

3-4 Years



Live

Love

Grow

Learn

Preschoolers are learning to exert their will. **One minute they are happy and the next minute they fall apart. Teach your preschooler positive social skills and how to manage emotions.**

- Treat all family members with respect. Say loving words.
- Give him words to express feelings. *“I get mad when Sam takes my truck.”*
- Teach empathy. Say, *“I’m sorry”* to those you hurt. Give hugs to those who are upset.
- Practice sharing and taking turns.
- Let her know you and other adults will help when problems arise.

Parents help preschoolers develop and reach full potential. *Every day, your 3 – 4-year-old learns from you – from what you do and say.*

Routines and Rituals

Routines and rituals organize daily life for you and your child. They help your child feel secure with a sense of control and order.

- Develop routines your kids can count on – morning, daycare, meals and bedtime.
- Plan ahead. Prepare backpacks for school. Plan family activities.
- Shift from one activity or routine to the next. As TV time ends, a bedtime routine begins.

Discipline

Actions have consequences.

Knowing what *to do* and *not to do* helps your child develop positive relationships with adults and peers.

- Set clear and simple rules and limits. No name calling. No hitting. Say “*please and thank you.*”
- Give daily reminders of what he can and cannot do.
- Set consequences for breaking rules.
- Be consistent as you enforce rules.
- Praise positive behavior.
- Tell your child what she *can do* rather than just say no.



Meals

Preschoolers may still be picky eaters. Be patient as you teach healthy eating by serving healthy food.

- Provide child size plates and utensils.
- Let your child serve his food. Start with small amounts.
- Allow him to stop when he feels full.
- Prepare small healthy snacks between meals.
- Never use food as a reward.

Fears

Children fear what is new and different and what they do not understand. Be patient as you help your child overcome fears.

- Never make fun of fears.
- Tell her she is safe. Hold her until she is calm.
- Show him you are not afraid and how not to be afraid.
- Give simple answers to her questions.
- Praise his attempts to overcome fears.
- Read children’s books about fears.

Safety

Injuries are the leading cause of death for kids under age 4. Teach safety skills.

- Review and enforce rules about how to cross a street.
- Prevent burns. Discuss safety around stoves, ovens and heaters. Talk about safety around fires.
- Lock doors, and use window guards.
- Practice gun safety. It is best to keep guns out of your home. Know if guns are present in homes your child visits.
- Make sure playground equipment is safe. Discuss safety at play.
- Watch your child *at all times*: around water, at theme parks and in public places.
- Discuss the dangers of strangers. Teach her what to do if a stranger does not leave her alone.

Reading

Language skills help a child make their wants and needs known. Boost your child's language skills. Read together daily.

- Read so your child will want to listen. Make the story exciting.
- Discuss the picture on each page.
- Point to and name items – *tree, bike, moon*.
- Name colors in pictures.
- Ask what she thinks will happen next.



Math Skills

Math is a part of daily life. Use daily activities to teach number and counting skills.

- Count objects – toys, shoes, socks, fingers.
- Teach shapes – triangle, square, rectangle, circle.
- Count numbers in a sequence – 1,2,3,4,5... Teach what number follows another number. *“What comes after 4?”*
- Sort items. Match by size, color, article.
- Practice simple sequence steps. *“Get a slice of bread. Put it in the toaster. Spread the butter and eat.”*

Gross Motor Skills

Kids develop gross motor skills at different rates. Supervise your child's new activities.

- Play with balls – kick, throw, bat, catch.
- Walk up and down stairs.
- Play hopscotch. Kangaroo hop.
- Ride a tricycle – push with feet, then learn to peddle.

Fine Motor Skills

A child needs to build strength and coordination in hands and fingers. Simple activities can help.

- Cut paper with safety scissors.
- Color and draw with crayons and pencils.
- Stack blocks.
- Pour water – cup to cup.
- Use play dough to create.

More Ideas to Help Your Preschooler Grow and Learn

Provide Outdoor Playtime

Spending time in nature boosts a child's mental and physical health.

- Plan weekly family outdoor time – in natural settings.
- Take a camping vacation.
- Schedule play dates in parks.
- Plant a garden.

Buy Hands-on Toys

Hands-on and learning toys help a child use creativity and imagination.

Include:

- Building blocks.
- Easels and crayons – chalkboards and chalk.
- Lacing or stringing toys. String penne pasta shells.
- Old clothes, hats, and shoes for dress up play.

Teach Your Child to Say and Recognize His Name

Every child will need to know and recognize his first and last name when he goes to Kindergarten. Start teaching your child.

- Say her whole name and have her repeat it.
- Let him say his whole name when someone asks.
- Print her name on her drawings. Show her, and say her name as you print it.

Support • New Ideas • Referrals

Call Parent Help Line at 217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.

Visit our website at www.parenthelpline.org and our

Facebook page:

Parent Help Line at St. John's Children's Hospital

Talk About Tasks

Every day, people perform and complete tasks. Your child will be given tasks in pre-school and Kindergarten.

- Talk about your tasks as you perform them — how you start and finish.
- Name objects you use. Describe how they are used.
- Enlist your child's help with simple tasks – putting away toys, books and clothes; watering outside plants.

Continue to Teach Positive Social Skills

Parents want their child to make and keep friends. Use daily events and teachable moments to teach skills like empathy, self-control, sharing, and the ability to communicate needs.

Visit Parent Help Line at www.parenthelpline.org.

Find new ideas that help keep your family safe, healthy and happy.

- Search for tips on parenting babies, toddlers, school age children and teens.
- Find information on early learning and school readiness. Read the *Live Love Grow Learn* booklets and *Ready In Stages* checklists to promote your baby's healthy growth and development.
- Learn how to teach your child skills that help with school and life success.
- Discover helpful Internet sites.