

## PRE-SCHOOL (2 to 5 years old)

### **DIET and NUTRITION**

Your preschooler's growth rate has slowed from the rapid growth of infancy. This often will be manifested by a small appetite. Do not worry. Continue to offer regular small nutritious meals and scheduled snacks. Your preschooler will take in adequate calories over the course of a several days. You should be brushing your child's teeth at least once a day. No toothpaste is needed until he can spit on command. Dental visits should begin no later than age 3. If your drinking water is not fluoridated, you may need to add a fluoride supplement. Please discuss this with us.

### **SAFETY**

Georgia law requires children under age 5 to remain in car safety seat and all persons must be in a seat belt at all times. Household injuries are very common in the preschool years. Keep sharp or hot object and poisons out of reach. If your preschooler has ingested a potentially dangerous substance, call Poison Control 404-616-9000 for immediate advice. Now is a good time to begin teaching stranger safety. If you have a firearm, store it locked and separate from ammunition.

### **DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION**

Your child is learning and changing every day. Speech is gradually becoming more intelligible. You should be able to understand about half of your child's language at age 2 years, 3/4 by age 3 years and almost all by age 4 years. He is becoming more adept at jumping, running, kicking a ball and maneuvering stairs. Provide time for active outdoor play as well as indoor activities, such as coloring or building with blocks, which stimulate finger dexterity. Continue reading on a regular basis. Support your child's interest in toilet training, but do not let it become a power struggle.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Your child's favorite word may be "NO" Try to help your child decide between acceptable alternatives rather than just "yes - no" options. Having a few simple rules that are consistently enforced will be more productive than multiple rules inconsistently enforced. Independence should be encouraged but molded -- Defiance should not be tolerated. Help your child develop respect toward authority figures, including you. Consequences for disobedience should be immediate, consistent and easily understandable. Time out for 1 minute per year of age may be helpful. Consistent boundaries and consequences actually help the child develop a healthy self esteem and let them know they are loved and cared for.

Teaching your child safe, polite and appropriate behavior will continue to be a very big job. Many books have been written and you may find these helpful:

[The New Dare to Discipline](#) by James Dobson  
[Good Behavior](#) by Stephen Garber  
[How to Really Love Your Child](#) by Ross Campbell  
[Shepherding a Child's Heart](#) by Ted Trip

[The New Strong Willed Child](#) by James Dobson

### **NEXT APPOINTMENT**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that preschoolers receive checkups once a year. They will likely need immunizations at 4 or 5 years of age.