

PE D I A T R I C S

of
Northeastern Pennsylvania

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YOUR 4 YEAR OLD CHILD

A preschooler lives at your house now, and if you close your eyes for just a second too long, the next time you look he'll be wearing a graduation cap and gown. So savor each moment with this neat little person and continue to learn together. Included in this handout is some "growing up" info. to keep you going.

NUTRITION

It's time to work more on table manners by creating a pleasant atmosphere at mealtime. An important part of "atmosphere" is conversation that includes your child. Talk about the food, the day, the weather and what will happen tomorrow. Offer some choices at mealtime and give small portions of food with second helpings available. Allow your child to see you eating new and different foods and avoid making negative food comments, "this is disgusting", that sort of thing. Remember food is not to be used as a reward system.

SAFETY

Safety belts and restraint systems are still an absolute must for both you and your child. Remember, example speaks loudly. Injury prevention is also still a must with close supervision necessary. Continue to select toys based on age-appropriate safety recommendation. Continue to lock up electrical tools, guns, matches and poisons. Even though your four year old may know these aren't to be touched, imagination and limit testing are still part of the picture. Bike riding is to be done on patios or sidewalks only, and of course with supervision. Swimming is allowed only with uninterrupted supervision by an adult who can swim. Discuss fire safety with your child and include in that discussion an escape route from your home in case of fire. Teach your child their name, address and phone number in case they should ever become lost. Talk to your child about bad touching from strangers or even from people they know well. Let them feel safe in coming to you with information along these lines.

PARENTING TIPS

Your child should be sleeping in their own bed, with a bed time ritual that they can enjoy and anticipate, i.e., a story, good night kiss and hug. Provide opportunities for your little one to interact with other children, such as play groups, day care or pre-school. Keep in mind that your child at this age can accept and keep an agreement, so encourage chores like setting the table, cleaning the table, or making their own bed - and Praise, Praise, Praise jobs well done. Promote activity that requires your child to figure things out, including card and board games. Limit TV and encourage exploratory walks, trips to new places and shopping trips. Questions about sex are bound to come up. Answer them factually with correct terminology and at your child's level of understanding. Also stay within the boundaries of each question. It's normal for your child to be curious about their own bodies as well as their friends' body. Do encourage privacy for your child while dressing, undressing or bathing. Discipline is still an important issue. Do it privately, when possible. Give appropriate and clearly stated limits of the consequences if these rules are broken. Remember, nagging and idle threats are meaningless and ineffective in the world of discipline. Instead, follow through with consequences of the broken rules. Remember to allow your child a gradual degree of increasing independence along with consistent limits. And most important, don't expect your child to know how much you love them, and how proud you are of them. Tell them constantly with words and show them with lots of hugs and kisses.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

At this age the typical child:

- alternates feet when ascending stairs, hops, jumps forward and can stand on one foot for three to five seconds
- climb a ladder, ride a tricycle, can walk on tip toes
- can hold a pencil with good control, build a tower of ten or more cubes
- have the ability to cut and paste
- can engage in conversational give and take
- can ask why, when, how and inquire about the meaning of words
- may name 3-4 primary colors
- can count from one to five, sing a song, and enjoy a joke
- can wash and dry their hands and brush their teeth
- can dress and undress with supervision, except for handling laces and buttons and if allowed sufficient time to dress, they may begin to be elective about their clothing.
- can initiate dramatic make believe and dress up play, in which of course, they assume the specific role
- is imaginative and intensively curious
- have a formed gender identification
- can copy a circle and a cross
- can draw a person with 2-3 parts
- can enjoy the companionship of other children and play cooperatively and show interest in other childrens bodies
- should be able to meet the challenges of a kindergarten class

IMMUNIZATIONS

Refer to immunization chart in baby book for immunizations due.

Immunizations and their schedules change according to the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Check with your physician for changes/updates.

Please remember these are "typical" milestones for this particular aged child, but every baby is an individual and variations are to be expected.

Please call out office between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. That's what OUR part of YOUR team is all about.