

# Health is a Journey!!

## What to expect at 4 Years!

### When to Call or Ask for Help!

#### Safety Issues

Close supervision is still necessary; your child is more dependable now than ever, but every now and then "the mood strikes", and some irresistible idea takes over!

Teach stranger safety (don't go with or accept things from strangers).

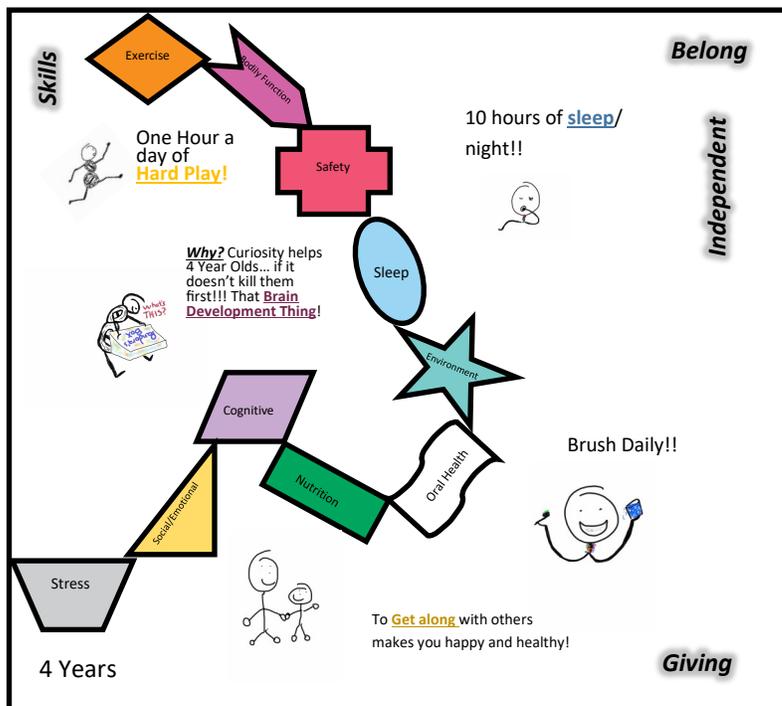
Child should know name, address, phone number, and know how and when to use 911.

Check your house for safety; electrical tools, matches, poisons, firearms should be locked or out of reach.

Your child should not have unsupervised access to, or ride a tricycle/bike into the street. Start use of helmet, and possibly knee and elbow protectors.

Re-enforce all the past items (water safety- water temperature, bath and swimming rules, burn safety- fire drills, battery changes in detectors, use of fire extinguisher if child is big enough and mature enough, car safety seat use, etc.)

The Journey..... Is made of **Short Term Goals** that you choose or at least control somewhat. These will lead to **Long Term Goals**, like being **Independent**, to **Belong**, to develop **Skills**, and be **Giving** when your child grows up! How exciting is that? And it happens, almost before you know it, so watch those Short Term Goals, One Day at a Time!



## One Day at a Time!!

And it all happens each Day as you make choices! Here are a list of things to possibly add to your Healthy Child Calendar, to be sure they get done:

## Healthy Child Calendar

*Pick one up to use as a reminder!!!*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1							
8							
15							
22							

Nutrition Updates (vitamins, iron, fluoride, lead poisoning!)

Brush those teeth Daily!!

Eye and dental examinations yearly!

Attention Span should be Four Minutes!

Review emotional development, anger, fear, depression.

TV/video/computer time should be limited to 1-2 hours/day.

Review safety issues, especially violence issues.

### A Day in the life.. As a 4 year old...

NOTICE to ALL who LOVE ME!!!

**I'M as BIG and as O..L..D.. As I've every been...**

so I DON'T know what I "Don't Know" ... and I don't know what YOU know... so cut me a little slack, when you expect me to know something! But be CONSISTENT!

**Important topic: 4 YEAR OLD LOGIC:**

I'm REALLY good at this... so bottom line... You can't win at arguing with me... so don't even try... just tell me you love me, and that...sadly... things have to be a certain way (probably your way...). If you tell me with love and respect and consistency, I will eventually agree (though there may be a tantrum or two)... oh... Had you noticed??? ... I am getting better at this **tantrum thing**... if I think I can get by with it!

However, I will improve, if you are consistent. Hang in there... Love me, every-day!!

P.S. I AM CUTE, aren't I????!!! Your TSK



*Give that kid a hug!*

*Gene...and Dr. Greta*

# Health is a Journey!! One Day at a Time!!



Gene, Dr. Greta's Advisor

THANK YOU for sharing your journey with Dr. Greta and her advisor, Gene. Together, you will explore the wonders of your child's growth and development. We will explore how to use Short Term Goals to reach your Long Term goals... and how to enjoy the Journey... One Day at a Time! Under the tutelage of Gene, this material is developed by

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Why? Why?? Why??? Why-Why-WHY???????????

## MORE INFO IN DEPTH.....

### Development

**Cognitive-Emotional** - It is important at this age to reassess how your child is doing with attention span and with anger, fear, and sadness (which can lead to depression) control. Your child should have an attention span of four minutes. An interesting study, called the Marshmallow test, showed, (better than IQ testing), which children at age four would do better in school and in society. Four year olds were told by an examiner that they could have a marshmallow, (it was placed in front of them), or if they waited until the examiner returned, they could have TWO marshmallows. The idea was that the children needed to wait. The children that could wait, had developed special techniques to keep away from the temptation of grabbing the marshmallow. They sat on their hands, did singing hand songs (like "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider"), turned away from the marshmallow, did dances or told stories, etc. The children that had learned these techniques by age four did better in school and had closer personal relationships with peers and spouses through adulthood. The important trait to learn was how to wait (or delayed gratification- When we get something we need or want, whether it is food or a special pair of shoes, we are "gratified", If we can put off getting the object for a while, until it is a better time or place, we say this has been delayed. Being able to delay something is a useful ability; if we always have to have things NOW, many opportunities will be missed!). Your child should be able to control some of his/her anger. He/she should also not be afraid of most daily activities. If your child is still having a lot of problems with anger or seems very shy, please ask. Likewise, if your child seems sad, has a change in sleep habits, a change in appetite, doesn't enjoy being with others, please call; children this age can be depressed. Sometimes the reason is obvious, especially if divorce, death, loss of something or a move, has occurred. Sometimes, it isn't so easy to tell. If your child has these symptoms, it is important to try to intervene, before these feelings get to be a habit.

### Developmental Milestones for Four Year Olds

Can walk on tip-toes, ride a tricycle, climb a ladder, hop, stand on one foot for 3-5 seconds, descend steps with alternating feet. Has good pencil control, copies a circle and possibly a square, draws a person with several features (like face, arms, legs, etc.). Is a good conversa-

ationalist, enjoys jokes, sings songs, counts to 10, enjoys make-believe/dressing up and acting out different roles. Asks LOTS of questions; Why? What? Where? Who? How come? Can dress/undress with supervision, except buttons. Enjoys the companionship of other children, plays cooperatively and shows interest in other children's bodies.

### Body Functioning

**Sexual development and questions** - Your child has been exploring now for one to two years, but usually around this age he/she may start to ask questions, especially if a younger sibling has arrived, or your child has seen animals give birth. It is important to answer the questions as simply and open as possible. Your child will not want a long, complicated answer. This makes it even harder! Also, answer just what your child asks; when he/she is ready for more, the questions will come. It is important that you feel comfortable talking about this; if you don't, your child will sense this, and start to develop ideas about sex that will color his/her approach (i.e., sex is bad, or dirty, or something to be embarrassed about, etc.)

### Activities to Enhance Development

**Attention Span** activities still need to be planned. See previous sheets. Daily family chores are still a good way to encourage this, and they help the child feel that he/she is an important part of the family.

**Communication** skills still need lots of practice. Having a regular reading plan (several books a day, or-ganized trips to the library, etc.) is imperative. It is felt that children that enjoy books will have an easier time in school; this can be a learned trait - it isn't inborn! Encourage and be patient as your child tells you stories; they will start making more sense, but still may not be in the right order. This is all right; you don't need, and probably shouldn't always correct your child's story if things get a little mixed up. This is an important part of brain development, to struggle with telling stories.

**Imagination** is still most important to encourage. As you work with your child, however, gently help him/her to understand the difference between what is real and what is imagined. Your child may have an imaginary friend, or seem to be "telling tall tales". He/she is not doing this to make you mad or frustrated. It is being done as a part of normal development! You can use this to your advantage, by playing along, and in many cases can teach moral issues. It is important to help the child understand that imaginary friends are different from real

friends, and that while imaginary friends may be able to jump from windows, like Superman, real people can't. Imagination is so easy to stifle; it takes a lot of work to allow it to grow, but if a child can have this freedom now, no telling what he will do with it as an adult!

**Exploring** the world is an important part of being four! You may get tired of your little "reporter", with all the "When, Why, How" questions, but it is important to listen and answer these. Planning short field trips, even to the store down the street, can be a learning experience! For example, you could decide ahead of time to look for every kind of leaf you can find, or look for different colored, or sized rocks. Then do something fun with them when you return; maybe go to the library and find a book on leaves, and learn about why leaves exist! These types of experiences naturally help your child in planning and orga-nizing, and also make for good interactions between you and your child. This all takes TIME, but this is a special short time in your child's life; if you miss it, you will never have another chance like this one, to impart your views to your child!

**Social interactions** are important to encourage. Your child may be ready for board games, and to start to learn a little about winning and losing. This has to be done delicately, but needs to be practiced. Teach your child that losing is a part of life, and that we can use failure to plan for doing things differently next time. Also, losing can teach a child to evaluate how important something is. This all takes a lot of your interaction with the child. A child should never feel that losing is a personal attack, or that he/she is "bad" because he/she lost. The child's sense of self-worth should always be maintained!

