Health has been defined by the World Health Organization as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The roadway to this kind of health begins in childhood. This little leaflet for parents is a kind of roadmap to that goal. It tells parents that a child who eats well-planned meals at regular hours, gets plenty of sleep at regular hours, plays vigorously outdoors in the sunshine, feels secure in his home life, has already passed the first milepost on the right road.
INTO CHILDHOOD

Help your baby to grow up

When is a baby no longer a baby?

Generally speaking, a baby is no longer a baby when he begins to walk and talk.

About that same time, he begins to do more and more for himself. He still needs you, though, to do a great many things for him. But it helps him to grow up if you let him do for himself as many things as he can. Let him try a new thing just as soon as he shows...
that he wants to. He won't be perfect but encourage him when he makes gains. Never force him ahead.

Help him to learn to do things that will be useful to him. That may take time. He may make mistakes. But don't lose patience. Remember he is learning.

Be consistent. You will confuse him if you laugh at something he does, and the next day scold him for the same thing. Then he won't know what to think. He will not be sure if you want him to do it or not.

Be honest with him. He needs to know he can depend on you. Don't make promises—or threats—unless you intend to carry them out.

One of the best things you can do for your child—for him now as well as for his future—is to let him know that you love him, want him, and that he is an important part of your family.

He must know this by more ways than by just telling him. Most of the time you will not even have to use words at all. How you act will let him know.

This love and affection is not all that he needs, but he needs it as much as he needs anything else. All of the care you give him—even if it is the best that can be had—will not make up for the lack of love.

- Help him keep well

Do your part to keep your child healthy. In this you will need the help and advice of a doctor. If possible, pick a doctor who is trained to take care of children.

Twice a year or oftener, see that your child gets a complete physical examination. Has he been vaccinated against smallpox and immunized against diphtheria? If not, have this done at once. He should be inoculated against diphtheria at 9 months and again 3 to 5 years later. He should have a smallpox vaccination before he is a year old. This
should be repeated every 5 years. Ask your
doctor how to guard him against other
diseases.

Maybe you will want some help in doing
what the doctor says to do for your child.
Find out if there is a public-health nurse in
your town or county. She will help you.

Take your child to the dentist when all of
his first teeth have come through. That
usually is when he is 22 to 27 months old.
After that first visit, go 2 times each year—
or more if the dentist says so.

Keep your child away from crowded places
and from any sick person, even if the sickness
is "only a cold."

**Help him enjoy his food**

When your child is hungry he will enjoy
eating.

You are hungrier sometimes than at other
times. Often you want second helpings. But

sometimes you do not want any or all of
what is served you. Your child is like that,
too.

Make mealtimes as pleasant as possible.
They should neither be "party" times nor
times for strictly business. Make his food
look good, and easy to manage. If he does
not want it, don't nag, or beg, or bribe, or be
angry. He may be tired, or upset, or catching
a cold. He will learn to enjoy his food if it
tastes good, and if you do not insist that he
eat when he is not hungry.

At this age he will probably eat better alone
than at the table with the family. Then he
will not see foods that he should not have and
he is not distracted from eating by the other
members of the family.

Serve him small portions. It will please
him that he is able to eat all on his plate.
Between-meal snacks, at odd hours, may dull
his appetite. Instead of these snacks, maybe
he needs a regular midmorning or midafter-
noon lunch besides his three meals a day.

Provided by the Maternal and Child Health Library, Georgetown University
When he is learning to feed himself, he will use his fingers to pick up food as often as he uses his spoon. This is all right; you want him to enjoy eating. Manners can wait until later.

Let him see that you enjoy your food. Eat it all. Praise him when he eats well. When he does not, say nothing—act as if that is neither bad nor good.

**Help him when he is learning**

A child—like a grownup—learns to do things by doing them time and time again with pleasure. To take off his sock may be hard at first but he enjoys doing it. So each time it is easier. Soon he can do it and not even think about it. It has become a habit.

Much of what your child feels and thinks may be learned. The way he is treated may play a part in making him cheerful and happy or sulky and cross.

A child wants to do again the things that please him, that make him feel he has done something well. Be sure that he gets that feeling from the things he does that you think will make him a nice person.

If he enjoys eating, sleeping, and the other things you want him to do to promote health, he will learn them more easily. Give him plenty of time. Don't hurry him about learning to keep dry, or eat neatly. He wants to please you. He will feel proud and happy when he does.

The example you set him will make a lot of difference. When you use a gentle voice you encourage him to do so, too. If you smile over mishaps, he will be more likely to do so. He will copy you in all kinds of ways.

At times he may do something just to get your attention—be the center of interest. For example, he may throw his cup on the floor. If everybody makes a fuss, he may do it again to be the center of interest. If you want him to forget something—any act that
is not useful or good for him—try to pay no attention to it. Then he is not so apt to repeat it.

On the other hand, if he does something that you want him to do again, praise him. He may carry his empty cereal bowl to the kitchen. He may put his toys away. If you let him know that you are pleased—are proud of him for it—he will want to do it again.

● Help him get as much sleep as he needs

A young child needs a great deal of sleep. Most little children will sleep the clock around at night and also get in an hour or two in the day.

Enough restful sleep for your child does much toward good health in body as well as in mind. When he does not get as much sleep as he needs, it shows up in the way he acts.

Because sleep is so important, it is best that he have a regular and early bedtime. You can't always be sure that he will make up lost sleep the next morning or during his nap the next afternoon. If his sleeping hours are hit-and-miss, his mealtimes are likely to be the same. Irregular times for meals do not encourage good appetite.

Plan his last meal, and the end of his day with his bedtime in mind. He will likely be more willing to go to bed if there is a regular time when his play always comes to an end. A little warning given so that he does not suddenly have to stop what he is doing helps to keep bedtime a pleasant time.

Plan your own day so that you can give him a little unhurried attention at bedtime with songs, or a story. Do not let him get the idea that you are putting him to bed to get rid of him or that it is just to please you. Mothers who punish their children by putting them to bed in the daytime may build a problem for the night.

If he doesn't go to sleep right away, that
does not always mean that he is getting too much sleep. Sometimes it may mean that his near-bedtime play may have excited him, his nap may have come too late in the day, he may be lonely and need a little loving attention, or there may be other causes. A calm short chat may help, or a story.

● **Help him to learn to take care of his body**

Every child should—

- Have a bath each day.
- Brush his teeth morning and night.
- Wash his hands before meals.
- Wash his hands after going to the toilet.
- Have his fingernails kept short.
- Have his hair and scalp kept clean.
- But

Never be made to think that it is a crime to get dirty.

- Mud puddles, sand piles, mud pies, finger painting, his kind of gardening, rolling, or tumbling on the grass or ground, exploring, examining—all these are fun to him and good for him.

He likes to do many things in which he is apt to get dirty. That isn’t his aim, it just happens. If you put him into the back yard to play and tell him, “Now, Johnny, keep clean. Keep away from this, and this, or that,” you may cramp his style.

You may hate dirt. Fine for you, maybe. But not for him. So, keep your dislike to yourself. The chances are he is going to love it—get a great kick out of splashing through mud, squeezing it through his toes or fingers. He’ll get quite a bit of fun out of just being messy—even with his food. Let him. He’ll outgrow that after a while but will be better for having been allowed to do it.
Let him play and exercise

Active play is not only to amuse and occupy him. It teaches him to use his mind and body. It helps him develop both. When he runs, climbs, jumps, and throws his ball, his muscles become strong and quick to act. Such play gives him a good appetite and helps him to sleep well.

Each day the sun shines get him out in it. Let him play in the open, unless the weather is bad.

If you buy him toys, choose balls, blocks, wagons, tools, dishes, dolls, and large kindergarten crayons. Things that he can handle are better than mechanical toys that he can only watch. But don’t be surprised if he likes a couple of tin pans better than anything you buy.

Seesaws and short ladders help him get body balance and muscle control.

He is lucky if he has a back yard to play in.

But if he does not, take him to a park or playground as often as you can manage.

Indoors, he should have some special place to play and keep his things. If you have no other space, give him a corner as his own. Pick one where he will be out of the way of others in the family. He does need to have a place to call his own, but don’t expect him to stay in his corner.

He is lucky if he has other children to play with. He learns to take his part in the game and wait his turn.

Food your child needs after the first year

Milk.—One and one-half pints to a quart a day.

Fruit.—Oranges, grapefruit, or raw or canned tomatoes (or their juice) each day. Other raw or cooked fruit at least once a day.
Vegetables.—A serving of potatoes and at least one other vegetable each day (green or yellow vegetables often).

Eggs.—One egg a day or at least five a week.

Lean meat, liver, fish, or poultry.—Once a day, or at least three times a week. Cheese, dried beans, or dried peas may be used at times in place of meat.

Bread, whole-grain or enriched.—Two or more servings a day. (Enriched bread has more vitamins and minerals than other refined cereals.)

Butter, or margarine with added vitamin A.—Two or three times a day.

Cod-liver oil.—Each day about 2 teaspoonfuls of cod-liver oil during the second year. Some doctors prescribe a source of vitamin D other than cod-liver oil. This is given in drops. Ask your doctor how much. After the second year, ask your doctor how much he needs of vitamins A and D.

Other foods to satisfy his appetite and give him energy.—More of the foods listed above, or others such as simple desserts. The kinds and amounts of food will differ according to your child’s age and size.

CHILDREN’S BUREAU PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO PARENTS

Infant Care. Children’s Bureau Publication No. 8. 1955. 106 pp. The baby’s development and care from birth to 1 year. Discusses breast feeding, how to prepare the formula for a bottle-fed baby, and when to begin giving other foods. Immunization, prevention of accidents, and the care of the sick baby are explained. 15 cents.

Provided by the Maternal and Child Health Library, Georgetown University
Your Child From One to Six. Children’s Bureau Publication No. 30. Revised 1936. 110 pp. How the healthy development of a young child depends upon his relations with his parents and others in his family is brought out. Discusses how children learn, how they grow, and how their behavior is affected by their opportunities to enjoy play, sleep, good food, and a safe, secure environment. 20 cents.

Your Child From Six to Twelve. Children’s Bureau Publication No. 324. 1949. 141 pp. Gives help to parents in the guidance of their children in the important school-age period. The 6 to 12 child is striking out for himself, making friends, exploring his world. He is on the way to becoming a self-directed, self-motivated individual. But he is still close to his parents and still appreciates attention, love, and sympathy. 20 cents.

The Adolescent in Your Family. Children’s Bureau Publication No. 347. Revised 1955. 110 pp. How knowledge of the many changes that come about in the early teen-age years can help parents understand their boys’ and girls’ growing need for independence. 25 cents.