

FOUR YEARS

DEVELOPMENT

1. At this age, children are becoming bigger, stronger, and more coordinated. They should be able to pedal a tricycle, throw and kick a ball, and partially dress themselves.
2. They should be speaking in sentences and their speech should be fairly clear to everyone. Some speech sounds, however, do not become perfected until eight years of age. They should be able to express themselves well, know some nursery rhymes, count to ten, and recite the alphabet.
3. At this age, children should be learning how to deal with their peers and with adults other than their parents. Nursery school, play groups, YMCA swim and gym programs, dancing lessons, and library story hours are excellent activities for children at this age.
4. All children should be exposed to books and the joys of reading at this age. The importance of reading cannot be over emphasized.
5. Your child has probably discovered computers and television. Parents should be monitoring the quantity and content of computer and television time. Television, videos, iPads and smartphones are poor babysitters. There is no substitute for a parent's time. Limit TV, movies, and computer use to 1 hour per day.
6. Please complete the PEDS Response Form to help us assess your child's development.

DIET

1. Avoid sweets and other junk foods.
2. By now, your child has developed definite likes and dislikes with regard to foods. There is no single food that your child requires for good health. A balanced diet should be offered to your child.
3. Variable appetite is normal at this age and should not be a source of parental concern if your child is growing well. Your child will eat what is needed if given the opportunity to eat a balanced diet.
4. Vitamin supplements are usually not needed at this age. Fluoride supplements may be prescribed if your water is not fluoridated.

SAFETY

1. Accident prevention is critical at this age. Never leave your child alone in the house, car or yard.
2. Children should ride in the back seat in a car seat if under 40 lbs or a booster safety seat with a lap/shoulder belt if over 40 lbs and 40 inches.
3. Do not leave child unattended in bathtub. Watch your child constantly when he/she is near any water.
4. Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies, and sharp and small objects away from your child. Be sure matches and lighters are in places where children cannot reach them.
5. Protect your home with smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
6. Cover electrical outlets and do not let child play with electrical cords.
7. Keep basement doors closed. Use window guards on upstairs windows.
8. Poison Control Center telephone 1-800-222-1222.
9. Cigarette smoking causes cancer. Do not expose your child to this toxin.
10. If your child is riding a bicycle, tricycle, skate board or scooter, insist on helmet use
11. Use sun block during the appropriate times of the year. Limit time in the sun. Use a hat.
12. Perform a full body tick check each night before bed.
13. Protect against mosquito bites. Use insect repellent sparingly.

14. Make sure that bureaus, dressers, TV and any other items that could tip over are secured.
15. Teach your child about how to be safe with other adults.
16. If there is a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately. Ask if there are guns in homes where your child plays. If so, make sure they are stored safely.

DISCIPLINE

1. By this age, children should have learned that there are restrictions that have been placed on their behavior. Temper tantrums should be less frequent as they have learned that they are not effective in getting them what they want. They are much more likely to use verbal means to get what they want.
2. Set consistent, reasonable limits. As children become more mature and are able to accept more responsibility, they should be given more freedom and their limits should be increased. The parent, however, must remain in control.
3. Both parents must agree on the method of discipline. Be consistent.
4. Reward desired behavior. Do not reward undesired behavior.
5. Self-image is important. Children like to please; they should not be referred to as bad, since they will be given a reputation to live up to. You may disapprove of what your child does, but never disapprove of your child.
6. Be reasonable, be consistent, and be patient. Children learn by repetition.

SLEEP

1. Sleep disturbances (nightmares) are common at this age. Your child should be comforted, fully awakened, then returned to sleep. Children should not be allowed to come into bed with their parents.
2. Establishment of a definite bedtime routine such as a bath followed by a bedtime story will help your child settle down to go to sleep. Parents should select a bedtime they believe is reasonable and fits into the family routine. Do NOT place a TV in your child's bedroom.
3. Naps are variable at this age. Children who do not take a daily nap should have a quiet time during the day.
4. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 10-13 hours of sleep, including naps, per day at this age.

LAB TESTS

1. A blood lead level to detect lead poisoning if living in a high risk area.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. Hearing Screening
2. Vision Screening

PROCEDURES

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that fluoride varnish be applied every 3-6 months to the teeth of infants and children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years. Please discuss this recommendation with your physician.

IMMUNIZATIONS

1. Please notify the physician if your child has had a reaction to any previous immunization.
2. Depending on physician and parent preference, your child may receive:
 - A. MMRV (Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella).
 - B. Kinrix (Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis, Inactivated Polio Vaccine).
 - C. Influenza vaccine, if available.

NEXT VISIT: At 5 years of age.

Parent/Guardian must accompany child at all visits.

Copies of this and all Handouts may be found on our website at www.tri-countypediatrics.com