

EARLY CHILDHOOD / 3 YEARS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury prevention

Use a Forward –Facing Car Safety Seat installed in the back seat, with a harness up to the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

Ensure that your child wears a life vest if boating. Inflatable flotation devices or "knowing how to swim" does not make a child safe in the water.

Ensure that swimming pools in your community, apartment complex, or at home have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Children should be supervised by an adult whenever they are in or near water.

Always put sunscreen on your child before going outside to play or swim.

Keep your child's environment free of smoke. Keep the home and car nonsmoking zones.

Test smoke detectors to ensure that they work properly. Change batteries yearly.

Keep cooking utensils, hot liquids, knives, and hot pots on the stove out of reach.

Ensure that electric wires, outlets, and appliances are inaccessible or protected.

Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, alcohol, and electrical tools locked up and/or out of the child's sight and reach.

Exclude poisons, medications, and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications.

Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Ensure that guns, if in the home, are locked up and that ammunition is stored separately. A trigger lock is an additional important precaution.

Never leave your child alone in the car or the house or while taking a bath.

Do not expect young children to supervise your three year old.

Supervise all play near streets or driveways.

Know where your child is at all times. They are too young to be roaming the neighborhood alone.

Teach your child pedestrian safety skills.

Ensure that a child riding in a seat on an adult's bicycle is wearing a helmet.

Ensure that playgrounds are safe. Check for impact- or energy-absorbing surfaces under playground equipment. Make sure that playground equipment is not over three feet tall and not made of pressure-treated wood.

Choose caregivers carefully. Discuss with them their attitudes about and behavior in relation to discipline. Prohibit corporal punishment.

Teach your child not to talk to strangers.

Nutrition

Serve your child meals with the family and give two to three nutritious snacks per day. Provide nutritious snacks rich in complex carbohydrates, and limit sweets and high-fat snacks.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Encourage conversation.

Offer nutritious foods and let your child decide what and how much to eat. Children will have an increasing list of accepted foods.

Serve a variety of healthy foods and model for your child how to eat them.

Promote Physical Activity

Be sure your child has opportunities for daily play at home, in preschool or childcare.

Praise your child for being active.

Be physically fit as a family.

Promote physical activity in a safe environment.

Oral health

Teach your child to brush her teeth with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

Give the child fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the child's drinking water.

Schedule a dental appointment for your child every six months, unless the dentist determines otherwise based on your child's individual needs/susceptibility to disease.

Sexuality education

Anticipate your child's normal curiosity about genital differences between boys and girls and about masturbation.

Use correct terms for genitalia.

Answer questions about "where babies come from."

Introduce the notion that some areas of the body are private.

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Promotion of social competence

Praise your child for good behavior and accomplishments.

Encourage your child to talk with you about their preschool, friends, or observations. Answer their questions.

Encourage interactive reading with your child. Look at picture books and let them tell the story.

Spend individual time with your child, doing something you both enjoy. Provide opportunities for exploration.

Provide opportunities for your three year old to socialize with other children in play groups, preschool or other community activities.

Give your child opportunities to make choices (e.g., which clothes to wear, books to read, places to go).

Reinforce limits and appropriate behavior. Try to be consistent in expectations and discipline.

Use time out or remove source of conflict for unacceptable behavior.

Encourage self-discipline.

Anticipate that your child may have many fears, including night terrors.

Limit television and video watching to an average of 1-2 hours per day of appropriate programs. Watch the programs together and discuss them.

No TV in the bedroom.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

If another baby is expected, discuss with the health professional how to prepare the three-year-old child for the new baby.

Spend some time playing with your child each day. Focus on activities that your child expresses interest in and enjoys.

Listen to and show respect for your child.

Show interest in preschool and/or child care activities.

Show affection in the family.

Spend some individual time with each child.

Participate in games and other activities with your child.

Encourage the development of good sibling relationships. Acknowledge conflicts between siblings. Whenever possible, attempt to resolve conflicts without taking sides. Do not allow hitting, biting, or other violent behavior.

Share meals as a family whenever possible. Spend time talking to each other.

Handle anger constructively in the family.

Discuss with the health professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g., using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g., WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.

Discuss with the health professional possible programs for your child: preschools, early intervention programs, Head Start (most programs start at age four), swimming and other exercise programs, or other community programs.

Learn about and consider attending parent education classes or parent support groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations.

Discuss with the health professional choosing and evaluating child care programs. Discuss the child care arrangements you have made.

Find out what you can do to make your community safer. Advocate for and participate in a neighborhood watch program.