

4 Year Old Handout

Diet

- Your preschooler will become neater at the dinner table; he will drink from a cup without spilling and more consistently use utensils to eat.
- Offer choices from all food groups (cereals/grains, fruit/vegetables, low fat/nonfat milk products, lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, dried beans, peas, and nuts). Don't be disappointed if he doesn't finish or sample them.
- Continue to provide easy to chew food (hamburger instead of steak) and healthy snacks.

Development

- Sleep
 - Your child maybe waking up at night because of nightmares or night terrors.
 - Comfort and reassure him that he is safe in his own bed.
 - Avoid frequent episodes of sleeping in bed with you.
- Speech and Language
 - Your child maybe pointing to colors you name and identify specific shapes.
 - Should be speaking in 4-5 word sentences, some of which are complex and pertain to imaginary conditions.
 - Favorite 4 year old conversations begin with "who" and "why".
 - Stimulate speech by helping your child classify objects, use the phone correctly, and plan activities with you.
- Social
 - Encourage your child to perform simple tasks around the house, such as setting the table and picking up toys.
- Physical
 - Your child will become proficient in riding a tricycle, alternating feet when descending stairs, walking on his tiptoes, and hopping.
 - Will become more skilled in dressing himself, and mastering buttons/zippers.
 - Will begin drawing more recognizable pictures, such as a person with 2-3 body parts.
 - Should be able to copy a circle and a line.
 - Expect some bed wetting. Only 3 out of 4 children this age are dry at night.

Getting Ready for School

- Ask your child to tell you about her day, friends, and activities.
- Read books together each day and ask your child questions about the stories.
- Take your child to the library and let her choose books.
- Give your child plenty of time to finish sentences.
- Listen to and treat your child with respect. Insist that others do so as well.
- Model apologizing and help your child to do so after hurting someone's feelings.
- Praise your child for being kind to others.
- Help your child express her feelings.
- Give your child the chance to play with others often.
- Consider enrolling your child in a preschool, Head Start, or community program. Let us know if we can help.

Your Community

- Stay involved in your community. Join activities when you can.
- Use correct terms for all body parts as your child becomes interested in how boys and girls differ.
- Teach your child about how to be safe with other adults.

- No one should ask for a secret to be kept from parents.
- No one should ask to see private parts.
- No adult should ask for help with his/her private parts.
- Know that help is available if you don't feel safe.

Healthy Habits

- Have relaxed family meals without TV.
- Create a calm bedtime routine.
- Have the child brush his/her teeth twice each day using a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Have your child spit out toothpaste, but do not rinse his mouth with water.

Safety

- Teach your children to be cautious around strangers (never accept food or a ride).
- Explain that "private parts" are to be touched only by parents or doctors.
- Use a forward-facing car safety seat or booster seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Switch to a belt-positioning booster seat when your child reaches the weight or height limit for her car safety seat, his/her shoulders are above the top harness slots, or his/her ears come to the top of the car safety seat.
- As a parent, remember to always use your seatbelt and wear a bike helmet. Children are more willing to do so, when all members of the family practice good safety.
- Never leave your child alone in the car, house, or yard.
- Do not permit your child to cross the street alone.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun. Ask if there are guns in homes where your child plays. If so, make sure they are stored safely.
- Supervise play near streets and driveways.

TV and Media

- Be active together as a family often.
- Limit screen time to no more than 2 hours per day.
- Discuss the TV programs you watch together as a family.
- No TV in the bedroom.
- Create opportunities for daily play.
- Praise your child for being active.

Immunizations

- A DTaP and the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) boosters are given at this visit.
- The measles portion of the MMR vaccine can cause a mild rash and fever 7-12 days after it is given.
- All vaccines may cause local redness and soreness at the site of injection.

Tests

- Hearing and a vision screenings will be performed at this visit.
- If there is risk, a PPD test to screen for tuberculosis may be done today. If a PPD test is administered, schedule an appointment in 48-72 hours from when the PPD is placed to have it read by a nurse.
- If there is risk, a lipid test to screen for high cholesterol may have also been done today.

The next visit is the 5 year visit.

Poison Help:

1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:

1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org