

4 YEAR OLD WELL CHILD VISIT

What do 4 year olds do? At this age, your child's personality is developing and he will be more animated, expressive, social and imaginative. He will be curious and will have many questions. Here are some of the things you can expect:

- Her language will be fluent and she will carry on conversations. She should be completely understandable most of the time. She may be able to tell you her first and last name and should be able to sing songs from memory.
- Pay attention to how she acts around other children. She may be cooperative, friendly and playful or she may be defiant, hostile and withdrawn. Praise your child for cooperative behavior and help her express her emotions, whether she is sad, happy or angry. Encourage participation in play groups, preschool or daycare to promote social skills. Encourage her language skills by asking her to tell you about her experiences.
- When playing with other children, she will likely be engaged in fantasy play as well as games like chase or hide and seek. She will also start to play board games and card games.
- She understands gender differences and will tell you her gender. Anticipate her curiosity about her body and gender differences and answer her questions simply and honestly.
- By 4 years, she can stack 8 cubes, balance on 1 foot for 2 seconds, hop on 1 foot, and name 4 colors. She can copy a cross and draw a person with 3 body parts. She will be able to dress herself (including buttons), brush her teeth, mash her own food and feed herself.
- She is toilet trained during the daytime. At 4 years, she may still not have full bladder control at night.

Things to Know about Caring for 4 Year Olds

Feeding:

- He should drink 15-20 ounces of whole milk and less than 6 oz. of juice per day.
- Try not to give him sweet and salty foods, fast foods, and sugary drinks/soda. These foods can make behavior hard to control, can increase his risk for diseases later in life, and can damage his teeth.
- He needs to eat 3 meals and 2 snacks a day with food from all 4 food groups – vegetable, fruit, meat and bread/pasta/cereal.

Teeth: Clean his teeth twice a day with a soft brush and water and a pea-sized amount of fluoride-containing toothpaste. Make sure to follow up with the dentist regularly.

Sleeping: Have a quiet hour of winding down before bed with bath time, stories, and cuddle time. If she has frequent nightmares, a favorite animal or blanket may also help. Minimize TV and movies, and talk with her about her fears.

TV: What children see on TV and how long they watch TV can cause sleep problems, behavior problems, weight problems and violence. Think of other things he can do instead of watching TV, like going for walks, reading, going to a park, going to the zoo or going to story time at the library. Have fun as a family; both children and adults need active playtime! If you do let your child watch TV, pick educational programs and only let him watch for 1-2 hours a day. Talk about what you see together and remember that the commercials may be bad for him. Try not to watch TV during dinner and don't let him have a TV in his room.

Discipline:

- Think of discipline as teaching rather than punishment. Keep your instructions consistent and firm. She may be able to understand some of the reasons behind them when you explain why you expect certain behavior from her.
- Be calm when he does something wrong; screaming at him, shaking him or spanking him won't work. The best way to discipline him is to put him in "time-out" for up to 2-3 minutes or taking away something he likes (a treat or toy for a time).
- Encourage good behavior. Flood her with praise and rewards (stickers, a special story) when she does something correctly or well.
- Don't let her hit, bite or use other violent behaviors. If she does, stop her immediately and tell her how these behaviors make the other person feel. Show her how to apologize and handle anger constructively with discussion, exercise, or time alone to cool off.