

EARLY CHILDHOOD / 4 YEARS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury prevention

Establish and enforce consistent, explicit, and firm rules for safe behavior.

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 swimming pools in your community, apartment complex, or 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 around water.

Teach your child how to swim.

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 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.

Supervise all play near streets or driveways.

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

Teach your child pedestrian and neighborhood safety skills.

Teach your child about playground safely.

Ensure that your child wears a bicycle helmet when riding a tricycle or a bicycle with training wheels.

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

Teach your child safety rules regarding strangers.

Nutrition

Serve your child three regular meals and two nutritious snacks per day. Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Encourage conversation.

Provide nutritious snacks rich in complex carbohydrates. Limit high-fat or low-nutrient foods and beverages such as candy, chips, or soft drinks.

Offer nutritious foods and let your child decide what and how much to eat. Model and encourage good eating habits. Serve a variety of healthy foods. Anticipate that your child will imitate peers in food likes and dislikes. Your child will have an increasing list of accepted foods.

Ensure that your child's caregiver feeds him nutritious foods.

Promote Physical Activity

Encourage daily active play at home, in childcare or preschool.

Praise your child when they are active.

Promote physical activity in a safe environment.

Oral health

Ensure that your child brushes their teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Regularly supervise tooth brushing.

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

Learn how to prevent dental injuries and handle dental emergencies, especially the loss or fracture of a tooth.

If your child regularly sucks their fingers or thumb begin to intervene to get him to discontinue.

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 the body and the differences between boys and girls.

Use correct terms for all body parts, including genitalia.

Answer questions about "where babies come from."

Explain to your child that no one should touch his "private parts" without his permission.

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Promotion of social competence

Praise your child for cooperation and accomplishments.

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

Encourage interactive reading with your child.

Spend individual time with your child, doing something you both enjoy.

Enlarge your child's experiences through trips and visits to parks and other places of interest.

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

Encourage assertiveness without excessive aggression.

Set developmentally appropriate limits.

Use time out, removal of source of conflict, and other options for unacceptable behavior.

Encourage self-discipline.

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

Provide some type of structured learning environment for the child, whether in Head Start, preschool, Sunday school, or a community program or child care center.

Discuss with the health professional how to tell when the child is ready for school.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

Listen to and show respect for your child. Model respectful behavior and apologize when you are wrong.

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 physical activities with the 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 the child: preschools, early intervention programs, prekindergarten programs, kindergarten, Head Start, swimming and other exercise programs, or other community programs.

Visit the child's preschool or other child care program unannounced. Ask if all children are immunized.

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 arrangements you have made.

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

Advocate for adequate housing and play spaces/playgrounds.

Recommend that schools provide early and regular comprehensive health education that encourages healthy lifestyles.