



WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

There's a conversation I've had more times than I can count, usually at the end of a long appointment, when a mom is gathering her things to leave and says, almost apologetically, "I just feel like I'm always behind."

Behind on the research. Behind on the decisions. Behind on figuring out what her family actually needs.

I always stop her there.

Because in my experience, the parents who feel that way are almost never the ones who are behind. They're the ones paying attention. And paying attention is most of the battle.

What I've watched over decades of practice is that parents, especially moms, consistently underestimate what they already have. The coverage they didn't know existed. The afternoon that didn't need a plan. The community of other parents who are asking the exact same questions and figuring it out right alongside them.

You're not missing something. You're not behind. You have more than you think.

Keep asking the questions. Keep showing up. That's enough. That's everything, actually.

Warmly,

Dr. Siobhan Dunnivant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?



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Preventive care for kids is expensive.
Between copays, deductibles, and surprise bills, most families are better off skipping routine visits unless something is actually wrong.

Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](#) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY ACTION



The Ones You're Honest With



The Ones You're Honest With

Think of two or three moms in your circle who are navigating the same season of parenting you are. Not the ones you perform for, the ones you're honest with.

Make time for a phone call or FaceTime this week, bonus points if you can make it in person. Tell them one thing you're figuring out right now and one thing that's actually going well.

Then ask how they're doing and mean it.

Community doesn't have to be organized to be real. Sometimes it's just a few minutes of honesty on a Tuesday after you've put the kids to bed. That's what your village is for.

THE LATEST

Your Health Insurance Just Made One Decision a Little Easier

Budgeting for kids is its own sport. You plan for school supplies, sports fees, the random Tuesday when you're told at 8 PM that you need to run to the store for a project due tomorrow, and then a medical bill shows up and blows the whole thing.

So when there's actual good news on the healthcare cost front, it's worth passing along.

[America's Health Insurance Plans \(AHIP\)](#), the national association representing health insurers across the country, recently confirmed that member health plans will continue covering [all ACIP-recommended immunizations](#) with no cost-sharing through the end of 2027. No copay. No surprise bill. No deductible applied.

If your family chooses to get any of those vaccines, you won't pay out of pocket for them. And vaccines aren't even the only thing on that list — which is actually the bigger story here.

Most private health plans are already required to cover a broad range of preventive services for children at no out-of-pocket cost. That includes well-child visits, developmental screenings, vision and hearing checks, and depression screening for adolescents.

What "No Cost-Sharing" Actually Means in Practice

"Covered" sounds simple, but it can mean a lot of things in the world of health insurance. No cost-sharing means none of it comes out of your pocket — no copay at the door, no deductible chipping away in the background, no surprise line item on the bill two weeks later.

For routine preventive care, that's a meaningful distinction. A well-child visit, the kind where your pediatrician checks development, updates growth charts, and flags anything worth watching, should cost you nothing under most private plans. The same goes for things like a vision screening at the two-year checkup, or a developmental screening for a toddler you've had questions about.

These are the appointments that actually catch things early — and knowing they're covered removes one real barrier to showing up for them.

Always worth a quick call to your insurer to confirm the details of your specific plan. Coverage can vary, and the last thing you want is a surprise.

Where Vaccines Fit In

For parents who are still in research mode or working through questions, this also just means the door stays open. If you get to a point where you and your doctor decide a particular vaccine makes sense for your child, cost won't be the barrier.

One of the most common variables parents cite when navigating vaccine decisions is cost. What does this actually run us? Will insurance cover it? Could we get hit with an unexpected bill? Those are completely reasonable questions and for families covered under AHIP member plans, the answer through 2027 is clear: if you choose to get an ACIP-recommended vaccine, it costs you nothing out of pocket.

That's one less unknown in what can already feel like an overwhelming process.

Part of a Bigger Shift on Healthcare Affordability

This isn't happening in a vacuum. The Trump administration has been pushing hard on healthcare costs across the board from capping insulin prices to launching TrumpRX, a new tool designed to help families find lower cash prices on medications and increase competition among drug makers.

Dr. Nicole Saphier, a physician, mother, and the administration's Surgeon General nominee, captured the underlying principle well in [a recent Fox News op-ed](#): *"Americans want the freedom to make their own choices alongside their doctors — and that freedom is only meaningful when access is guaranteed."*

She's right. Whatever choices your family makes about your children's health, those choices should be made freely and not shaped by financial pressure, limited access, or information you didn't have. Affordability and medical freedom aren't at odds. They're part of the same picture.

A Few Practical Steps Before Your Next Well Visit

- **Check your specific plan.** AHIP represents member plans broadly, but coverage details vary. Log into your member portal or call your insurer to confirm exactly what's covered and how.
- **Bring your questions to your pediatrician.** What vaccines are on the schedule for your child's age? What are the risks of each? What happens if you delay or skip? A good doctor welcomes all of it.
- **Plan ahead.** Knowing your coverage situation before a well visit means you can walk in focused on the conversation that matters (your child's health) instead of worrying about the bill.

At the end of the day, this is about options. Knowing what's covered, what's available, and what it costs gives you one more piece of information to work with as you make the choices that are right for your family.

That's all any parent can ask for.

The To-Do List Will Wait. These Moments Won't.

Think about the last Saturday that actually felt good. Not productive — good. Chances are it wasn't the one with a packed schedule. A slow morning. A meal everyone sat down for. A moment where nobody was rushing anywhere.

That feeling is worth protecting, and according to a [2023 study in the Journal of Pediatric Nursing](#), it's also worth prioritizing for your kids. Researchers found that parent-child quality time is directly tied to children's flourishing — their attachment, resilience, and sense of

contentment. Not their perfectly coordinated schedule or number of activities. Time. Simple, unhurried time.

[Harvard researchers](#) similarly found that unstructured free play, the kind that happens when nothing is planned and the afternoon stretches on, is one of the most powerful tools for building children's brains, teaching self-regulation, creativity, and emotional intelligence.

We don't need more activities. *We need more time.*

What Slowing Down Actually Looks Like

Slowing down isn't doing nothing. It's choosing differently. Here's what that can look like in practice:

- **Let them lead.** A friend recently shared something that resonated. She and her husband had planned a "yes day" with their kids. A full day where the kids got to call all the shots. They braced themselves for big, expensive asks. What did their kids want? To play a board game together and make s'mores. That was it. Sometimes the ask is smaller than we expect, and the gap between what our kids want and what we think they want is a good thing to sit with.
- **Make the ordinary a ritual.** Saturday morning pancakes. A walk after dinner. Reading in the same room. These aren't grand gestures. They're the things children actually remember. Rituals create safety. Safety creates connection.
- **Let them be bored.** Resist the urge to fill every quiet moment. Sit outside with them. Give them space to figure something out on their own. Boredom is where imagination starts, and your job in those moments isn't to entertain. It's to be nearby.
- **Put the phone down.** Kids notice the half-present parent, the one whose eyes drift to a screen mid-conversation. Presence is physical, but it's also attentional. Give them your eyes.
- **Rest out loud.** If you're always running around, your kids learn that stillness is something to escape. When they see you read on the couch or sit quietly outside, you're teaching them that slowing down is something people do on purpose — not something that only happens when they're sick or exhausted.

You Are Allowed to Opt Out

You don't have to fill every weekend with activities. You don't have to document it for anyone. You don't have to arrive at Monday morning having maximized 48 hours.

The memories that stick are rarely the ones you planned. They're the ones that snuck up on you. Folding laundry while your kid talked your ear off about something that mattered to them. The Saturday it rained and you stayed in and built a blanket fort in the living room. The moment you put the list down and your kid's whole demeanor changed.

They always notice.

Before this weekend arrives, ask yourself one question: *What is one thing I can take off the list so I can be more present with my family instead?*

Just one thing. The list will get done. But this child, at this exact age, with this exact version of their laugh — that's something you can't press pause on.

Slow down. Show up. The unscheduled moments are the ones they'll carry with them.

Empowering Parents to Make Healthcare Decisions for Their Children: A Conversation With Real Moms

Last week, Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, Ginny Yurich ([@1000HoursOutside](#)), Lauren Johnson ([@NaturalNurseMamma](#)), and Jenna Johnson ([@JennaJohnsonLiving](#)) spoke on Instagram Live about what matters most when it comes to raising healthy kids. From parental rights to screen time to getting kids moving, no topic was off limits.

Don't worry if you missed it! Keep an eye on our Instagram [@Adv4HealthyKids](#), for clips of moments we want to highlight.

SHEET PAN BANANA OAT PANCAKES

The breakfast that buys you a slow morning.

Pour the batter, let the kids claim their section of the pan, and load up their own toppings. While it bakes, you make the coffee. No standing over the stove, no flipping, no negotiating over who gets the blueberry ones. One pan comes out of the oven, and everyone gets exactly what they wanted, including you.



DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER

ENGAGE WITH US

What's one thing you wish someone had told you earlier about navigating your child's healthcare?

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



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