

# BRIGHT FUTURES: FAMILY MATTERS



APRIL 2015

## The Well Visit Planner: Making the Most of Your Child's Health Care Checkups

Busy families, busy health care providers! Time is of the essence for everybody, and so making the best use of the time we have is critical.

Well-child visits—those regularly scheduled trips to the doctor for your child's checkups and shots—provide an important time with your child's health care provider. A new tool can help you make those visits as meaningful as possible: the **Well Visit Planner**.

## What is a Well-Child Visit—and Why are They Important?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends 13 well-child visits during the first three years of your child's life. These are over and beyond any visits for illness or those with specialists.

That sounds like a lot of visits! Why take your child to the doctor if he or she isn't sick?

When your child is sick, the most important priority for you and your doctor is figuring out what is wrong and what to do to make it better. There is rarely time to discuss other topics about how your child is growing and developing.

Well-child visits are all about prevention and promotion of healthy habits. Recommended vaccinations are given during these visits, as well as routine screenings for such things as vision or hearing problems, anemia, autism, and other issues.

It is the perfect time to share what your child is doing and learning, and to share any questions or concerns you might have.

It's also a good time for your child's health care provider to learn about your family and your cultural and family traditions and anything that effects your child's health and development.

Seven of the 13 visits happen in the first year: newborn, first week, 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 9 months. This is a time when babies are rapidly growing and learning new skills!

The visits space out over the next 2 years: 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 2 years, 2 1/2 years, and 3 years. Beyond 3 years, well-child visits are usually scheduled once a year.



### In This Issue:

- What is a Well-Child Visit?
- Introducing the Well Visit Planner
- Step by Step
- When Your Child has Special Needs
- How is the Information Used?
- Helpful Tips
- More Information about the Well Visit Planner

### The **WELL VISIT PLANNER**:

An online tool to help you prepare for your child's upcoming checkups.

- It's free!
- It takes 10 to 15 minutes to fill out
- It helps you be a better partner in your child's health care
- It helps health care providers better serve your child's needs

### CHECK IT OUT!

[www.WellVisitPlanner.org](http://www.WellVisitPlanner.org)



Did you know that **one in five** families with children has at least one child with special health care needs? Join **Family Voices Public Awareness Campaign** and make a difference!

## WHAT HAPPENS TO MY INFORMATION?

You may wonder if the information you provide on the Well Visit Planner is secure. This online tool has been designed and tested to be 100% secure. No personal information is stored on the site.

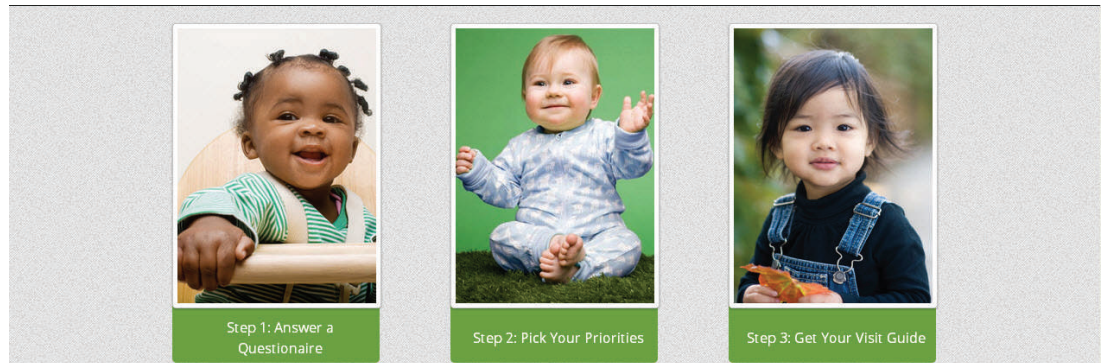
The Planner will refer to your child by name. But this information won't be stored.

Any information that is collected on the Well Visit Planner site—which does not include anything that could identify you or your child—is only used to help understand in an overall way parents' concerns and priorities for their well-child visits.

To learn more about how the site uses information, go to: <http://www.wellvisitplanner.org/Terms.aspx>

## MY PROVIDER DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THE WELL VISIT PLANNER!

You can use the Well Visit Planner to plan your next well visit with any provider. Providers interested in making the Planner an ongoing part of their practice can learn more here: [www.cahmi.org/projects/wvp/wvp-implementation-portal/](http://www.cahmi.org/projects/wvp/wvp-implementation-portal/)



## Introducing the Well Visit Planner!

Health care providers such as your child's primary care doctor often have only 15 to 20 minutes to actually spend with your child in a well-visit checkup. As children grow, there are many topics about prevention and health promotion that you and your doctor could discuss at each visit.

Some topics may be more important to you and your family than others.

The Well Visit Planner is a free tool to help you identify the specific questions and topics that you want to be sure to get answers to in your child's upcoming checkup. It provides a way for you to:

- **Explore** issues and needs important to the health of your child and family.
- **Learn** about developmental milestones and important topics for children ages 0 to 6 years old. This includes information about your child's growth, development, and language skills.
- **Pick** what you want to discuss with your child's health care provider. You can create a *Visit Guide* that is based on the questions you identified as being important for your family.
- **Partner** with your child's provider by sharing your questions and concerns in your *Visit Guide*.

You can also learn more about your

child's development before the visit by reading the Well Visit Planner's education materials at [www.WellVisitPlanner.org/Education](http://www.WellVisitPlanner.org/Education).

By taking 10 to 15 minutes before the checkup, you can help decide which topics you and your child's doctor discuss in the appointment.

## How Does It Work?

To get your *Visit Guide*, follow these three easy steps:

1. **Go to [www.WellVisitPlanner.org](http://www.WellVisitPlanner.org) and answer questions about your child and family.** This information will help your child's health care provider understand more about how your child is developing.
2. **Pick the topics related to your child that you want to discuss with the health care provider.** These are your priorities for the visit.
3. **Print a free *Visit Guide* to take with you to the next visit.**



# Step by Step: Using the Well Visit Planner

## Step 1: The Well Visit Planner Questionnaire

Well visits are the perfect time to help your child's health care provider get to know your child and your family.

The [Well Visit Planner](#) asks questions about:

- What your child is learning to do. Remember that children develop at different rates, so your child may not be doing all of these things yet.
- What concerns you have.
- What is going on in your family that might affect your child's health.

The image shows the 'Step 1: Answer a Questionnaire' screen of the Well Visit Planner. It features a header with 'Your Child, Your Well-Visit' and three icons for Step 1 (a baby), Step 2 (a girl), and Step 3 (a boy). The main content area is titled 'General Questions about You and Your Child' and contains three numbered questions with input fields and checkboxes. Question 1 asks about things the child is able to do. Question 2 asks about specific concerns. Question 3 asks about recent changes in the family.

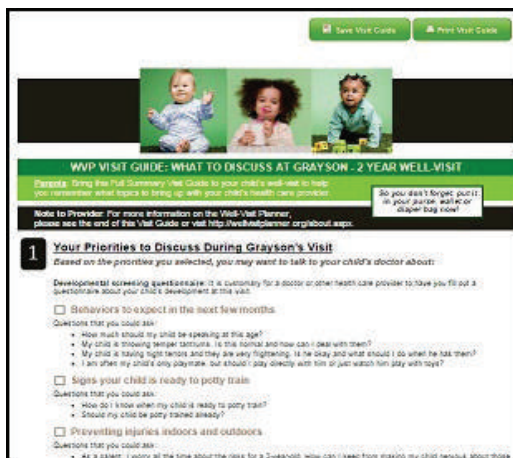
## Step 2: Pick What's Important to You

There are many things that could be discussed at a well visit. Not all of them are important to you right now!

- Step 2 of the Well Visit Planner will help you think about the important topics you'd most like to discuss.
- Each item on the list has more information if you click on the blue "i"—this may answer some of your questions ahead of time.

## Step 3: Get Your Visit Guide

Once you have completed the questionnaire, you'll see your personal *Visit Guide*. You can print this and bring it to share with your provider.

The image shows the 'WVP VISIT GUIDE: WHAT TO DISCUSS AT GRAYSON - 2 YEAR WELL-VISIT'. It includes a header with 'Take Visit Cards' and 'Print Visit Cards' buttons. Below is a photo of three children. The main content area is titled 'Your Priorities to Discuss During Grayson's Visit' and lists various topics to discuss, such as 'Developmental screening questions', 'Behaviors to expect in the next few months', 'Signs your child is ready to potty train', and 'Preventing injuries indoors and outdoors'. Each topic has a checkbox and a brief description.

## Helpful Tips

- Put the Planner in your purse, wallet, or diaper bag as soon as you print it! That way you'll have it!
- If you don't have a printer, ask if you can email the *Visit Guide* to your provider and get a printed copy when you arrive.
- If you have more than one child, complete the questionnaire for each child.
- If you don't have a computer or Internet access, you may be able to access the Planner at the library. For more tips on how to get online if you don't have access at home, go to: [www.familyvoices.org/work/diversity?id=0002](http://www.familyvoices.org/work/diversity?id=0002)



## MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS. CAN I USE THE WELL VISIT PLANNER?

Yes! Every child needs well visits! You can adapt how you use the Planner depending on your child's special health care needs.

For example, your child may have a developmental delay. If so, it may be more helpful to complete the questionnaire about your child's developmental age, not his or her actual age.

Use the Planner as a tool to help you think through the topics around promoting good health and preventing illness and accidents for your child.

The Well Visit Planner can also give you ideas of questions to ask your child's specialists or other health care providers.

## IS THE WELL VISIT PLANNER AVAILABLE IN OTHER LANGUAGES?

Yes! Currently the Planner is in Spanish and English. Select the language by clicking the box in the upper right hand corner of the home page.

Find out even more information about the Well Visit Planner for you and your provider at: <http://wellvisitplanner.org/FAQ.aspx>



## More Information about the Well Visit Planner

### How was the Well Visit Planner developed?

The Well Visit Planner (WVP) was developed and created by the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) ([www.cahmi.org](http://www.cahmi.org)).

National experts, families, and pediatric providers worked together in the design, development, and testing of the WVP. The information contained in the WVP is based on the American Academy of Pediatrics *Bright Futures Guidelines for the Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* (<https://brightfutures.aap.org>)

### What are Parents Saying about the WVP?

A survey of 3,000 parents found that:

- 92% would recommend the WVP to other parents.
- 92% thought the WVP increased the value of their child's well visits.
- 92% were comfortable with the amount of time it took to complete the questionnaire.
- 75% thought the WVP was very useful for focusing their time with the provider on what was most important to their family.

### What are Health Care Providers Saying about the WVP?

Health care providers found the WVP improved their office workflow, how well they were able to engage patients, and improved the quality of care that they provide. It can cut down on unnecessary tests—and that saves money! They also felt the WVP helped parents identify issues that they might not have otherwise brought up at a visit.



### What Does it Mean to Partner with Health Care Providers?

As your child's most consistent caregiver, you know your child in ways that no one else does. You want to be sure that your child's health care needs are met. You want to share what you know about your child with your child's provider. Tell the provider if you are concerned that something is wrong with your child.

Asking questions can help you build partnerships with your child's health care providers. These partnerships will help your child receive the best health care. Start with clear communication between you and the provider. Be sure to share your cultural traditions and beliefs about your child's health.

For tips to help you be a better partner in your child's health care, go to: [http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/files/4414/2149/5755/ParentsPartnering\\_01-16-2015r.pdf](http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/files/4414/2149/5755/ParentsPartnering_01-16-2015r.pdf)

The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) is a national initiative based out of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. The WVP tools were developed and tested for use in pediatric practices under a four year grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (R40 MC08959 03-00; 2008-2012). Since 2012, CAHMI continues to develop and support the WVP's use in communities and other settings, including dissemination in EHS/HS Centers.

### FAMILY VOICES MISSION

Family Voices aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities.

Through our national grassroots network, we provide families tools to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care.

[www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org)

Family Voices promotes health and wellness for all children and families, and encourages partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. Share *Bright Futures: Family Matters* with your networks.

Visit [www.fv-impact.org](http://www.fv-impact.org)

Check out the Family Voices *Bright Futures Family Pocket Guide* for more information! <http://www.fv-impact.org/publications/pocket-guide/>

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