

HEALTHY *and* SAFE at 4 Years

Tips for Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Talking With Your Child

- Ask your child to tell you about his or her day, friends, and activities.
- Give your child plenty of time to finish sentences.
- Listen to and treat your child with respect. Insist that others do so as well.
- Show your child how to say “I’m sorry.” Help your child apologize after hurting someone’s feelings.

Reading With Your Child

- Read books together each day. Ask your child questions about the stories.
- Take your child to the library to pick out books.

Healthy Habits

- Have relaxed family meals without TV.
- Create a calm bedtime routine.
- Have your child brush his or her teeth twice each day using a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Have your child spit out toothpaste, but do not rinse the mouth with water.

Indoor and Outdoor Safety

- Never leave your child alone in the car, house, or yard.
- Watch children when they play near streets and driveways.
- Do not let your child cross the street alone.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Ask if there are guns in homes where your child plays. If so, make sure they are stored safely.



Your Child's Interactions

- Praise your child for being kind to others.
- Help your child express feelings.
- Give your child the chance to play with others often.
- Think about signing your child up for preschool, Head Start, or a community program. Let your child's doctor or nurse know if they can help.

Car Safety

- Use a forward-facing car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Switch to a belt-positioning booster seat when:
 - Your child is over the weight or height limit for the car safety seat,
 - Shoulders are above the top harness slots, or
 - Ears come to the top of the car safety seat.

Keeping Your Child Safe

- Use correct terms for all body parts as your child becomes interested in how boys and girls are different.
- Teach your child about how to be safe with other adults.
 - No one should ask for a secret to be kept from parents.
 - No one should ask to see private parts.
 - No adult should ask for help with his or her private parts.
- Know that help is available if you don't feel safe.

TV and Being Active

- Find fun, active things to do together as a family.
- Get involved in your community. Join activities when you can.
- Limit TV time to no more than 2 hours per day.
- Talk about the TV programs you watch together as a family.
- Do not put a TV in your child's bedroom.
- Play with your child daily. Praise your child for being active.

What to Expect at your Child's 5 and 6 Year Visits:

Your child's doctor will talk about -

- Keeping your child's teeth healthy
- Getting ready for school
- Dealing with child's temper problems
- Eating healthy foods and staying active
- Safety outside and inside

To Learn More

- **Poison Control Center** 1-800-222-1222
- **Child Safety Seat Inspection** 1-866-SEATCHECK, 1-866-732-8243 or www.seatcheck.org
- **Immunizations** at aap.org/immunization
- **MaineHealth Learning Resource Center** 1-866-609-5183 or <https://mainehealth.org/healthy-communities/learning-resource-center>
- **Barbara Bush Children's Hospital** www.bbch.org
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** healthychildren.org
- **2-1-1 Maine** (a directory of local services) 211 or 1-877-463-6207 or 211maine.org
- **MaineHealth** mainehealth.org