

SUBURBAN PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES, INC.

Well Child Care at 4 Years

Nutrition

Your child should always be a part of the family at mealtime. This should be a pleasant time for the family. Give small portions of food to your child. If he is still hungry, let him have seconds.

Development and Discipline

At this age children usually become more cooperative in their play with other children. They are curious and imaginative.

Allow privacy while your child is changing clothes or using the bathroom. When your child starts wanting privacy on his own, let him know that you think this is good.

Breaking rules occasionally is common at this age. Making children have a time out by themselves for 4 minutes is usually an effective discipline. If you have questions about behavior, ask us.

Many children benefit from pre-school experiences that encourage play and socialization. We can help you assess your child's readiness for kindergarten over the next year.

Dental Care

- Brushing teeth regularly after meals is important. Think up a game and make it fun.
- Your child should be receiving dental visits every six months.

Immunizations

There are no routine immunizations scheduled for this visit. If your child is in need of an immunization, it will be given.

Safety Tips

Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- Everyone in a car must always wear seat belts.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- Teach your child to never ride a tricycle or bicycle in the street.
- Have your child wear a bicycle helmet while riding a tricycle or bicycle.
- It is too early to expect a child to look both ways before crossing the street. Supervise all street crossing.

Poisons

- Teach your child to never take medicines without supervision and not to eat unknown substances.
- Put the poison center number on all phones. The poison control number is 1-800-222-1222.

Safety Around Strangers

- Teach your child the first and last names of family members.
- Teach your child to never go anywhere with a stranger, or keep secrets.

Avoid Injuries

- Do not allow your child to be near knives, power tools, or mowers.

Next Visit

A once-a-year check-up is recommended. Be sure to check your child's shot records before starting school to make sure he or she has all the required vaccinations. At this time we also begin assessing your child's hearing and vision in a more formal way.

Normal Development: 4 Years Old

Here's what you might see your child doing between the ages of 4 and 5 years.

Physical Development

- Hops, runs, skips, climbs, with increasing skill
- Tires easily
- Is accident prone
- Enjoys making loud noises but is frightened by unexpected sounds
- Toilets independently
- Makes designs and draws recognizable objects
- Manipulates blunt scissors
- Dresses self (with exception of shoes)
- Small muscle control lags behind large muscle

Emotional Development

- Regresses to baby behavior periodically
- Shows new fears (becoming aware of more dangers)
- Has a penchant for silliness

Social Development

- Refers to parents as final authority
- Continues to test parental limits
- Uses "naughty" words to observe reaction
- Is ready for group activities
- Talks "with" another child, but does not listen to what other child says
- Is comfortable with other children, but shares grudgingly
- Tattles and name-calls
- Is more aware of sex role differences
- Imitates adult activities

Mental Development

- Is more likely to solve problems through words than aggressive action
- Has a vocabulary of about 1500 to 2000 words
- Speaks in 4 to word sentences
- Fancies funny, exaggerated stories
- Can count to 5
- Identifies some shapes
- Begins to understand some concepts of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow)
- Asks endless "why" questions
- Usually can put toys and materials away without adult assistance
- Insists on finishing an activity or project
- Likes helping with simple tasks
- Begins to know difference between right and wrong
- Shows growing ability to distinguish real-life from make-believe
- Tells tall tales, but cannot always distinguish between honesty and dishonesty
- Believes the only viewpoint is his or her own
- Believes two unrelated events can have a cause-effect relationship

Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain behaviors and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones. If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, please give us a call.