

# Watching My Child Grow!

**Zack, Luisa, and Wajdi are all about the same age. But their heights and weights are so different. Luisa, whose parents are tall, weighed more and was longer at birth. Wajdi's parents and grandparents are short. He was born two weeks past his due date. Zack was born two months prematurely. Each child is perfectly normal!**

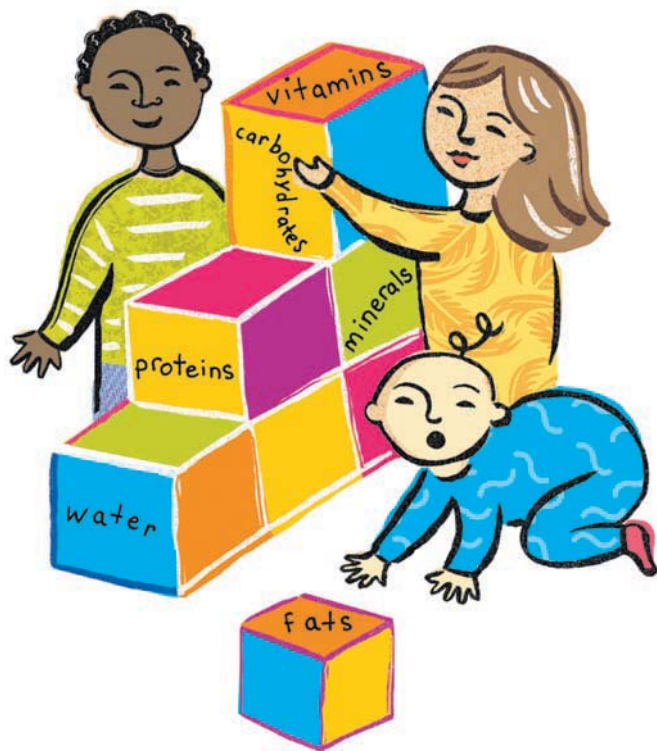
As a parent, you probably wonder if your child's growth is normal. That's natural. And making sure is part of your responsibility.

## No two children grow alike.

In every way, your child is an individual. That's true for his or her body size and growth pattern, too. It makes no sense to compare your child's growth to your friends' children. If your child was born prematurely or a little late, that makes a difference, too.

## Your child may grow like you.

The way your child grows depends a certain amount on genes. As you watch your child grow, consider the ways your family members grew when they were kids. Also think about the types of food and activity choices usually made by each member of the family. Who is your child most similar to?



## Checking a Growth Chart

Your child's height and weight are marked on his or her own growth chart as part of regular health exams. The chart shows:

- Your child's growth pattern and progress.
- How your child fits within healthy ranges for his or her age.

Ask to see and discuss your child's growth chart. The new charts now being used were made with your child in mind.

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## Watch your child's growth pattern.

- A big change may be normal. Or it may signal a problem.
- A poor appetite for a long time may be a concern. If your child has energy, feels okay, and is growing normally, it's probably normal.
- Many children gain weight before they grow taller. That's natural, too.

### Tip:

Of course, you want to be sure that your child is growing normally. If you're concerned, talk to your child's health care provider. If there's any problem, then you will know. If not, you can relax.

## Watch Me Grow

Kids like to see how they grow taller each year. They feel proud of each inch. And they are pleased when grown-ups and older children notice.

### Do this together!

- **Keep track of your child's height and weight.** You might find a closet door on which to mark your child's height on each birthday and six months later.
- **Talk about growing.** Ask:
  - How are you different from last year?
  - How might you be different by next year?

This is a chance to show respect for the many ways your child is growing up.

- **Show photos of you and your family when you were young.** Your child may have the same growth pattern that you did.

