

## FOUR YEARS

### At 4 years, your child may:

- Understand that other people have feelings too
- Make friends
- Show a sense of humor
- Brush teeth with help
- Test limits
- Make up rhymes
- Uses pencil with good control. Copies a cross and a circle.
- May draw a person with two to three parts. Cuts with children's scissors and pastes.
- Uses full sentences. Can sing a song. Speech should be intelligible to strangers.
- Counts to 10. Names three or four colors. May recognize some letters and name.
- Dresses and undresses self. Washes and dries hands.
- Enjoys make-believe play and dressing-up play. Imaginative and very curious.
- Enjoys playing with other children.



### Things to do together:

- Talk to your child about protecting themselves. They should never go with strangers. They should tell a trusted adult if anyone touches them in an uncomfortable way.
- After your child watches a TV program, talk to them about it. Ask them which part they liked best.
- Teach your child that different people come from different cultures. Go to festivals and celebrations in your community.

### What you can do:

- Teach your child how to express feelings with words
- Provide safety scissors, paper, crayons, and glue for artwork
- Limit TV to one hour a day or less
- Ask about their daily activities
- Sign up your child for school

### Anticipatory Guidance (Do's and Don'ts):

- Alternates feet descending stairs, hops, jumps forward. Uses slide. Rides tricycle or trainer bike.
- Continue fluoride supplement if water not fluoridated. Brush teeth twice a day. Routine dental check-ups.
- Accident prevention:
  - Car seat required until 40 pounds and 4 years. Booster seat should be used if the child is over 40 pounds
  - And is required until 6 years of age or at least 60 pounds.
  - Child should always ride in rear seat until age 12.
  - Teach bicycle safety and use helmet.
  - Supervise play near street. Adult supervision in or near water.
  - Lock up electrical tools, firearms, matches and poisons.
- Teach child to never accompany or accept food from strangers or allow touching he/she does not like.
- Encourage child to sleep in own bed. Establish bedtime rituals. May have nightmares or night terrors.
- Toilet training: By age 4, 90 percent are dry in daytime and 75 percent dry at night. 95 percent bowel trained.
- Curious about their own as well as a playmate's body, differences between boys and girls, and where babies come from. Answer questions factually with correct terms for genitals at child's level.

- Provide appropriate and clearly stated limits and consequence if rules are broken. Nagging and meaningless threats are ineffective. Balance child’s need for independence and need for limits. Praise positive behavior.
- Assign chores such as setting and cleaning up table.
- Provide opportunities such as pre-school and play-groups for child to interact with peers and separate from parents.
- Parent activities:
  - Encourage exploratory walks and outing to new places.
  - Limit TV viewing. Read together.
  - Encourage pretend play and activities that require child to “figure things out.”
  - Card and board games appropriate for age. Encourage art projects with crayons, paints, cutting and pasting. Puzzles and blocks.

**Common Concerns – *Helping your child feel good about themselves.***

Self esteem means how we feel about ourselves. It is important for your child to feel that they are loved and wanted. Children with high self-esteem often

- Do better in school
- Cooperate well with others
- Know how to show their emotions
- Form friendships more easily
- Make healthier decisions

**Feeding:**

- Create pleasant atmosphere at mealtime with conversation that includes child.
- Offer small portions of variety of foods in each food group, with second helpings available.

**At this visit, your child received the following vaccines:**

1. DTaP: immunizes against Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis. This is the last of 5 doses.
2. IPV: immunizes against Polio. This is the last of 4 doses.
3. MMR: immunizes against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella. This is the last of 2 doses.
4. Varicella: immunizes against varicella (chicken pox). This is the last of 2 doses.

**Next Visit:** in 1 year (age 5 years)

