



WOODCREEK PEDIATRICS

Puyallup Office • 1706 S Meridian, Suite 130 • Puyallup
Sunrise Office • 11102 Sunrise Blvd E, Suite 103 • Puyallup
Bonney Lake Office • 10004 204th Ave E, Suite 1300 • Bonney Lake

CONVENIENCE CARE by WOODCREEK

Puyallup Office • 1706 S Meridian, Suite 120 • Puyallup
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253-848-8797

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT: 4 YEARS OLD

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Hops, runs, skips, climbs with increasing skill.
- Tires easily.
- Is accident prone.
- Likes making loud noises, but is frightened by unexpected sounds.
- Goes to the bathroom without help (though may not wash hands).
- Makes designs and draws recognizable objects.
- Can use blunt scissors.
- Dresses self (with exception of shoes).

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sometimes still acts like a baby.
- Shows new fears (becoming aware of more dangers).
- Enjoys silliness.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Refers to parents as final authority.
- Continues to test parental limits.
- Uses “naughty” words to see how others react.
- Is ready for group activities.
- Talks “with” another child, but does not listen to what other child says.
- Is comfortable with other children, but shares grudgingly.
- Tattles and name-calls.
- Imitates adults.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

- Is more likely to solve problems through words than aggressive action.
- Has a vocabulary of about 1,500 to 2,000 words.
- Speaks in 4 to 5 word sentences.
- Likes funny, exaggerated stories.
- Can count to 5.
- Identifies some shapes and colors.
- Can understand some concepts of time (yesterday, today, and tomorrow).
- Often asks “why” questions.
- Usually can put toys and materials away without adult help.
- Insists on finishing an activity or project.
- Likes to help with simple tasks.
- Starts to know difference between right and wrong.
- Shows growing ability to tell real-life from make-believe.
- Tells tall tales, but cannot always tell the difference between truth and lies.
- Believes the only viewpoint is his or her own.
- Believes two unrelated events can have a cause-effect relationship.

These guidelines show general progress through the developmental stages rather than fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to reach some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend.

If you have any concerns about your child’s own pattern of development, check with your healthcare provider.

Written by Donna Warner Manczak, PhD, MPH and Robert Brayden, MD.

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This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

Well Child Care at 4 Years

Nutrition

Your child should always be a part of the family at mealtime. This should be a pleasant time for the family to be together and share stories and experiences. Give small portions of food to your child. If he is still hungry, let him have seconds. Selecting foods from all food groups (meat, dairy, grains, fruits, and vegetables) is a good way to provide a balanced diet. Choose and eat healthy snacks such as cheese, fruit, or yogurt. Televisions should never be on during mealtime.

Development

At this age children usually become more cooperative in their play with other children. They are curious and imaginative.

Allow privacy while your child is changing clothes or using the bathroom. When your child starts wanting privacy on his own, let him know that you think this is good.

Behavior Control

Breaking rules occasionally occurs at this age. Making children stand in a corner by themselves for 4 minutes is usually an effective way to correct the undesirable behavior. This technique is called time-out. If you have questions about behavior, ask your doctor.

Reading and Electronic Media

It is important to set rules about television watching. Limit total TV time to no more than 1 hour per day. Children should not be allowed to watch shows with violence or sexual behaviors. Watch TV with your child and discuss the shows. Find other activities you can do with your child. Reading, hobbies, and physical activities are good alternatives to TV.

Dental Care

- Brushing teeth regularly after meals and before bedtime is important. Think of a way to make it fun.
- Make an appointment for your child to see the dentist.
- If your child sucks his thumb, ask your doctor or dentist for advice on how to help him stop.

Safety Tips

Keep your child away from knives, power tools, or mowers.

Fires and Burns

- Practice a fire escape plan.
- Check smoke detectors and replace the batteries as needed.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen.
- Teach your child to never play with matches or lighters.
- Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out.
- Turn your water heater down to 120°F (50°C).

Car Safety

- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- Everyone in a car must always wear seat belts or be in an appropriate booster seat or car seat.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- Teach your child to never ride a tricycle or bicycle in the street.
- All family members should use a bicycle helmet, even when riding a tricycle.
- It is much too early to expect a child to look both ways before crossing the street. Supervise all street crossing.

Poisoning

- Teach your child to never take medicines without supervision and not to eat unknown substances.
- Put the poison center number on all phones.
- Do not put anything that could be poisonous into drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

Strangers

- Teach your child the first and last names of family members.
- Teach your child to never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Teach your child that no adult should tell a child to keep secrets from parents, no adult should show interest in private parts, and no adult should ask a child for help with private parts.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.

Immunizations

Your child will probably receive shots such as:

- DTaP (diphtheria, acellular pertussis/whooping cough, tetanus) shot
- measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- chickenpox (varicella)
- polio vaccine.

An annual influenza shot is recommended for children up until 18 years of age. After a shot your child may run a fever and become irritable for about 1 day. Your child may also have some soreness, redness, and swelling where a shot was given.

For fever, give your child an appropriate dose of acetaminophen. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shot as often and as long as needed for comfort.

Call your child's healthcare provider immediately if:

- Your child has a fever over 105°F (40.5°C).
- Your child has a severe allergic reaction beginning within 2 hours of the shot (for example, hives, wheezing or noisy breathing, swelling of the mouth or throat).
- Your child has any other unusual reaction.

Next Visit

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that your child have a routine checkup every year. Be sure to bring your child's shot records to every annual visit.

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