



## 3 – 4 YEAR VISIT

### NUTRITION

- Provide a good variety of healthy foods, including 3-5 fruits & vegetables/day.
- Juice is not necessary. If given, dilute with water and limit to 4-6 ounces/day.
- Give 3-4 servings of dairy a day for 800 mg of calcium (offer a calcium supplement or calcium-fortified foods).
- Visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) for guidance.
- Avoid buying junk food, soda pop and fast foods.
- Eat family meals together. Avoid eating while playing or watching television.
- Avoid struggles over eating – picky eaters are common.
- Avoid using food as a reward.
- Include your child in healthy food preparation.

### SLEEP

Most 3 and 4 year olds need 11-13 hours of sleep at night. Many will still take a nap, but naps become shorter and less frequent. Have a regular bedtime routine including reading, but don't stay with your child until he/she falls asleep. Resisting going to sleep is common. Children this age may have nightmares.

### FEARS

Three to four year olds may start developing fears. This is a healthy survival instinct to protect them from danger. These fears, however, can become exaggerated and painful for kids. Check the “visual diet” of your child – even a children’s program can contain frightening images. Talk openly and calmly with your child about fears; acknowledge the fear and let your child know you understand and are there for support. It is appropriate to do what you can within reason to help

your child feel safe in his/her room at night, but keep in mind there is a limit – at some point every child must face the fears and get through them. Your job is to support him or her in this important endeavor.

### DISCIPLINE

Discipline is really a matter of learning how to behave – learning to consider others as well as themselves. Children learn best by experience and learn readily when they think they can succeed. Discipline problems often occur when children are bored. Assigning responsibilities that interest your child and that he/she can be successful in (e.g. picking up clothes, simple kitchen chores, putting away toys, caring for a pet) are ideal. Children can be expected to stay in Time Out for 3-4 minutes. Have your child apologize for bad behavior, then offer praise for completing a Time Out.

### HEALTH & SAFETY

- When giving liquid medicine, always use the dropper or syringe that comes with medication. If medication does not come with a dosing device, ask your pharmacist for one that should be used. Never use teaspoons, tablespoons, or other spoons to measure medicine. Aspirin should not be given to children (under 21 year of age) due to its association with Reye’s Syndrome.
- Provide lots of time and room for playing. Ensure playground safety.
- Media use (TV, DVDs, computer/mobile applications) should be limited to 1 hour or less of high-quality, age-appropriate children’s programming. Parents are encouraged to view media with children, to help them understand what they are seeing and apply what they learn to the world around them. Avoid media one hour before bedtime, and do not have TV or computer in child’s bedroom.
- Brush teeth regularly/schedule dental appointments every 6 months, ideally with a pediatric dentist. Fluoride application to prevent cavities.
- Use sunscreen with SPF of 30 liberally. Apply 30 minutes before sun exposure and reapply every 1 1/2 – 2 hours. Protective clothing, hats and sunglasses should be used in addition when outside.
- It is ok to use an insect repellent with up to 30% DEET, but use sparingly and wash off once you come inside.
- Do NOT use combination sunscreen/bug spray, as sunscreen must be applied more often than is safe to use bug spray.
- Discuss stranger safety (at 4 years of age) and good touch/bad touch.
- Do not let young brothers and sisters watch over your child.
- Use a car seat in the back until 40 lbs and 4 years of age. After 40 lbs use a booster seat in the back seat.
- Child safety seat inspection: 1-866-SEATCHECK or visit [www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/cps/index.htm](http://www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/cps/index.htm)
- Insist on helmets and safety gear for bikes & skates (set a good example by wearing your helmet).
- If you have guns in the house, make sure they are locked and well out of reach.
- Make sure your home has working smoke detector and CO2 monitor.
- Know your poison control number: **1-800-222-1222**
- Never leave your child alone in the car, house, or yard. Supervise play near streets and driveways.
- Your child is too young to cross the street alone.
- Make sure there are operable window guards on every window on the second floor and higher. Move furniture away from windows.

## DEVELOPMENT

Three-and four-year-old children enter into a magical world of fantasy and imagination, including imaginary friends and pretend play. They are increasingly independent and social, thriving on contact with other children. While three-year-olds may be fairly calm, four-year-olds may seem to be “out of bounds” – full of energy, drive, bossiness and belligerence. One of the most important things you can do as your child matures is to help him/her feel confident and capable.

## PRESCHOOL/PARENTS DAY OUT

Provide opportunity for your child to socialize with other children in playgroups, preschool, or other community activities. Children should be with other children of approximately the same age and stage of development. While peer interaction and social skills are an important part of the development that occurs in this setting, so is the exposure to new and varied play. Academics should not be the focus.

## Playing with Others

Playing with other preschoolers helps get your child ready for school.

- Give your child a variety of toys for dress-up, make-believe, and imitation.
- Make sure your child has the chance to play often with other preschoolers.
- Help your child learn to take turns while playing games with other children.

## Getting Ready for School

- Ask your child to tell you about his/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 him/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 his/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.

## READING AND TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD

- Read books, sing songs, and play rhyming games with your child each day.
- Reading together and talking about a book’s story and pictures helps your child learn how to read.
- Ask your child questions about the story or pictures. Ask him/her to tell a part of the story.
- Use books as a way to talk together.
- Look for ways to practice reading everywhere you go, such as stop signs or signs in the store.

## FAMILY SUPPORT

- Take time for yourself and to be with your partner. Parents need to stay connected to friends, their personal interests, and work.
- Be aware that your parents might have different parenting styles than you.
- Give your child the chance to make choices.
- Show your child how to handle anger well—time alone, respectful talk, or being active. Stop hitting, biting, and fighting right away.
- Reinforce rules and encourage good behavior.
- Use time-outs or take away what’s causing a problem.
- Have regular playtimes and mealtimes together as a family.

**Your child should have a routine well care visit every year. (Please complete ASQ Developmental Screening prior to next visit)**

You may request the next Ages & Stages Developmental Questionnaire when scheduling your appointment.

**APA Website: [www.advancedpediatricassociates.com](http://www.advancedpediatricassociates.com) | APA Patient Care Line: 303-699-6200**