

# Health and Physical Development

## Infants and Toddlers

**Children's ability to move and play supports learning and success in other areas. Check out these strategies to support your child's health and physical development!**

### Physical Health and Growth

Ensure your infant's safety by always placing them on their backs to sleep in cribs, and avoid putting blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals, and other materials in their cribs. Instead, place children in "sleep sacks" or warm pajamas.

Hold and talk with your infant during feeding and allow enough time for them to finish bottles or food.

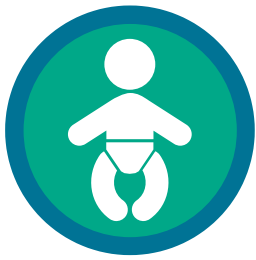
Offer types, sizes, and textures of food that your infant or toddler can eat safely and successfully. New foods may need to be offered several times before your child is comfortable with new tastes and textures.

Do not force your child to eat more than they want and allow them to leave food uneaten. This supports them in recognizing their body's physical cues of fullness.

As soon as a tooth appears, start brushing your child's teeth twice a day with a bit of toothpaste the size of a grain of rice.

Children require rest and relaxation; provide a routine that includes both active time and rest during the day.

Take your child outside regularly to play during all seasons. Dress them appropriately for the weather (raincoats, sweaters, boots, mittens, coats, hats, and sunscreen).



# Health and Physical Development

## Infants and Toddlers

### Motor Development

Place your infant on their tummy frequently throughout the day. Place interesting toys in front of them. Use a rolled towel to support your baby's chest and arms if needed. For babies who do not like being on their stomachs, try a few minutes of tummy time several times a day rather than for one long period.

Give your child brightly colored and interesting toys to reach for or move toward, like balls, mobiles, and soft toys. Encourage them to bring their hands together as they play with objects.

Encourage your child to take part in active play every day, such as climbing, running, hopping, rhythmic movement, and dance.

### Self-Care, Safety, and Well-Being

Hold, cuddle, make eye contact, and talk with your child to build trust.

Establish regular routines for diapering, toileting, hand washing, eating, sleeping, and dressing your child. Do things the same way as much as possible.

Respond quickly and consistently when your child communicates their needs. Learn to read their cues, cries, and gestures.

Supervise your child at all times. Even if your older toddler is beginning to develop self-control, it is easy for them to get excited and forget what is dangerous.



This information was adapted from the South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines. To learn more, talk to your childcare provider or visit [sdstepahead.com](http://sdstepahead.com).