

# YOUR 4 YEAR OLD

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

### SAFETY

- **ALWAYS** use a size appropriate forward facing car seat that is properly installed in the back seat according to the manufacturer's instructions and vehicle owner's manual until your child reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the manufacturer. The back seat is the safest place for children to ride.
- **EXPLAIN** to your child that certain parts of the body (those areas normally covered by a bathing suit) are private and should **NOT** be touched by others without his permission. Anticipate your child's normal curiosity about his body and the differences between boys and girls. Use correct terms for all body parts, including genitals.
- **TEACH** your child rules for how to be safe with other adults, using these 3 principles: (1) No adult should tell a child to keep secrets from parents, (2) No adult should show interest in private parts, and (3) No adult should ask a child for help with his or her own private parts. We used to be worried about strangers. Now we know that abusers are often a person the child should be able to trust.
- **IF** your child is experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, **TELL** your health care provider or call the **ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-752-6200** for help. Teach your child that some areas of the body are private. Explain to your child no one should touch the "private parts" of his/her body without permission.
- **IF** it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, it should be stored unloaded and locked, with ammunition locked separately from the gun. Children this age are naturally curious and will get into everything! Also keep medications, cleaning solutions, and insecticides out of children's reach. **POISON HOTLINE 1-800-222-1222**.
- **NEVER** leave your child alone when they are outside.
- **CLOSELY WATCH** all play near streets or driveways. Your child is not ready to cross the road alone.

### NUTRITION

- **CREATE** a pleasant atmosphere at mealtime by turning off the TV and having table conversation that includes your child. A poor appetite or limited food preference is not a major concern if your child's growth rate has been normal.
- **FEED** your child's meals and snacks at the same times each day. Provide nutritious snacks such as yogurt, fruits, vegetables, or whole grain crackers. Limit high-fat, sweets, candy, or sugar sweetened drinks.
- **ASK** your health care provider about the **WIC** program.

### HEALTHY TEETH

- **BE SURE** your child brushes his/her teeth twice a day using a soft toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. He/she should spit out the toothpaste after brushing, but not rinse his/her mouth with water. Closely watch tooth brushing each time.
- **LEARN** how to prevent dental injuries and what to do if a tooth is lost or fractured.
- **SCHEDULE** a dental visit for your child every six months. Check your child's mouth and gums regularly for redness, sore places, or new teeth.

### CARE and INTERACTIONS

- **CREATE** a calm bedtime ritual that includes reading to telling stories to help with language development and pre-reading skills and to help your child sleep peacefully.
- **CONSIDER** some form of structured learning center for your child whether in Head Start, preschool, Sunday School or a community program or child care center.

- **TEACH your child to talk about preschool, friends and his/her activities. Show interest in your child's activities**
- **Guide your child through learning experiences and allow him/her to explore and investigate nature within limits. Teach book-sharing/reading and establish a routine "story time".**
- **TEACH your child to be active in many ways, including running, marching and jumping. Praise her for her ability to do these activities. Be physically active as a family.**
- **USE DISCIPLINE as a way of teaching and protecting, not as punishment. SET limits which are appropriate for your child and teach self-discipline. LIMIT television and video viewing to no more than 2 hours per day. Be sure the programs are appropriate. If you allow your child to watch TV. Watch with her and talk together about the programs.**

## **GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT**

### **TYPICALLY A 4 YEAR OLD CHILD:**

- **Can sing a song.**
- **Can talk about daily activities and discuss things in his home (food, appliances, etc).**
- **Draws a person with three parts.**
- **Can tell you his first name and last name.**
- **Builds a tower of 10 blocks.**
- **Hops, jumps on one foot, throws an overhand ball, and ride a tricycle or bike with training wheels.**