

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Toothbrush-ing – Teaching your child to be patient enough to thoroughly brush their teeth can be hard. Sing one of your child's favorite songs and challenge them to keep brushing until the song ends. (Try "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." If you do it enough, they will sing the song in their head as they get older; it builds a lifetime habit.)

Moving Music – Show your preschooler that exercise can be fun by turning on your favorite dance jams and moving and grooving without stopping for at least two songs.

Handwashing Helper – Combine glitter with lotion. Explain that the glitter represents germs that can make us feel yucky. Rub the mixture on their hands. Then, have them play with a few toys. Point out the glitter being transferred from surface to surface, just like germs. To close, run some warm, soapy water into a tub or bowl, allowing them to practice washing their hands and toys.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your preschooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



HEALTH

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Health. In the preschool years, your child is growing and changing *quickly*. In this phase, it's especially important to keep in mind that every kid is different—your preschooler may learn and develop at a different rate than others. So don't get discouraged if your neighbor's two-year-old *adores* peas while your kid just shoves them up their nose. Continue to introduce healthy foods and habits over and over again. In the Preschool phase, your role is to . . .

Establish
BASIC NUTRITION



So your child will . . .
**HAVE CONSISTENT CARE AND
EXPERIENCE A VARIETY OF FOOD.**

This guide is designed to help you connect with your child in the phase they are in, by giving you some words to say to help them develop healthy habits. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind for your kids:

HEALTHY HABITS

Learning to strengthen my body through exercise, nutrition, and self-advocacy.

IN THE NEW BABY PHASE, ASK THESE QUESTIONS . . .

"Can you tell me a few details about our family's medical history?"
(Ask your parents or a close relative.)

**"When should we schedule
our health appointments?"**

(Make sure you stay current on
all your child's pediatric visits.)

"How do I know if he is getting enough to eat?"
(Ask your pediatrician or pediatric nurse for some guidelines.)

IN THE FOLLOWING PRESCHOOL YEARS, SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"Let's drink milk this time instead of juice."

"Today, we're going to see Doctor Mark!"

"Yum, let's try some green beans."

"Let's wash your hands. It keeps you from getting sick."

"Did you know carrots grow underground? Eating carrots help your eyes see better."

"Will you help me cook dinner tonight? You can stir!"

**"What's your favorite thing to do outside?
Swing? Play hopscotch? Kick a ball? Let's go
play outside together!"**

"Thank you for trying the peas. Let's try another new food soon!"

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The preschool years are the wonder years. You can incite their wonder by exploring the world side-by-side with your child. Allow them to touch, see, smell, hear, and (whenever appropriate) taste any and all things that will help them better understand their growing and changing bodies.