



4 years

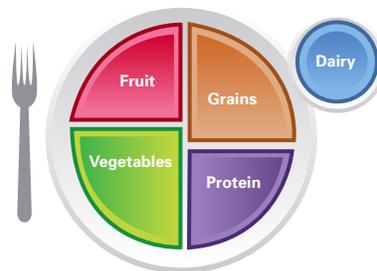
Parent Tips

- Mealtime is a perfect place to learn. Offer a variety of healthy, colorful foods. Talk about how the food tastes, smells, feels and looks.
- **Trust your preschooler's appetite.** All children know how much they need to eat. Ask your preschooler, "Is your tummy full?" Don't make them eat more.
- **Never bribe, comfort or reward with food.**
- Continue to have family meals. If they don't eat at one meal, they will at the next.
- Focus on meals. Turn off the TV and other screens. Slow down and enjoy family time.
- Sweets and sweetened drinks (soda, fruit punch or sports drinks, etc.) should not be a part of daily routine.
- No computers or TVs in your preschooler's bedroom.



Feeding Advice

- Your main job as a parent is to be sure that meals start with a vegetable and include a wide variety of healthy foods from all the food groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains and meat/protein).
- Serve your preschooler the same food as the rest of the family. Don't make separate food.
- Serve small portions and let your preschooler ask for more. Continue to use small plates, spoons and forks.
- Keep up good habits when eating away from home. Bring fruits or vegetables.
- **If your child is in day care or with relatives, make sure you know what they are eating and drinking. Maintain healthy eating plans.**
- At restaurants, split meals between kids or share your meal. Order milk with the meal. Don't fill up on pre-meal foods, such as bread, chips or crackers.



- Offer healthy snacks, like vegetables, cut-up fruit, cubed cheese or yogurt.

What should my preschooler be drinking?

- Milk and water

Be Active

- Encourage daily play of one hour or more. Make it a part of the family routine. Try riding a bike, skipping, dancing, jumping or running.
- Enjoy throwing and catching balls with your preschooler. Try playing hopscotch or hide-n-seek.
- Limit screen time (TV, computers, tablets, video games, cell phones) to 30 minutes at a time and no more than 1 to 2 hours a day. Help your preschooler choose what to watch.

Sleep Advice

- Enjoy a calming sleep routine with low lights, a warm bath, and **reading** together, or have your preschooler **read** to you.
- No food or screens before bed.
- It is normal and best for preschoolers at this age to sleep 11 to 13 hours each night.





Play with a Purpose: 4 years

With lots of words, strong muscles and play skills, the 4 year old keeps finding new things to explore. Give them lots of variety for play, like hoops, different types of balls, bats, bean bags, and scarves to throw and catch. Your preschooler may have less body fat, so they may look taller or thinner. This is healthy growth and normal at this age.

Watching Your Child

- Your preschooler will be curious about everything. It's a great time to show them how simple everyday things work. Don't let them sit still for long.
- Just walking with your child is a chance to talk about what they see.
- Your preschooler enjoys new things that use the five senses (sight, smell, taste, feel and sound).

Fun at Mealtime

- Meals are the best time to talk. Talk back and forth.
- Songs are fun to sing at meals together.
- Portions need to match your preschooler's size and activity level.
- Ask your preschooler to help you mix and match food groups at every meal and snack.

Choose vegetables, fruits, grains, milk/dairy, and proteins, like peanut butter, beans, fish, lean meat, nuts/ seeds. But your child still needs to be the one to say when their tummy is full.

Play with a Purpose

Try to have play time with your preschooler every day. Outdoors or indoors, have play breaks together whenever you can.

- **Talk** – keep up a steady back-and-forth talk when you play, walk, or bike together.



- **Big muscles** – Have your child play with other preschoolers. This teaches teamwork and sharing. Play games that let them use a bat or racket, practice jump-and- throw, use balance, bowl, and climb. Work on “step and throw,” “catch with their hands” and “kick with the side of the foot.”
- **Hands and fingers** – Keep lots of craft tools (paper, preschooler scissors, glue, glitter, yarn or cloth). Creating art, printing their name, writing numbers, and playing games or puzzles will help their hand skills

Try This!

- Try short “move it and groove it” breaks together where you dance and sing.
- When your child shops with you, show them which foods are good for you and which foods to eat only sometimes.

Want more info? Go to
www.theounceofprevention.org