S. Secretary of Health
and Human Services



For information and answers to your health care questions, visit health finder:



healthfinder® (www.healthfinder.gov) is a free gateway to reliable consumer health and human services information developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. healthfinder® can lead you to selected online publications, clearinghouses, databases, web sites, and support and self-help groups, as well as the government agencies and not-for-profit organizations that produce reliable information for the public.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR PARENTS

How do I know what immunizations my child needs?

Babies need seven different kinds of shots by the time they are 2 years old to help protect them from childhood diseases like measles, mumps and rubella. If you do not have a doctor or would like information on a location near you where you can get shots, call the free National Immunization Hotline: English (800) 232-2522 or Spanish (800) 232-0233. Or, visit the CDC National Immunization Program home page at www.cdc.gov/nip.

How can I find low cost health insurance for my family?

Many families who work hard to make ends meet can get low-cost or free health insurance for their children through 18 years of age. Each State has its own program that makes health insurance coverage available to children in working families. For more information call 1-800-543-7669 or visit the web site at www.insurekidsnow.gov.

How can I find the right child care?

Call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 for information on locating child care in your area. Ask for their free brochure, ***Five Steps to Finding the Best Child Care***. You can also find information on their web site at www.childcareaware.org.

How can I start saving for my family's future?

It's never too early to start planning your financial future. The Social Security Administration has several resources to help you plan for financial security and begin preparing for retirement. Visit www.ssa.gov or call the federal government's Consumer Information Center and ask for the Planning Financial Security brochure at 1-888-878-3256.

How can I keep my baby safe while he's asleep?

Many parents don't know that it's safest to put a baby to sleep on his or her back for the first year. SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is more common in babies who sleep on their stomachs. For more information, talk with your doctor or call the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development at 1-800-505-CRIB.

What is the right temperature for my baby's bath?

The comfort range for a baby's bath water is 91-97°F. Lower your hot water heater to 115°F, and always check the water before you bathe your baby.

How do I keep my child safe in the car?

All children should be restrained in child safety seats appropriate for their height and weight. Finding the right safety seat and properly installing it can some times be confusing. Call the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's hotline at 1-888-DASH-2-DOT for detailed safety information and ask for their free booklets, ***Are You Using it Right*** and ***A Parent's Guide to Booster Seats***.

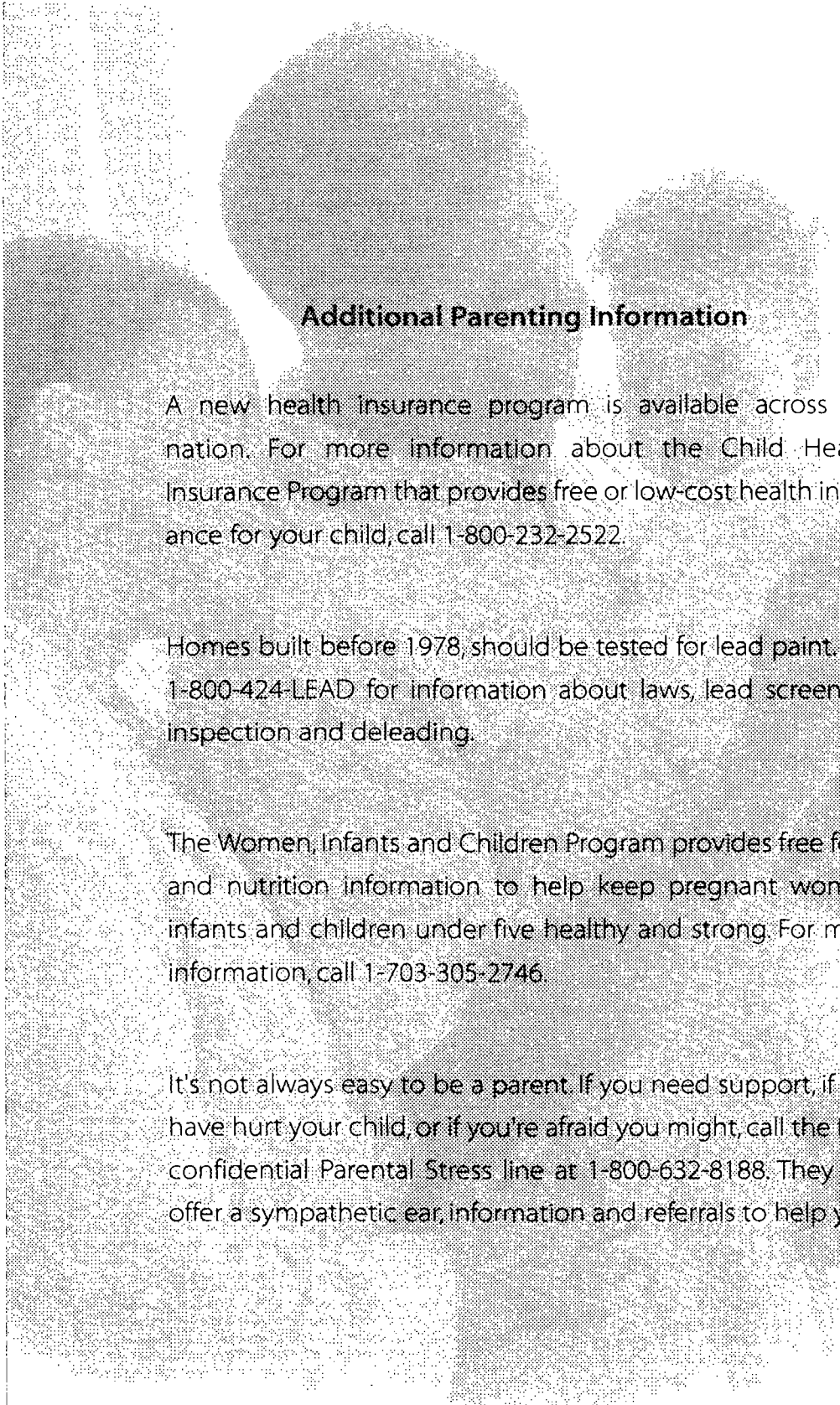


When should I start reading with my child?

Talking and reading with children from their earliest days can help stimulate brain development and is a great way to bond with your little one. Call the U.S. Department of Education at 1-877-4-EDPUBS and ask for the Ready Set Read activity calendar that includes ideas to help stimulate your child's language and literacy development.

How do I know what toys and baby equipment are safe?

You can receive free updates on product recalls and other safety information by mail from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC.) Call 1-800-638-CPSC and ask to be added to the mailing list or visit CPSC's website at www.cpsc.org.



Additional Parenting Information

A new health insurance program is available across the nation. For more information about the Child Health Insurance Program that provides free or low-cost health insurance for your child, call 1-800-232-2522.

Homes built before 1978 should be tested for lead paint. Call 1-800-424-LEAD for information about laws, lead screening, inspection and deleading.

The Women, Infants and Children Program provides free food and nutrition information to help keep pregnant women, infants and children under five healthy and strong. For more information, call 1-703-305-2746.

It's not always easy to be a parent. If you need support, if you have hurt your child, or if you're afraid you might, call the free, confidential Parental Stress line at 1-800-632-8188. They can offer a sympathetic ear, information and referrals to help you.

ParentStart is brought to you by  **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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INFORMATIVE WEB SITES

FREE OR LOW-COST BOOKLETS FOR PARENTS

To order, contact the Consumer Information Center
at Pueblo CO 81009, call 1-888-878-3256,
or visit the web site: www.pueblo.gsa.gov.

Keep this stub with your personal records.
The other side contains important information.



John Q. Public
Boston, MA 02222

YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

Detach the card below and sign it in ink immediately.
Keep your card in a safe place to prevent loss or theft.
Do not laminate your card.

**Social Security
card here**

PHOTOCOPY PRESERVATION

YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD

The Social Security number shown on your card is yours alone. Record your number in a safe place in case your card is lost or stolen. Protect both your card and your number to prevent their misuse.

If you lose your card or change your name, you will need to file a new application and submit evidence of identity to obtain a duplicate or corrected card. You may also have to submit evidence of U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status. Contact any Social Security office to find out exactly what you need to do.

Show your card to your employer when you start a new job. Make sure your employer gets your number and name right so we can record your earnings correctly.

Some private organizations use Social Security numbers for record keeping purposes. Such use is neither required nor prohibited by Federal law. The use of your Social Security number by such an organization for its own records is a private matter between you and the organization. Private organizations cannot get information from your Social Security record just because they know your number.

Any Federal, State, or local government agency that asks for your number must tell you: whether giving it is mandatory or voluntary, its authority for requesting the number, and how the number will be used.

If you are an alien without permission to work in the U.S., your Social Security card will be marked "NOT VALID FOR EMPLOYMENT". We will notify U.S. immigration officials if you use the number to work.

If you are an alien legally in the U.S. with temporary permission to work, your Social Security card will be marked "VALID FOR WORK ONLY WITH INS AUTHORIZATION". If you show this card to an employer as evidence of employment eligibility, you will also have to show your U.S. immigration document authorizing employment.

Contact any Social Security office immediately if you:

- are unable to work because of a severe disability expected to last a year or more;
- are age 62 or older—to ask about possible retirement benefits;
- are within 3 months of age 65, even if you don't plan to retire—to sign up for Medicare;
- have a limited income and resources and are either blind, disabled or age 65 or older—to apply for SSI.

This card is the official verification of your Social Security number.
Please sign it right away. Keep it in a safe place.

Improper use of this card or number by anyone is punishable by fine,
imprisonment or both.

This card belongs to the Social Security Administration and you must return
it if we ask for it.

Social Security Administration
P.O. Box 17087 Baltimore Md. 21203

For any other Social Security business/information, contact your local Social
Security office. If you write to the above address for any business other than return-
ing a found card, it will take longer for us to answer your letter.

Social Security Administration
Form SSA-3000 (4-95)

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ParentStart™ Focus Group Results

Quotes from Parents in Initial Focus Groups

- Parents appreciate timely information on how to care for young children

"It is always great, especially as a new parent to be updated on the latest advisories concerning new babies and children in general."

"If you're a new parent, you want all the info you can get."

"New parents, as myself, would benefit greatly from the coupons and newsletter. I enjoy receiving information that is current and would benefit my child and family."

- Parents have a better image of government agencies

"It's warm...they put some effort into it, some creativity. You actually feel like they're concerned about you and what your needs are."

"This isn't a file clerk in some boring room stuffing envelopes for a job."

"I didn't have any expectations, but this is a nice surprise."

"It makes you think you are more than just a number."

"It shows they care."



Department of Education Results



“Getting the private sector and the public sector to work together has been one of my main goals...This partnership will sure add firepower to help parents get news they can use.”

—Hillary Rodham Clinton
to the Association of American Publishers
March 18, 1999

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