

# your child @<sup>TM</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** Your child should ride in his booster seat until the adult seat belt fits, usually between ages 8 and 12 and about 4’9” tall.

*Born Learning*<sup>®</sup> is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child’s first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way. For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

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