

THREE YEARS

At 3 years, your child may:

- Know their name and age.
- Draw shapes. Copies circle.
- Dress them selves.
- Ask “Why?” a lot.
- Pedal a tricycle. Jumps, kicks ball, stands briefly on one foot.
- Builds tower of blocks, simple puzzles and shape sorters
- Play with others. Imitate others.
- Play make-believe.
- Increasing vocabulary.
- Speak in fully understandable sentences.
- Taking turns.
- Begin to recognize colors.
- Washes hand, brushes teeth.

Things to do together:

Try out clean and safe playgrounds. Look for ones with:

- Soft surfaces
- Rubber or canvas swings
- Climbers with more than one way to climb
- Slides no higher than 5 feet
- Platforms and guardrails
- No peeling or chipping paint
- No spaces for fingers or hands to be pinched

What you can do:

- Use praise often.
- Make a dentist appointment for your child.
- Go to story hours and children’s museums.
- Be patient when they ask “why?”.
- Give a simple answer
- Teach your child to use a bike helmet.
- Use correct words for body parts.
- Go to the local library and get them a library card.



Anticipatory Guidance (Do’s and Don’ts):

- Continue fluoride supplement (dose increase at age 3) if water not fluoridated. Brush teeth twice a day. Start routine dental check-ups.
- Accident Prevention:
 - Car seat with child in rear seat until 40 pounds and 4 years of age.
 - Poison-proof the house.
 - Store knives and firearms out of reach.
 - Teach child danger of running into street.
- Discuss water safety. Knowing how to “swim” does not make a child water safe at this age.
- Talk to children about not following strangers and not accepting touching they don’t like by others.
- Toilet training: By age 3, approximately 85 percent of children are dry in the daytime, 60 percent to 70 percent are dry at night, and 90 percent are bowel trained.
- Discipline: Explain consequences of unacceptable behavior to child. Encourage independence by allowing some decision making. Be consistent with limits and consequences.
- Maintain regular bedtime. May have night fears. May discontinue nap.

- Needs opportunities such as pre-school and play groups for socializing with peers and separating from parents. Begins to share and take turns.
- May be curious about where babies come from and differences between boys and girls.
- Encourage active play with blocks, puzzles, “art projects,” books and reading, and outdoor play.
- Discourage TV.
- Talk with child about his activities. Have special time alone with child. Show affection.

Common Concerns – *Make Believe*

A new kind of thinking develops in most 3 year olds – imagination. Play gives many chances to use imagination. Your child can pretend to be a parent, a bear, or a baby. They can imagine that a shoe is a car, a telephone, or a bottle. Pretend play helps learning.

Your child may have an imaginary friend. This friend can do things a child dreams about. Imaginary friends are common. Do not be concerned. Respect your child’s privacy. Imaginary friends give your child a safe way to try out who they want to be.

An active imagination is healthy, even when it includes changing the truth. A make-believe story might begin as a way for your child to feel safe. Your child is trying to take care of things the best way they know how. Try to understand what is happening and respect their feelings. If you react harshly, your child will become fearful.

Feeding:

- Offer variety of healthy foods. Avoid junk food such as candy, cookies, chips and soda.
- Child should be able to feed self.
- Avoid control struggles about eating.

At the next visit, your child should receive their last dose of DTaP, IPV, MMR and Varicella.

Next Visit: in 1 year (age 4 years)

