

# your child @<sup>™</sup>

## 4 years

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

At the end of this year, your child will finish preschool and prepare for kindergarten. Get ready for him to learn new things.

### Your child's health

**The Well Visit** Take your child to the doctor for a check-up when she turns 4. Ask your doctor about shots that your child may need before starting school. And catch up on any missed vaccinations.

Let your doctor know if your child:

- Is very afraid, shy, or aggressive.
- Does not want to play with other children.
- Is unhappy or sad a lot of the time.
- Has trouble eating, sleeping, or using the toilet.



**Sleep** Your child probably sleeps between 10 to 12 hours per night and does not nap.

Nighttime troubles may be:

- Bad dreams. If your child has a bad dream, comfort him until he is able to go back to sleep.
- Night terrors. If your child suddenly sits up in bed and cries, screams, or kicks, do not wake him. Stay with him until the terror ends and he is calm.
- Bed-wetting. Reward your child for dry nights. Do not punish for wet nights. Tell your doctor if the problem lasts.

**Nutrition** Encourage good eating habits:

- Offer 3 healthy meals each day, plus 2 small snacks.
- Talk about how eating the right foods (fruits, vegetables, low-fat meats, and whole grains) helps the body grow.
- Let your child help plan and prepare meals with you.
- Be a good example. Eat foods that are good for you.

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### Nurturing your child

#### Behavior

Here are some ways to help your child behave:

- Try not to say “no” all the time. Use positive words. Say, “Let’s jump off the pillows instead of off the bed.”
- Give choices. Let your child choose between 2 or 3 things. “Would you like to do a puzzle or read a book?”
- Make rules clear. Set up rules that are easy to understand and use them again and again. For example, tell your child that he can play outside when he cleans up his toys.
- Know your child’s limits and try not to push him too far. For example, if he is tired, don’t bring him shopping.
- If your child falls apart, stay calm instead of getting angry. Gently take him away from the situation.

#### Toilet Training

Talk to your doctor if you have general concerns about toilet training, or if your child:

- Stays dry at night for a while, but then begins to wet at night again and must go back to wearing training pants.
- Is 5 and still consistently wets the bed.
- Is completely toilet trained for at least 6 months but suddenly begins to have many accidents during the day and night.

### Your child’s safety

#### Around the House

- Never leave your child alone near water, even if he can swim.
- Put cleaning supplies, medicines, and vitamins out of your child’s reach.

#### Street Safety

- Be sure your child wears a bike helmet while riding a scooter or bicycle.
- Teach your child to look and listen for cars before he crosses a street or a parking lot.

#### In the Car

All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car seat should use a Belt-Positioning Booster Seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age.