



Growing Up Healthy

You and your 4 to 6 year old child

This information will help you understand your 4 to 6-year-old child. If you have concerns about your child, see the **More Information** section on the back of this pamphlet or contact your local public health nurse.

Your Needs

- You are not perfect and neither is your child.
- Try to do something nice for yourself everyday. You deserve it. Relax and enjoy the noisy, challenging world of a preschooler.
- Develop relationships with the staff at your child's preschool, day care, or kindergarten, your child's friends and their parents.
- Make sure there is time for "kids to be kids". Over-scheduling is stressful for parents and children.
- Your child is becoming more independent and will not need to be with you all the time.
- You may feel a sense of loss as your child becomes involved with her peers and the world around her. It is important to support her growing independence.

Your Child's Needs

Love and Comfort

- Your child still needs lots of love and comfort.
- Tell your child that you love him.
- Kiss, hug, snuggle, smile and talk with your child everyday.

Crying

- Your child should know how to calm herself but may need reminders when very distressed.

Sleep

- Your child will sleep 11 to 13 hours per day.
- 4 year olds may need a regular daytime nap.
- Your child continues to find comfort in bedtime routines.
- In the half hour before bed, avoid active play, screen time or other excitement.
- Explain to him that everything he wants has to be done before bed, like toilet, drinks, hugs.
- Your child may wet the bed sometimes. Reassure him it is okay and do not make him feel guilty.
- It is important to listen to his thoughts and worries. Life changes affect his sleep.
- Teaching him to manage these situations is a lifelong skill.

Structure

- Your child still needs structure throughout her day.
- Let her help with simple chores.
- Introduce changes in routine to your child before they happen and allow her time to adapt, like starting daycare, preschool or school.



Your Child's Development

Brain Development

- Your child is growing in his ability to learn, think, and solve problems.
- You are your child's greatest teacher. Model coping techniques, problem solving, and respect for others to help his brain grow in ways that will help now and in the future.
- Give him choices to help develop self-esteem and feel in control of his environment, like what to wear, when to play, and how much to eat.
- The older your child, the more choices he should be given.

- Your child's brain is growing and developing throughout his early years. Supporting his brain development will help him have health throughout his life.
- Use household objects and toys to do simple adding and subtracting, like "If you have three dolls and you take away one, how many are left?"
- Help your child understand "more" and "less". Such as "There is more water in my glass than your glass".
- Match things and point out details that help your child understand "same" and "different".

Your 4-year-old child

- » Names colors and numbers.
- » Understands the idea of counting.
- » Starts to understand time.
- » Remembers parts of a story and tells you what he thinks is going to happen next in a book.
- » Understands the ideas of "same" and "different".
- » Draws a person with 3 or more body parts.
- » Uses scissors.
- » Starts to copy capital letters.
- » Plays board or card games by taking turns.

Your 5-year-old child

- » Counts 10 or more things.
- » Draws a person with at least 6 body parts.
- » Prints letters or numbers.
- » Copies a triangle and other geometric shapes.
- » Knows about things used every day, like money and food.

Your 6-year-old child

- » Explains the rules of a game or activity.
- » Pays attention and follows instructions in a group.
- » Copies shapes.
- » Cuts out simple shapes following an outline.

Emotional Development

- Support your child to label her feelings, such as by saying, "You are excited".
- Help her understand how her body feels emotion, like having butterflies in her stomach when she is nervous.
- Help her solve problems when she is upset.

- Your child is developing independence and beginning to engage with his peers.
- Encourage your child to play with other children. This helps him to communicate, read body language, and learn about sharing and friendship.
- Encourage pretend play. This helps to get out aggressive feelings.
- Your child may fight with siblings. Be fair. Help him learn to get along.
- Playing with younger children can develop a sense of leadership and helpfulness.

Your 4-year-old child

- » Enjoys doing new things.
- » Plays “Mom” and “Dad”.
- » Would rather play with other children than by himself.
- » Cooperates with other children.
- » Often can’t tell what’s real or make-believe.
- » Talks about likes and interests.

Your 5-year-old child

- » Wants to please friends and be like them.
- » More likely to agree with rules.
- » Likes to sing, dance, and act.
- » Shows concern and sympathy for others.
- » Is aware of gender.
- » Can tell what’s real and make-believe.
- » Shows more independence, such as visiting a next-door neighbour by himself (adult supervision is still needed).
- » Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative.

Your 6-year-old child

- » Tells about own experiences and asks about yours.
- » Plays cooperatively with 2-3 children for 20 minutes.
- » Apologizes for actions he didn’t mean to do.
- » Listens while others are speaking.
- » Shows understanding of right from wrong.
- » Helps others.

Physical Development

- Play often with your child. Jump over a low rope, walk on a balance beam, cut and paste simple shapes and pictures, and play games together.
- Challenge your child to try new activities without fear of failure.
- Your 4 year old should be active for at least 180

minutes per day. By the end of age 4, 60 of these minutes should be energetic play, such as running, hopping, bike riding.

- 5 and 6 year olds should have at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day, such as bike riding, running, swimming.
- At age 5 or 6, you can introduce active play that helps build strength.
- Limit screen time to no more than 1 or 2 hours a day. Too much screen time has been linked to obesity, irregular sleep and behaviour problems in children.



Your 4-year-old child

- » Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds.
- » Catches a bounced ball most of the time.
- » Pours and cuts with supervision, and mashes own food.

Your 5-year-old child

- » Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer.
- » May be able to skip.
- » Can do a somersault.
- » Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife.
- » Uses the toilet on her own.
- » Swings and climbs.

Your 6-year-old child

- » Skips across a room.
- » Walks on a beam or curb without falling.
- » Catches a small ball.
- » Hops on one foot for 3 meters (10 feet).
- » Knows right from left on own body.

Sexual Health Development

- The way you talk about sex, gender, sexuality and sexual health will influence your child's ideas.
- Your child may begin to ask questions, such as "Where did I come from?"
- Teach your child his rights, for example "Your body belongs to you."
- Encourage your child to tell you if someone is touching him inappropriately.
- He will begin to gender role play.
- Your child may develop a basic understanding of sexual orientation.
- Provide basic information and use correct words when referring to body parts, sexuality or the reproductive system.

Praise

- Your child wants to please you.
- She needs your praise and support to meet challenges.
- Praise her with smiles, a thank you and hugs. This makes her feel important, capable and respected.
- Praise positive behaviours.
- Explain to your child exactly why she is being praised.

Discipline

- Show patience and don't give up. Model and explain what you expect.
- Be clear and consistent. When you tell him no, follow up with what he should do instead.
- Talk to him about limits in a positive way. Say "please sit on the couch" instead of "don't stand on the couch".
- Time outs are only for helping him calm down or remove himself from a situation that is causing distress or hyper-arousal. One minute per year of age is suggested.

Seeing and Hearing

- Eye and ear problems can affect your child's learning.
- Yearly eye exams are free until your child is 18 years old.
- If you have concerns about your child's hearing, have him assessed by an audiologist.

Speaking

- Read with your child everyday.
- Model good speech and language.
- Help your child to improve her speech by rephrasing what she says. If she says, "he falled down and

hurted hissself" you can say "yes, he fell down and hurt himself".

- Encourage your child to tell stories about her day.

Your 4-year-old child

- » Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" and "she".
- » Sings a song or says a poem from memory.
- » Tells stories.
- » Says her first and last name.

Your 5-year-old child

- » Speaks clearly.
- » Tells simple stories using full sentences.
- » Uses future tense, like "Grandma will be here."
- » Says her name and address.

Your 6-year-old child

- » Understands some words about time and order (morning, next).
- » Identifies sounds at the beginning of some words (what sound does pop start with? "puh").
- » Correctly says almost all of the sounds in words.
- » Speaks clearly enough to be understood by everyone.
- » Recognizes some familiar written words.

School Readiness

Your child will have better success in school if he has:

- » confidence;
- » curiosity;
- » ability to think about and complete tasks;
- » self-control;
- » ability to develop relationships,
- » good communication skills, and
- » ability to cooperate.



Feeding

- Your child's appetite will vary, but she may have a better appetite and eat more variety than when she was a toddler.
- Offer healthy food choices and plan regular meals and snacks. She will choose what and how much to eat from what you put on the table.
- Serve small portions or let her serve herself. Sometimes she will not eat well when there is too much on her plate.
- By age 4 she will be better at using a spoon and fork. At about 5 years she can use a knife and fork together.
- Teach her good eating behaviour, like saying "no, thank you" rather than "yuk", and sitting down at the family table during meals and snacks.
- She is influenced by what you do and say. If you eat green beans, she is more likely to try them some day. If you say you do not like broccoli, she is less likely to try it at all.

Ask your child to help plan and prepare food. This teaches her life skills, builds self-esteem and may increase the number of foods she is willing to try.



Nutrition

- A child's food portions are usually smaller than an adult's.
- Let your child's appetite lead how much he eats. Over the day he will get the amount he needs.
- He should not graze on food or beverages between meals and snacks. This interferes with family meals and learning to eat when hungry and stop when full.
- Meats are accepted more now because he is better at chewing.



- For healthy bones, your child should be offered at least 2 servings of fortified milk each day. More than 3 cups of milk leaves little room for other healthy foods.
- Offer vegetables and fruit instead of juice. They give him more nutrition and fibre. If you offer juice, make it 100% vegetable or fruit juice and limit to ½ cup (125ml) a day.
- If he is thirsty, offer water. It is the best way to quench thirst.

Build Strong Teeth

- Your child should have regular dental check-ups. If your child has not seen a dental professional in the last year, call your local dental office as soon as possible.
- Use a pea sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste and teach your child to spit out the toothpaste, not swallow it.
- You still need to help your child brush and floss. Allow your child to brush her teeth first and then you can follow up with a final thorough brushing focusing along the gum line.
- Flossing should begin when the molar teeth have fully grown in. Try having your child lay backwards with her head in your lap and have her look up at the ceiling. You may find a floss wand or floss stick easier to use.
- Limit food and beverages containing sugar to mealtimes.
- Parents need to keep their own mouth clean and healthy. Brush and floss twice a day, have regular check-ups and receive dental treatment as needed.

Brush your child's teeth with a child-sized, soft-bristled toothbrush twice a day, especially at bedtime.

Safety

- Supervision is the best way to prevent injuries.
- Make sure that your child has a safe, fenced play area.
- Teach your child his full name, address and phone number.
- Teach him how to call 911.

Tobacco-Free Homes

- Children model what they see their parents do. If you smoke, your child may also become a smoker.
- Have you thought of quitting? Look into programs and medications that can help you quit.

Choking

- Always supervise your child at the playground. Hoods, drawstrings, scarves and bicycle helmets can get caught on play equipment.
- Sitting when eating or drinking prevents your child from choking.

Making Your Home Safe

- Keep chemicals, cleaning products, medications and vitamins in their original container with original labels. Do not re-use chemical containers and follow directions on container for proper disposal.
- Teach your children to recognize warning labels on products and what they mean.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors on all levels of your home especially outside of sleeping areas.
- Keep the number of the Saskatchewan Poison Centre (1-866-454-1212) by all phones.
- Use plug in covers over empty electrical sockets.
- Install blinds without pull cords.
- Keep electrical cords out of reach of children.



Teach your child to wear a bicycle helmet as he starts to ride a tricycle or bicycle.

Street Safety

- Always have an adult cross the road with your child. Show him how to look both ways and look for cars, bikes and people.
- Your child's peripheral vision, ability to detect location or direction of sound, and judging speed of an oncoming vehicle is still developing.
- Because children are small, drivers can't always see them.
- Keep him on the sidewalk and away from the street and traffic. Tell him not to play in the street or run after stray balls.
- Safety habits are best started when your child is young.
- Encourage your child to wear safety gear, such as elbow and knee pads when skateboarding or rollerblading.



Water Safety

- Supervise your child near water, including the bathtub.
- Do not let siblings bath together unsupervised.
- Follow safety guidelines for pools.
- Be a good role model and wear a lifejacket when boating. This will ensure you can help your child if needed.
- Your child should also wear a properly fitted life jacket.
- This is a good age for your child to start swimming lessons.

Burns

- Lower the temperature of your hot water heater to 49°C.
- Keep all lighters and matches locked in a cupboard, out of sight and reach.
- Always burn candles with an adult present.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home. Test monthly and replace batteries every six months.
- Teach your child safe routes to get out of your house in case of a fire. Have fire drills together as a family.



Seasonal Safety

Summer

- » Scarves and necklaces can be a choking hazard.
- » Use sun screen on your child before she spends time outside and reapply according to the directions on the bottle.
- » Teach your child to wear sunglasses when she is outside.
- » Hats prevent sunburn and heat stroke.

Winter

- » Cover exposed skin with a hat, mitts, neck warmers, coat and boots as appropriate.
- » Your child should wear a helmet and any other applicable safety equipment when she skates, toboggans, rides all-terrain vehicles or snowmobiles.

Medicines/Poisons

- Store chemicals, poisons, alcohol and drugs out of your child's reach.
- Never refer to medicine and vitamins as candy.

Car Seats

- Every time your child travels in a vehicle, she needs to be properly secured.
- Your child should ride in a booster seat until she is between 80 and 100 pounds (between 8 and 12 years old).
- Once your child weighs 18.4 kg (40 lbs) and meets the height guidelines in your booster seat user guide, she will be ready for a booster seat.
- Starting June 27, 2014, booster seats are mandatory for children under 7 years of age, less than 145 cm (4' 9") in height and 36 kg (80 lbs) in weight.
- Install the booster seat in the back seat of your car.

Immunization

- At 4 years, your child will receive the last of his preschool immunizations.
- His next immunizations will occur during school starting in grade 6.

Family Pets

- Teach your child to only pet animals with an adult present.
- Teach your child not to tease animals.
- Animal reactions to children can be instinctual and result in injury and, at times, death.
- Your child may want a pet of her own. Keep in mind that your child will not be able to properly care for a pet. This will be an adult's responsibility.

Water

- Clean safe water is important for the entire family for meal preparation, drinking and cleaning.
- If you use your own water source, your water should be tested twice per year such as in the spring and fall, or if concerns arise. The Water Security Agency has more information about this.
- If you have been notified of a boil water advisory in your area, follow the precautions outlined by your health region.

You know your child best

Act early by talking to your child's public health nurse or primary care provider if by 4 years of age your child:

- is not meeting the developmental stages in this pamphlet, or
- loses the skills he once had.

More Information

Here are some trusted websites:

Saskatchewan Immunization Fact Sheets and Caring for Your Child's Fever	www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize
Ministry of Health – Child Health and Parenting	www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/wellness-and-prevention/children-health-and-parenting
Saskatchewan Poison Center	1-866-454-1212
Immunize Canada	www.immunize.ca
The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute	www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca
Government of Canada	https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health.html
International Breastfeeding Centre	ibconline.ca/information-sheets/
Dietitians of Canada	www.dietitians.ca
Caring for Kids	www.caringforkids.cps.ca
Safe Kids Canada	www.parachutecanada.org/safekidscanada
SGI Care Seat Information	https://www.sgi.sk.ca/carseats
Aftermarket Car Seat Products	www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safedrivers-childsafety-notice-d200401-menu-336.htm
Facts for Garage Sale Vendors	www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/garage-eng.php
Maternal Depression Online	https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/wellbeing-program
Low Risk Drinking Guidelines	http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/default.aspx
Al-Anon	https://sk-alanon.ca/includes/sk-alanon_index4.php
Smoker's Helpline	1-877-513-5333
Go Smoke Free	www.gosmokefree.ca
Water Security Agency	www.wsask.ca/Water-info/Domestic-Water-Well-Management
Daycare	https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/family-and-social-support/child-care/child-care-in-saskatchewan
Pre-Kindergarten	https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/education-and-learning/prek-12-education-early-learning-and-schools/prekindergarten
Pregnancy and Parenting in the Workplace	http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=12099

For more information and advice, contact:

HealthLine – 811 (24 hour service), or your public health nurse, or your primary care provider.

