

# Choosing a Doctor for Your Child

## Are you looking for a new doctor for your child?

These tips will help you pick a doctor who is right for you and your child.

## What is important to you?

Make a list of the things that matter the most to you in a doctor. For example:

- Do you want a doctor who treats only children (a pediatrician)?
- Would you like a doctor who treats the whole family?
- Do you want a doctor who is close to your home or work place?
- Do you need to choose a doctor from a list given by your insurance provider?
- Do you want a doctor who offers evening or weekend hours?
- Would you or your child prefer a man or a woman doctor?
- Does your child need a specialist?
- Do you want a doctor who speaks a certain language?

## Finding a doctor

To get names of doctors, ask people whose parenting styles match yours or whose views you respect. One of their doctors may be a good fit for your family.

Seattle Children's can also help you find the right doctor for your child quickly and easily. Children's Doctor Finder is a free online service that allows you to search for primary care pediatricians or for pediatric specialists who are on the medical staff of Seattle Children's Hospital. You can look for doctors by specialty,



location, language or name. You'll find contact and background information as well as photos of the doctors listed.

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org) and select Doctor Finder. Or call 206-987-2500 or 866-987-2500 and select option 4 for the physician referral line.

## Looking for a good fit

It's important for you and your child to feel at ease with your doctor. Think about making an appointment to meet the doctor and staff in person. A phone meeting can work, too. Ask questions and listen closely to the doctor's responses. This will tell you a lot about that doctor's style. You might ask:

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- Is there a nurse who handles questions over the phone during office hours? How about after hours? Is there an after-hours clinic, or would we need to go to an emergency room?
- Who will my child see if our doctor is not there?
- What hospital or hospitals can the doctor refer patients to?

### Other things to consider

- Does the doctor listen to you and give you a chance to ask questions?
- Does the doctor discuss your child's development and safety?
- How do the doctor and staff relate to children? Does the waiting room have toys and books for children? How long are patients kept waiting?
- Do the doctor and staff share your beliefs on raising children? Ask questions about feeding practices or child behavior to get an idea of the doctor's approach.
- How does your child react to the doctor? How does the doctor react to your child?

### A final thought

Once you decide what's important for you, talk with a few doctors. You should be able to find someone who meets your needs.

#### To Learn More

- [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)
- **Seattle Children's Resource Line**  
206-987-2500 or 866-987-2500  
toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho
- **Your child's healthcare provider**

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Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5205 or 206-987-2280 (TTY).

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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