

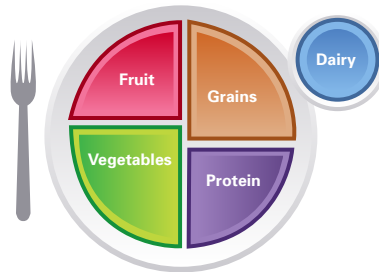
# 3 years

## Parent Tips

- Your preschooler is becoming more independent.
- **Trust your preschooler's appetite.** All children know how much they need to eat. Ask your preschooler, "Is your tummy full?" Don't push them to eat more.
- Continue to have family meals. Offer 1 to 2 healthy snacks a day. If they don't eat at one meal they will at the next.
- Your preschooler can now let you know what they like and dislike with words. Encourage them to talk about tastes, smells, textures and colors in foods.
- Your preschooler wants to do what you are doing. Model healthy choices for them.
- No screens (computers, tablets, cell phones and 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 small portions. Let your preschooler ask for more.
- Serve vegetables and fruit each day.
- Establish good habits when eating away from home. Take fruits and vegetables.
- If your preschooler is in day care or with relatives, find out 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.
- Sweets and sweetened drinks like soda, fruit punch or sports drinks should not be part of the daily routine.
- Your preschooler should be outgrowing the stage of picky eating. Continue to offer varied flavors, colors



and textures at each meal.

- Focus on meals, turn off the TV and other distractions, slow down and enjoy family time.

### What should my preschooler be drinking?

- Serve milk at meals.
- Serve water first for thirst between meals.

## Be Active

- Encourage daily play of one hour or more. Include the entire family.
- Your preschoolers should be jumping, running, climbing; and may be ready to try a tricycle.
- Limit screen time (TV, computers, tablets, video games, cell phones) to 30 minutes at a time and no more than 1 to 2 hours per 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 around 11 to 13 hours each day.

## Play with a Purpose: 3 years

Your child is curious about everything. If they fall, but aren't hurt, don't over react to it. It's part of trying out new muscle skills.

### Have You Noticed?

- Your preschooler may have less body fat after age 3, so they may look taller or thinner. This is normal at this age.
- Smile and praise them when they are calm, use quiet words.
- Your preschooler may want foods or drinks they see others having, or start asking for foods they see on TV.
- Now your preschooler can run faster, balance on one leg longer, and climb stairs faster.
- They move constantly, except in front of the TV. Keep them moving.

### Watching Your Child

- When your preschooler is busy playing, they can forget to eat or to finish their meal. But when they are bored, they may want to eat all day.
- The 3 year old likes to be part of things. Have them help you with meals, shopping and chores.

### Fun at Mealtime

Dinner with the family can be a fun way to talk about their day. Bring your preschooler into the kitchen and have them measure, count, pour, mash or stir.

### Play with a Purpose

The most important thing is making time to play, indoors or out.

- **Talk** – use as many new words as you can that mean the same thing. For the word “big” say “large, tall, long, huge, giant or super-sized.”
- **Big muscles** – Play games that let them feel their body work. Hit a soft ball with a soft bat, kick or catch



a beach ball, jump on two feet, balance on one foot with their eyes closed, and run fast.

- **Hands and fingers** – Printing letters and numbers, drawing, coloring or painting, and making big letters or numbers with chalk on the sidewalk help them use their hands. Card games, puzzles, and pretend with tools or kitchen things can help their eyes and hands work together.

### Try This!

- When your preschooler is crabby, bored, and asking for food, try playing a hand game (like “itsy bitsy spider”). It will distract them, make them smile and work their hands.
- Help your preschooler make healthy snacks:
  - Try “Ants on a Log” by adding peanut butter to celery with raisins or berries
  - Try vegetables with dips like peanut butter, hummus, or low-fat ranch dressing

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