

4 years old

HEALTH ISSUES

Offer healthy snack and meal choices, limiting sugars. Children often don't eat meals well because they graze with snacks all day - that is fine, just make sure those snacks are healthy snacks (yogurt, peanut butter, fruit, vegetables, cereals).

Avoid direct sun exposure. Use a sunblock - SPF 50.

Make an appointment with your dentist for a routine exam and start routine cleanings every 6 months.

Continue to have your child brush his or her teeth twice daily with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

Ensure adequate amounts of sleep and physical activity. Encourage importance of good personal hygiene.

SAFETY ISSUES

Continue safe car seat use. Read instructions for proper installation. Here are some general guidelines:

Place seat in the back seat. Children this age should face forward in an appropriate child car seat. A booster seat is appropriate as long as your child is within the weight guidelines (greater than 70 lbs.) with a 5-point harness.

Never put a child under 13 years of age in the front seat of a car with a passenger side airbag.

Turn the hot water heater in your home down so the hottest water you can get from the faucet is 120 degrees.

Install and test your smoke detector in or near your child's room.

Childproof your home (poisons, medicines, guns, cigarettes, hot liquids).

Make sure any playground environment is safe.

Obtain your local Poison Control Center's phone number and keep it on hand.

Use a bike helmet for your child (and yourself) when riding.

Supervise activities, especially around lawnmowers, large dogs, cars. Do not allow your child to ride on a riding lawnmower.

Keep matches out of reach and instruct on fire safety.

Do not keep a firearm in your home. If you must, make sure it is locked and out of reach from your curious child.

Start teaching your child not to take rides or food from strangers; also, teach that his or her "privates" should not be touched or looked at by anyone other than mom, dad, or a doctor.

Provide a safe after-school environment.

Teach your child how to swim and follow water safety rules.

YOUR CHILD SHOULD...

Learn his or her phone number and address.

Be able to draw a person with head, body, arms, and legs; copy a triangle or square. Be able to draw a picture of his or her family and describe the picture to you.

Be able to recognize most letters and be able to print a few.

Be able to dress self without much help.

Be able and willing to follow rules at home and school; respect authority.

Know how to swim.

Play make-believe.

YOU SHOULD...

Praise your child at every opportunity.

Talk and sing regularly with your child.

Listen to music together with your child.

Introduce and play board games and card games with your child.

Limit screen time (TV, computer, tablets, smart phones) to certain programs and to maximum of 1 hour per day. Practice selective TV viewing (not channel surfing). Ensure adequate amounts of sleep and exercise (at least 60 minutes per day).

Continue to read books interactively with your child.

Encourage opportunities for safely exploring his or her environment.

Reward good behavior as much as possible.

Be consistent with rules. Be firm. You decide how strict or liberal to be, just make sure you are consistent.

Keep discipline brief. "Time-out" is usually effective at this age (1 minute for each year of life).

Offer choices to your child at every opportunity to allow decision-making.

Encourage assertiveness but not aggressive behavior.

Allow for self-care opportunities.

Have a bedtime routine and put your child to sleep in his or her own room. If they wake up at night, take them back to their own room and, if needed, lay down with them in their room until they are asleep again.

Eat meals as a family. Expect a poor appetite and don't argue with your child about not eating well.

4 years old

Try to allow expression of feelings (anger, joy, sadness, fear). Offer ways to resolve conflicts and handle anger.

Expect curiosity of genitalia and sexual matters. Use correct anatomy terminology. Answer sex-related questions in a simple manner.

Expect your child to share, reward him or her when he does.

Prepare for school and meet with teachers. Get involved with your child's school and organized activities.

Assign chores and offer rewards (point scoring system, allowance).

Be an example of the type of person you want your child to grow up to be - they are like sponges and absorb everything around them!

Spend time alone with your partner - one of the best things you can do for your child is to maintain a quality relationship with your partner.

IMMUNIZATIONS...

Tdap, IPV, MMR, Varicella.

Side effects may include pain and fever for which you may give the instructed amount of Acetaminophen (Tylenol ®) every 4 hours OR Ibuprofen (Motrin®/Advil®) every 6 hours as needed.

CALL IF...

Lethargic, Ill appearing, Fever greater 102 or with any concerns.