

Norman Pediatric Associates
Parent Handout 4 Year Visit

Profile: The four-year-old is developing more independence through increasing language skills, curiosity, and the ability to do some things on his/her own. The four-year-old has the ability to dress and undress himself/herself; they have achieved bowel and bladder control during the daytime, but may still have accidents at night. He/she begins to notice other people's feelings as well as being able to identify his/her own. He/she plays well with others and begins to develop friendships with other children. Four-year-olds are talkative and full of energy. Your child can run, climb, swing, slide, and jump. He/she continues to have "magical thinking" and enjoys playing "dress-up" or "make believe". Four-year-olds are curious about their bodies and those of the opposite sex. Modesty and the need for privacy begin to develop around this age. The four year old will test the boundaries to the limits and is interested in why, how, what and when of everything. Your child knows his/her first and last name, can draw a person with three parts, and can tell you about his/her day. He/she knows what household things are used for like food, appliances, vacuum cleaner, etc, and can distinguish real from fantasy.

Feeding/Nutrition: Your child continues to need three healthy meals a day. Include your child in meal times with the family. Mealtimes should be enjoyable and are a good time for talk. Turn off the TV or radio and let them decide how much to eat. Anticipate that the child will imitate friend's food likes and dislikes. No candy, soda, juices or chips except for special occasions. He/she should drink 16 – 20 ounces of skim/fat free milk a day. Give your child a daily multivitamin.

Toys and Activities: Good toys and activities for this age include: card and board games, crayons and washable markers, finger painting and painting with brushes. Your child will like to trace and copy geometric patterns like stars or diamonds, play with clay or play dough, cut with safety scissors and paste, and build structures with blocks.

Safety: Learn CPR.

Car: Continue to use a forward-facing safety seat as long as possible. A booster seat can be considered if your child weighs greater than 40 pounds. The child should sit in the backseat of all vehicles. Never leave a child alone in the car, yard or house.

Water: Your child needs to be watched continuously when around water. He/she needs to wear a life vest if boating or swimming. Always use a sunblock of SPF 30. Enroll your child in swimming lessons.

Smoking/Burns: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING - Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for child's health. Make your home and car "no smoking zones". Your water heater should be set at less than 120° F. Test your smoke detector and CO detectors frequently and change the batteries. Keep your toddler away from the hot stove, hot liquids, fireplace, curling iron, lighters, space heaters, and electrical tools locked up and out of reach. Always use sunblock SPF 30 or higher on your child when going out to play.

Stranger: Continue to teach the child not to talk to strangers. Your child should wear a helmet when riding a bike. Teach child pedestrian safety skills, watch all play near streets or driveways. Do not let your child cross the street alone. Know where your child is at all times. A 4-year-old is too young to roam the neighborhood alone. Teach your child playground safety.

Poisons: Keep poisons, medications, and toxic household products out of reach and locked up.

Teeth/Oral Health: Your child needs to brush his/her teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day (after breakfast and before bed). Your child should see a dentist at least every 6 months or as the dentist decides. Have your child spit out toothpaste, but do not rinse his/her mouth out with water.

Social skills: Catch your child being good and praise his/her for that behavior. Be consistent with discipline and reinforce limits. Listen to and treat your child with respect and expect others to do so as well. Encourage your child to talk about childhood friends, preschool, or activities. Help your child express his/her feelings. Model apologizing and help your child to do so after hurting someone's feelings. Read books with your child, this helps foster language development. Take your child to the library and let him/her choose books. Be active as a family. Praise your child for being active. Spend individual time with each child and do something you both like to do. Go on outings to parks, museums, the zoo, or other places of interest around town. Provide opportunities for your child to socialize with other children their age. Provide some type of structured learning environment like Sunday school, community programs, daycare, or preschool. Limit television to no more than one hour a day of programs suited for your child's age. Watch the programs with him/her and discuss what took place on the show. No TV in the child's bedroom. Create a bedtime routine.

Sexuality education: The four-year old is curious about his/her body and that of the opposite sex. Use correct terms for body parts including the genitalia. Questions about where babies come from should be answered. Reinforce with the child that no one is to touch your child's private parts without permission and in the absence of mom and dad. Also reinforce that no adult is to ask for help with his/her private parts or ask the child to keep secrets from his/her parents.

Immunizations: Today your child received Kinrix, which is a combination vaccine that includes the DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, & Pertussis) and IPV (Inactivated Poliovirus) vaccines; and the second doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) and Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccines.

Oklahoma Poison Control Center:
(405) 271-5454 (OKC area)
1-800-222-1222 (state wide toll free)

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