

WELL CHILD CARE Three year old check-up

Feeding:

Your preschooler loves to eat. Most of the picky days of toddlerhood are gone. Except for needing his food cut up, your preschooler can feed himself.

Preschoolers prefer simple, plain foods to casseroles and adult dishes. Encourage snacks like apples, carrots, yogurt, graham crackers and dry cereal. It is never too early to teach your child about good eating habits. Look for your child to gain about 4 to 6 pounds this year and grow 2 to 3 inches taller.

Talking:

Preschoolers sure ask a lot of questions! He can even answer some simple questions himself. Listen for his sentences to be about 4 to 5 words now. Begin working on naming colors.

Some preschoolers stutter when they talk. This is normal. They have so much to say and are in such a hurry to say it. Be patient when your preschooler talks to you. Remind him to slow down. Listen to yourself talk and see how fast you talk. You may want to try and slow yourself down.

Moving:

Your preschooler is starting to have more balance when he moves around. You may notice him riding a tricycle, jumping off the bottom step, and jumping over things on the ground. He can even stand on one foot for a few seconds. Have you watched him walk up the steps? He can now go up alternating feet-just like adults!

When he sits down for quiet play, he does more activities. He can put together a simple puzzle (about 4 to 5 pieces). When he draws, he can copy a circle and make an "X." His little fingers can put clothes on and off a doll.

Playing:

Your preschooler is learning to share with others. Preschoolers like to play games that have rules, such as "Hide and Seek," "Tag," and "Duck, Duck, Goose." Part of sharing is taking turns. He loves to put things away and be helpful. Be sure to tell him how glad you are for his help. A new idea for him is the difference between boys and girls. He will love to tell you which is which.

Sometimes, he may seem to be aggressive with other children. This is because he doesn't quite know his own limits yet. He needs his parents to show him those limits and enforce the rules.

Thinking:

Most of the time, your preschooler is thinking about himself and how the world is treating



him. When something happens, he can only see it from his point of view. He is beginning to understand time. He can't read a clock, but he knows today or tomorrow. Tell him about time by talking about what will happen first. For example, we will go to the park after we visit the doctor. He will understand this better than, "we will go to the park at 2:30 p.m."

Family:

A preschooler loves to make his parents happy. He likes to help around the house. You can let him put out the napkins for dinner, pick up his toys, or get a clean diaper for his baby sister. He is aware of family relationships. When you look at a family photo, he can tell you his mommy, daddy, grandma, cousins and others. Have you noticed that when you leave him with a baby-sitter now, he doesn't cry as much? He understands that you will come back.

Teeth:

Your child should now be seen by a dentist. Ask your doctor for the names of pediatric dentists in the area. You need to help your child brush and floss his teeth at least once a day.

Safety:

Pay attention to what your preschooler is watching on TV and videos. You will find him trying to act like the people he sees on TV. If the cartoons show people kicking and talking back to their parents, your preschooler will probably try to do the same thing.

Remind your preschooler to stay with you. Know where your child is at all times. Use a car seat or an approved booster chair in the car at all times. He also needs to wear a helmet whenever he rides his bike.

Guard against drowning. Knowing how to 'swim' does not, in anyway, make a child water safe. You should never leave a bucket or doggy bowl with water where the child can reach. If you have a pool, you should have a four-sided fence with a self-latching gate. Nothing can replace constant adult supervision, but since 24 hour adult supervision is impossible, barriers like fences are necessary. Remember, deaths due to drowning are the #2 cause of death in children this age.

REMEMBER: Teach your preschooler fire safety!

A fire is fascinating to watch. Preschoolers can start a fire without even knowing what happened.

- Keep lighters and matches away from all children.
- Be sure to have smoke detectors on every floor of your house.
- Know two exits from every room so you can get out in case of a fire.
- Show your child how to STOP, DROP and ROLL, if he were to catch on fire.
- Practice fire drills.
- Be sure to have a meeting place outside the house in case of fire.