

your child @TM

3 years

highlights of what's happening
at this stage of your child's development...

Your “little baby” is off to preschool, where their world will broaden seemingly overnight. And they’ll need your hand to guide them. As they make friends, you can teach them to share. As they potty train, you can help them practice. With encouragement and patience, you can help set up your child for success.

your child's health

take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, you should let your doctor know if, by the time your child is four, she cannot or does not:

- Jump in place.
- Grasp a crayon between thumb and fingers.
- Scribble.
- Use sentences of more than three words.
- Use “me” and “you” appropriately.

The Well Visit

Expect to take your child to the doctor for checkups when they turn three and again, when they are four. Exams might include tests to check for lead poisoning, tuberculosis, and kidney and metabolic diseases. Also, well visits are a good chance to check with your pediatrician about any booster shots that your child may need before starting school and be sure to catch up on any missed immunizations.

The Dentist

By the time your child turns three, they should have almost all of their 20 baby teeth. This means it's time to visit the dentist if you haven't already.

Before the visit. Prepare your child by talking about what will happen at the dentist's office and reading books about going to the dentist.

At the dentist. The dentist will count and examine your child's teeth, and give a lesson about how to brush their teeth.

- Brush teeth at least once per day (especially at night).
- Use a child-size toothbrush with a pea-sized bit of fluoride toothpaste.
- Let your child brush their teeth themselves and then help them to make sure their teeth get cleaned. Is brushing a battle? Give them your toothbrush so that they can “clean” your teeth while you clean theirs.

Nutrition

Part of the family. At this age, your child's eating habits should be similar to yours. They should eat the same foods at the same times, and use child-size utensils.

Beware. Choking is still a hazard because your child has not yet mastered chewing and swallowing. So, make portion sizes small, especially when serving:

- Grapes (cut them in half).
- Hot dogs (slice in half across and lengthwise).
- Raw vegetables, such as carrots and celery.
- Peanut butter (avoid spoonfuls).

- Avoid entirely foods such as hard candies and cherries with pits.

Sleep

Goodbye naptime. Between the ages of three and four, children commonly give up their afternoon naps. Your child should sleep anywhere from nine to thirteen hours per day.

Hello bedtime battles. As a way of gaining control of their world, your child may try to resist bedtime. You can ease the process if you:

- Stick with the bedtime routine.
- Allow your child to make choices — pick out pajamas or books to read.
- Provide a sense of security with night lights, security blankets or stuffed animals.

Toilet Training

At this age, children's toilet skills are varied. Some kids may have mastered it. Others may be just starting. Don't get down on your child (or yourself) if your child is still learning. No matter where your child is in the process, you will probably deal with:

Accidents. They happen. Don't get mad or make a big deal about it. This will only discourage your child from trying on their own again.

Preschool. First, your child's preschool may require them to be trained in order to attend. So, set them up for success:

- Let them use toilets outside of your home.
- Dress them in clothes that are easy for them to pull up and down.
- Have boys practice from a standing position.

Staying dry at night. Help them along by:

- Using the potty right before bed.
- Limiting liquids after 5 pm.
- Putting them to bed in underwear instead of pull-ups.
- Making the potty accessible to them in the night.

your child @TM 3 years

your child's growth and development

Your child should be able to do most or all of the following by the time they turn four years old:

Physically

- Throw and kick a ball.
- Draw circles and squares.
- Begin to copy capital letters.
- Dress and undress.

Intellectually

- Identify "same" and "different" objects.
- Talk in short sentences so that others can understand.
- Tell and remember parts of stories.

Socially and Emotionally

- Cooperate with other children.
- Engage in fantasy play.
- Understand that there are ways to solve problems.

nurturing your child

Sharing

To have a friend means to be a friend. Whether at school or at a playgroup, you'll notice that your child is beginning to make friends. For the first time, they face difficult new issues like sharing and taking turns.

To help your child understand these concepts, you can:

- *Show them how to share.* Offer your child a pen from your desk in exchange for one of his markers. Also, let them see you sharing with others. Use the word "share" during these interactions, so they can begin to connect the word to the action.
- *Use "share-friendly" toys.* When your child has a friend over to play, put out toys that lend themselves to sharing and cooperating. Try blocks, dress up clothes, art supplies and climbing toys. Also, before guests arrive, put away toys that your child does not want to share.

- *Practice with your child.* Play games that involve taking turns such as board games, the memory game and hide-and-seek are good.
- *Encourage and explain.* Praise your child when they share, but don't punish them if they do not. Instead, wait until you are alone with your child and talk about sharing. Explain that just because they let his friend use their toy doesn't mean that the friend will get to go home with it.

Television/Computer time

Limit media watching (including TV, computer, video games, etc.). One to two hours per day is more than enough. Also, monitor the shows they watch. Tune into shows that have nice messages. Tune out violence.

your child's safety

In the Car

Booster time? Contact either the Missouri or Kansas Highway Patrol for information regarding each states law on the use of booster seats. Always use a lap/shoulder belt with a booster seat.

Note: Stick with the booster until the adult seat belt fits properly, usually between 8 and 12 years old and about 4'9" tall.

take note...

Now that your child is interacting more with other children, they are more likely to be exposed to new germs. Remind them to wash their hands well when they come in from outside, after using the toilet and before they eat.

Born LearningSM is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children.

