

Suzanne Holbrook, MD  
sunnysidepeds.com

### **3 Year Visit**

At this age, your child has learned through exploration and experimentation. They have learned to walk well, now able to not only walk but to alternate feet when walking up stairs, able to broad jump, and wiggle a thumb.

Your child has an interest in the world outside your home! They are entering a more social understanding and can learn and repeat, when questioned, a friend's name. There is with this broader interest in the world outside your house a need for support in this learning. Expose your child to new ideas including: books, experiences from a museum or planetarium. Make "playdates" so this social identity can be consolidated. Your child is entering a time of life referred to as "the magic years". At this time, they believe anything is possible. Telling stories is an expression of this. Your child will love hearing stories and they will come up with some doozies of their own. It isn't that they are all trying to fool you in these stories, it is that the world is a fantastic place and there is a fine line, for this age, in the truth and the fantasy of their growing imagination. Be gentle in reminding them about fantasy and reality, be playful, have fun with this world of their imagination.

Over the next several months, your child will be learning to name several colors, use adjectives to describe an object, and have mastered language enough to speak over 200 words including sentences with 5 words or more. They can, if they want to, follow a direction of 3 parts. They are able to answer questions about a story they have heard and can understand the concept of counting.

Specific issues that come up include:

Mastery of several processes such as toilet training, speech, and the motor skills of mobility. This mastery is important to praise them for, they are gaining a critical sense of their own ability. You, as a parent, are there to support this process. These little people are building their sense of self through this mastery, building their self-confidence.

Friends as separate from themselves, same and different as concepts.

Right and wrong, truth and lies.

Be gentle, support their developing sense of accomplishment in this mastery of the environment! But also realize there is a need for balance: both praise for accomplishments and persistent boundary setting and consequences such as found in 1,2,3 Magic by Thomas Phelan PhD. This understanding of your child will help you navigate this great time of your child's life.

Call for concerns.

Suzy Holbrook, M.D.