

# Mendon Pediatrics

## 4-6 Year Visit

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### Nutrition

- Learn the Food Pyramid as a family and practice healthy eating choices together. Remember that our children learn much more from our behavior than from what we tell them to do. For more information on the pyramid visit <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.
- Allow children to help plan, shop and prepare meals.
- Watch what foods you have in the house. It's much harder to eat junk food if it's not there. Fruits and vegetables make great snacks!
- For picky eaters, continue to offer a variety of healthy food choices.
- Use low fat dairy products.

### Healthy Habits

- Encourage routine physical activity. Play ball, ride a bike, take a walk. Make it a habit to make physical activity a family routine. Keep moving and keep your hearts healthy.
- Minimize television, video games and computer time. Make a rule that all of these be lumped into "screen time" of no more than 1-2 hours per day. Encourage children to participate by helping to make a weekly TV-time budget. Parents should monitor the shows, video games and online use of their children.
- See a dentist twice yearly. Brush teeth twice daily and floss daily.
- Continue to keep your child's environment smoke free.
- Read! Read together, read out loud. Exercise your brains!
- Discipline should be respectful to the child and parent. It should be related to the deed ("logical consequence"). Keep discipline brief and offer reassurance once negative behavior has stopped. Parents need to set limits throughout childhood. You are now training your teenager by setting limits and being consistent.
- Prepare a plan for your child in case of loss. Review your life insurance coverage to make sure it provides for your child and your will should include all members of your family. Also discuss a plan of guardianship for your child.

### Safety

- Children less than 80lbs and less than 7 years old need to be in a booster seat in the back seat of the car. It is NY state law that all children under 7 years old and less than 4' 9" need to be in a booster seat.
- Bike helmets are a must. Always wear a helmet on bikes, rollerblades, skates, scooters, snowboards, and skis.
- Guns are dangerous. Every 2 hours in the US someone's child is killed by a gun. Guns in the home substantially increase the risk of suicide and homicide. If you have a gun in your home, make certain that the gun is securely locked and stored separately from ammunition. Teach your child never to play with guns.
- Continue to practice street safety with looking both ways before crossing and teaching to be careful when running out into the street chasing a ball.
- If your child does not know how to swim, consider swimming lessons. Even if your child knows how to swim, always supervise your child while he/she is swimming. Drowning in swimming pools is one of the leading causes of preventable childhood deaths.
- When outside in the sun, always protect your child's skin with sunblock of SPF 15 or higher.
- Insect repellent should contain less than 30% DEET.
- Sports should be fun. Competition is inappropriate at this age. Choose a sport that suits your child's physical abilities and temperaments. Do it safely and with proper supervision.
- Avoid the urge to purchase a home trampoline or allow your child to use them. They can cause multiple injuries.

- Teach your child his/her telephone number and address. Discuss what to do in circumstances where your child may get lost. For instance, who is safe to approach for help such as a police officer, or another mother with children.
- Go over the dangers of unfamiliar dogs.
- Discuss stranger awareness and good touch/bad touch.
- Your child will be entering school soon. Have him/her tested for readiness. Discuss with your pediatrician any concerns about their inability to learn or function well in school.
- Poison control can be reached at **1-800-222-1222**.

### Suggested Reading

*To Listen to a Child*, by T.B. Brazelton

*Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*, by American Academy of Pediatrics

*Caring for your School-Age Child*, by American Academy of Pediatrics

*The Hurried Child*, by D.Elkind

*Raising Your Spirited Child*, by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka

*1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12*, Thomas W. Phelan Ph.D.

### Developmental Evaluations

Evaluation and treatment of motor and speech delays are available to all preschool age children at no cost to the patient. Evaluations can be scheduled through your school district Committee on Preschool Special Education. Call the school district, ask for the Committee on Preschool Special Education, and ask for an evaluation to be arranged per your pediatrician's recommendation.

*As children become more independent, they develop their own sense of personhood.*

*They need both the freedom of personal expression and the structure of expectations and guidelines.*