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4 Year Visit

At this developmental stage your child enjoys new things and experiences. Creativity is a big part of a 4-year-old's world. Singing songs, repeating or making up stories, improved coloring, drawing a person with 2-4 body parts are all expected. You may have noticed that your child seems to be quite the pretender, this is normal; it may be difficult for a 4-year-old to understand the difference between reality and pretend. How cool is that! Such an imaginative time. Gentle with reminders regarding the difference between make believe and "truth". Children at this age are social and enjoy playing with other kids. This is a very important process because they will learn about "same" vs "different" and through exposure to others will enlarge their world-view. Kids now can balance on a single foot for up at least 2 seconds.

Children at this age should be quite proficient with words. They should be able to speak sentences well, understandable by strangers. They are beginning to understand some objectification of the world, getting a larger framework of themselves in comparison to others. Encourage this through offering opportunities for socialization whether it be preschool or playdates. They learn about themselves through comparison.

Your child should be more interested in toilet training due to the increased social pressure. If this hasn't started happening consistently then please bring this up. Some kids will still have accidents at night and this is normal.

This is the preparation for more intensive schooling so start to expose your child to short times, maybe as little as 10 minutes of learning about letters and numbers.

They may be more explorational with food so try to offer a more varied diet than you have been able to over the past several years. Don't miss this opportunity for broadening the menu of your 4-year-old.

I would be concerned if you haven't started to see your 4-year-old pretend, tell stories, draw a figure with at least 2 body parts and want to play with other children.

This is the magic years of your child so enjoy, play and take lots of pictures!

Suzy Holbrook, M.D.