

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Your child will soon be entering school. The things you have been doing with her – reading, talking, singing and drawing – have helped her develop the basic concepts and skills she will use in her schoolwork. But schoolwork is only part of it. Starting school, making new friends and adjusting to new rules is a big change for your child. She needs your encouragement and support. You can help her learn how to get along with others and how to cope in new situations. You are her role model and her security blanket.

What I Need

I am fast, noisy and adventurous. Take me places where I can run, jump, climb, balance on things and turn somersaults.

I love jokes and riddles. Bathroom humour makes me giggle. Don't worry. It will pass.

I am ready to learn skills that will last a lifetime. Take me fishing. Teach me to cook simple things and how to send a card or letter to a relative. Help me learn to ice skate, in-line skate and swim.

I ask about differences like skin colour, weight and physical disabilities (including my own). Please answer my questions honestly. Show me how to include all children and adults.

I love my brother (or sister) but sometimes we fight. Please be fair and help me learn how to get along with them.

HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED

STEPS FOR HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (4 TO 5 YEARS)

SAFETY



- When travelling in a vehicle, ensure your child is properly secured in a car safety seat or booster seat that is appropriate for his size.
- Remove drawstrings from her jackets and use a neck warmer not a scarf. Cords and scarves can cause a child to strangle if they get caught on play structures and other things.

SECURITY



- Accept your child's fears as real and talk calmly about them. Reassure him when he has bad dreams.
- Celebrate her talents. Hang her artwork on the wall.

HEALTH



- Have your child's vision and hearing checked before he begins school. When problems are found early, they can be quickly corrected and sometimes reversed.
- Make sure your child knows how to use toilet paper correctly. Teach her to flush the toilet and wash her hands.

LEARNING



- Encourage your child to solve problems by building things with pieces of wood, interlocking plastic toys and other safe objects.
- Limit the amount of time your child watches television. Make sure the programs are appropriate for his age and watch them with him.

ADJUSTING



- Encourage pretend play, puppet shows and play wrestling to get out her high energy or aggressive feelings.
- Use good table manners so your child will learn to eat with a knife, fork and spoon. Have conversations at meals. Playing a game such as "I spy" toward the end of the meal may keep him there longer.

What to Expect *Remember:* Every child develops at his or her own pace. Your child may be slightly behind or ahead of these guidelines. If you are worried, talk with your doctor, a public health nurse or an early childhood educator.

- Your child makes friends. He knows how to give, share and receive.
- Your child will show an interest in his or her private parts and in the differences between boys and girls.
- He is aware of simple rules and is beginning to feel guilty when he disobeys.
- She can skip, walk on her tiptoes and balance on one foot or on a beam about two inches wide.
- He can hold a pencil, cut, paste, draw stick figures and copy a square and a circle.
- She is more confident and calm than she was when she was younger. She enjoys being busy and making things.
- He may wet the bed from time to time. Keep a plastic sheet over the mattress just in case and use a pull-up diaper at night if this happens often.

Take Care of You

Parents are not perfect (as any teenager will remind you). Neither are preschoolers. So next time you start to doubt your ability to be a good parent, remember:

- Moms and dads need lots of hugs and kisses too.
- The world will not come to an end if your child watches an hour of cartoons one afternoon so you can have a rest.
- It does not matter if your preschooler wears a diamond tiara and shoes that don't match. She feels good because you let her choose.
- You know your child better than anyone else.