

All in for Kids

A Birth to 3 Program Family Newsletter

All in for Kids: Birth to 3 Program is a newsletter that helps 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.



Birth to 3 Program services: occupational therapy

The Birth to 3 Program is an early intervention special education program. It helps children under 3 years old who have delays or disabilities. The program helps children learn, interact, and thrive at home, in childcare settings, and within the community.

Families enrolled in the Birth to 3 Program can receive many services. A team that includes the family determines the services, based on the needs of the child and their family. The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) lists the identified services.

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Examples of services a family may get are special education, occupational therapy, speech therapy, assistive technology, and physical therapy.

In this newsletter, we will highlight occupational therapy services.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy (OT) helps children develop new skills through fun, everyday activities. OT helps children become more independent by participating in daily routines like eating, dressing, playing, and more. Occupational therapists work with children who have injuries, delays, or disabilities to help them achieve their goals. They mainly help with the small muscles in the arms and hands, which are important for many tasks.

How do OT services help a child?

Children learn best by playing with their favorite toys and doing activities with people they know. OT services in the Birth to 3 Program help your child join in meaningful activities like daily tasks, learning, playing, sleeping, and socializing. OT can also help them with social and emotional regulation like calming their body or tolerating sensory things like brushing their teeth. By practicing everyday activities, your child grows and learns how to participate in your family's routines and community activities. These activities are fun and purposeful, helping your child build new skills in a way that feels like play.

Examples of how OT can help

- **Seeing and doing things:** Helping your child see and play with things they enjoy.
- **Daily activities:** Making diaper changes, bath time, mealtime, and bedtime routines easier.
- **Sensory skills:** Helping your child understand and use information from their senses like sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.
- **Moving around:** Strengthening the muscles needed to sit up, reach, and play comfortably, such as picking up and letting go of a toy.

WHAT IS AN IFSP?

The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is your child and family's roadmap to success. It's customized, focuses on what you think is important, and adapts as your child grows. It's a way to make sure your child gets to enjoy being a kid while learning and developing at their own pace, with you cheering them on every step of the way.

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- **Social interaction:** Combining physical activities with social skills, like asking your child to hand you a puzzle piece or drop it in a container.
- **Engagement:** Using activities your child loves to build new skills, like pointing to pictures in your child’s favorite books or using their favorite toy to encourage water play.

Examples of skills developed through OT

- Feeding themselves a cracker
- Holding a cup with both hands
- Holding out arms and legs while being dressed
- Passing toys from one hand to another
- Playing peek-a-boo and finding hidden objects

What should I do if I think OT might help my child?

To learn more about occupational therapy services, contact your primary service provider. They help your child grow and thrive! ❖

Vision develops as a child grows

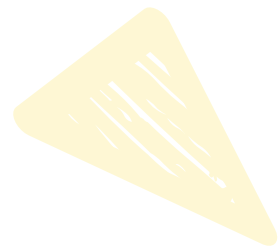
A baby’s vision goes through many changes in the first year of life. Babies do not see well at birth. Your child’s health care provider should check their vision at birth, by their first birthday, and once more before they turn 3. These vision screenings are usually done during a routine check-up.

Your child may have vision problems if their eyes:

- Do not follow a moving object, like a toy or your finger, when it passes in front of their face (for babies older than 3 months)
- Cross inward or drift outward (for babies older than 4 months)
- Blink faster or more than normal
- Seem very sensitive to light
- Have issues such as:
 - Redness that does not go away in a few days
 - Swelling
 - White or grayish color in the pupil (the black center of the eye)
 - Watering

PRIMARY SERVICE PROVIDER (PSP)

A primary service provider (PSP) is a team member who is the main contact for a family in the Birth to 3 Program. The PSP supports the family in addressing their child’s development and achieving the goals of their IFSP.



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If you have concerns about your child's vision, you can:

- Tell your child's health care provider what you notice about your child's eyes or vision and why you are concerned. They may recommend an appointment with an eye doctor.
- Ask the Birth to 3 Program service coordinator to screen your child's vision. Screening will show if there are warning signs that should be looked at by an eye doctor. ❖

Understanding the ICC and how it supports families

What is the ICC?

The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) helps make the Birth to 3 Program better for children with delays and disabilities and their families. It also advises the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) on ways to improve the program.

Who is on the ICC?

The ICC has 15 to 25 members, including:

- Birth to 3 Program providers
- Parents
- Advocacy groups
- State agency staff
- A Head Start and Early Head Start member
- A state legislator

What does the ICC do?

The ICC:

- Gives advice on how to run the Birth to 3 Program
- Checks how well the program is working
- Makes sure people can talk about early intervention
- Suggests program improvements

How to learn more

For more information, questions, or comments, visit the ICC webpage at dhs.wi.gov/b3icc. ❖

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Key information for families

Upcoming meetings:

- September 11, 2024
(remote using Zoom)
- November 20, 2024
(remote using Zoom or in-person)

Public comments:

- You're invited to attend each meeting even if you're not a member of the ICC. There is time for public comments at the start of each meeting.
- The ICC helps make sure the Birth to 3 Program supports children and families. Your input helps improve the program.

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Family spotlight: Ava's journey with the St. Croix County Birth to 3 Program

We are happy to feature the story of Ava, a remarkable little girl who has made significant progress through the St. Croix County Birth to 3 Program.

Ava's story

Ava began her physical therapy journey at just 10 months old with Maria, a physical therapist with the Birth to 3 Program. When Ava was found to have low muscle tone, it became clear that she would need extra help and repetition to achieve her developmental milestones.

Maria worked to build Ava's therapy sessions around her family's busy schedule, ensuring that Ava received the support she needed. With each session, Ava made significant strides. Maria guided Ava's parents on specific stretches and exercises that would help her transition from crawling to walking.

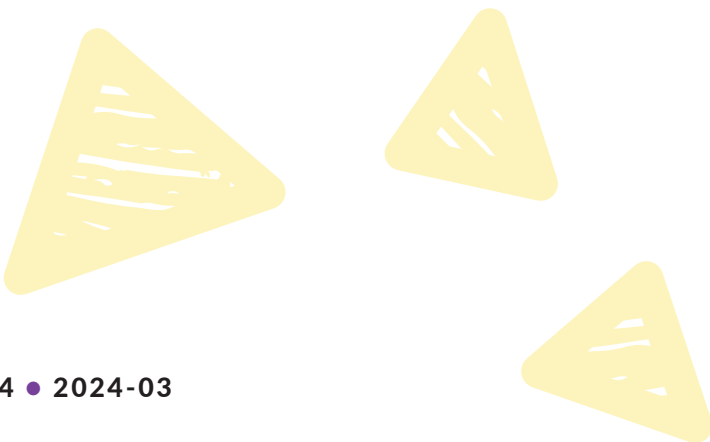
After a year of hard work and dedication, Ava successfully met all her goals.

A message from Ava's family

"Ava hit all her milestones and goals and we owe a lot of it to Maria. Our family is so thankful for the Birth to 3 Program and all the hard work and guidance our team has put into our daughter's success." ❖



Pictured: Ava with her physical therapist, Maria.



The Birth to 3 Program wants your family stories and photos!

The All in for Kids newsletter is for families. We want to feature your photos and experiences for other readers to enjoy!

You can share things like:

- A positive interaction with the Birth to 3 Program.
- An example of how the Birth to 3 Program has helped your family or child.
- A photo or story of an activity you did with your child.
- A photo of artwork or something else your child has made.

Email your family story or photo to dhsbirthto3@dhs.wisconsin.gov with “All in for Kids” in the subject line. You can also send ideas for stories you would like to see in the newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you! ❖

Embracing fall transitions: tips for families

As summer ends, families may feel different emotions. Some love the cooler weather and fall activities, while others might find it hard to move from summer to fall. No matter how you feel, fall is a time of change for everyone.

Enjoying fall activities with the Birth to 3 Program

The Birth to 3 Program is here to help your family during this time. We offer services in places where kids play, like parks and pumpkin patches. We support you during daily activities, making services feel natural and fun.

Helping kids understand the changes

Young children might not understand time like adults do, so changes in seasons can be confusing. Here are some tips to help your child:

- **Point out changes:** Show your child the differences in temperature, colors, and daylight. Make a game to notice how we dress for cooler weather.
- **Talk about nature:** Discuss the changing leaves, earlier sunsets, and how animals prepare for winter. Use books and songs to make it fun.

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Fun fall activities

Try these activities to enjoy the season:

- **Fall discovery basket:** Collect pumpkins and different colored leaves in a basket or box and let your child explore them. Talk about their colors, textures, and sizes.
- **Visit a pumpkin patch:** Many pumpkin patches are free and offer activities like hayrides.
- **Have a picnic:** Choose a warm fall day for a picnic with your favorite snacks and toys.

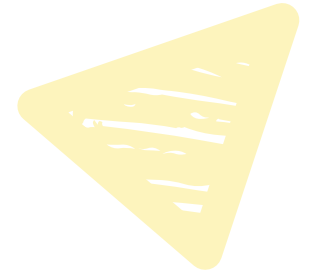
Helping your family adjust to fall

Here are some tips to help your family get used to the new season:

- **Change bedtime slowly:** Move your child's bedtime 15 minutes earlier each night to adjust to the new schedule.
- **Make cozy spaces:** Use warm blankets and comforting items to make your child's room cozy.
- **Outdoor activities:** Spend time outside to help your child enjoy the season. Take walks, visit parks, or look out the window together.
- **Warm meals:** Enjoy cozy meals like soups that can comfort your child.
- **Autumn crafts:** Do simple crafts to celebrate fall and create new traditions.
- **Family time:** Talk about summer memories, organize photos, and discuss what you look forward to in the fall.
- **Indoor activities:** Balance outdoor play with calming indoor activities such as tummy time, reading a book together, building forts inside with blankets and furniture you already have.

Talk to your service provider

The Birth to 3 Program can help with your fall plans. Discuss the activities you want to do and set goals to make sure your child enjoys fall while learning and growing.



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Celebrate every moment

Transitions can be tough, but they also bring new experiences. Celebrate small victories and enjoy making new memories this fall. The Birth to 3 Program is here to support you. ❖

Early childhood feelings thermometer

The Early Childhood Feelings Thermometer is a helpful way for families to help young children begin to understand and name their feelings. You can ask your child to tell you which emotion they are feeling on the thermometer.

The thermometer features five zones. It starts at green – the calm zone – listing feelings and behaviors associated with that zone. The gauge goes up to red – the furious zone – with suggestions to help your child in the moment. Studies show that identifying an activity is another important step to self-regulation. Offering your child choices like jumping jacks, belly breathing, wiggle dancing, or drawing can make a difference in the body as well as helping to shift moods.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

For faster delivery, sign up to get the electronic version of this newsletter and other emails about the Birth to 3 Program. Go to dhs.wi.gov/aboutdhs/alerts.htm and scroll down and click the Birth to 3 Program Information for Families link.

Don't forget to tell your family and friends in the Birth to 3 Program to sign up as well!

EARLY CHILDHOOD FEELINGS THERMOMETER
▶▶▶ Ask the child to identify the emotion using a face and/or word below.

CHILD'S EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIORS	HOW CAN YOU HELP THIS CHILD?
MAD, ANGRY, EXPLOSIVE ▶ Screaming, crying, hitting, biting, pushing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll up in a ball• Exercise: push the wall, jumping jacks• Listen to calming music• Squeeze a stuffed animal or pillow
UPSET, FRUSTRATED, OPPOSITIONAL ▶ Shutdown, refusing, arguing, complaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathe: belly breathing, square breathing• Exercise: jumping jacks, push the wall• Squeeze a squishy ball or toy• Draw, color, or count out loud
SCARED, ANXIOUS, UNSETTLED, TENSE ▶ Clingy, avoiding, crying, worrying, nervous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breathe: take a deep breath in through the nose and then slowly blow out a pretend candle• Assign a teacher helper task• Draw a silly picture• Listen to music• Do a wiggle dance, pretend to shake it off• Hug a stuffed animal or blanket
SAD, BORED ▶ Withdrawn, crying, low interest, low energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assign a teacher helper task• Draw or color• Build with blocks• Look at a book• Walk around the room• Play with another child or a caregiver
HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT ▶ Engaged, calm, smiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sing or listen to songs• Draw or color• Skip• Play with toys• Help a friend• Try something new

Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health
children.wi.gov

Visit children.wi.gov/Pages/EarlyChildhoodFeelingsThermometer.aspx to download and print the graphic and get more tips and tools for using it. ❖

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Learn more about the Birth to 3 Program

The First 1,000 Days brochure gives an overview of the program:

dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-02928.

The Birth to 3 Program Services at a Glance guide explains


the supports and services available: dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-03011.

The Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers With Delays and Disabilities in Wisconsin booklet helps you understand how early intervention helps your family and child learn and grow together:

dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/p-03022.

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

are available online: dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/akidsb-3-2024. ❖



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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 dhs.wi.gov/children/index.htm.

Para leer este boletín en español, visite dhs.wi.gov/library/collection/akidsb-3-2024.

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