

# TIP CARD FOR DADS OF PRESCHOOLERS

(AGES 3-5)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance



**HMRF**  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD



## DID YOU KNOW?

Preschoolers are beginning to master their world - a loving, nurturing relationship helps them navigate the journey.



## SPENDING TIME WITH DAD POSITIVELY AFFECTS THEIR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

- They like learning numbers and letters, doing arts and crafts, riding tricycles, and playing games.
- Reading to them is good for language development and helps them do better in school.

## PRESCHOOLERS CAN BE BOTH COOPERATIVE AND DEFIANT.

- Stating clear expectations and being consistent helps them exercise self-control.
- Research shows physical discipline can lead to more aggressive and antisocial behavior from children.
- Providing a nurturing environment can help avoid negative emotional consequences.



### By the age of 3,

they have largely mastered control of their bodily functions and have some self-care skills.



### By the age of 4,

their brain has grown to at least 90% of its adult size.



### By the age of 5,

attention spans are increasing - they can usually respond to requests such as "use your quiet voice please."

## REFERENCES

- Child Development Institute <https://bit.ly/2mKtAeN>
- First5LA <https://www.first5la.org/parenting/fathers/>
- Perry, Bruce. (2000). Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain Development, and the Next Generation. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Pruett, Kyle. (2000). Fatherhood: Why Father Care is as Essential as Mother Care. New York: The Free Press.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help your preschooler find their way in the world – set clear expectations, praise them, encourage them, do things with them, hug them.

### ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO SOME THINGS FOR THEMSELVES.



- Make their own peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- Put their shoes on.

### DO THINGS WITH THEM.



- Play simple games like Go Fish or Checkers; teach them to throw a ball.
- Tell silly jokes and riddles – see <https://www.fatherhood.gov/dad-jokes>.
- Pretend to be the characters in their favorite story.
- Take them with you to the store or on other errands.
- Let them help you with simple tasks around the house.

### LET THEM MAKE SOME DECISIONS, BUT GIVE 2-3 CHOICES THAT YOU SELECT.



- “Would you like to wear your blue socks or your white socks?”
- “Which of these three books do you want to read tonight?”

### BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL.



- Be patient. Try not to react in anger or frustration.
- Always treat your child’s mother with respect.
- Don’t shout at the driver who cuts you off.
- Avoid excessive drinking or smoking.
- Limit the time you spend looking at your smartphone!

#### NRFC RESOURCES

- Healthy Fathers, Healthy Families – lifestyle ideas for staying healthy <https://bit.ly/2riAOLI>
- NRFC Tips for Dads: The Benefits of Reading to Your Children <https://bit.ly/2Lo4dcV>

#### OTHER RESOURCES

- Fathering Your School-Age Child: A Dad’s Guide to the Wonder Years (3 to 9), Armin Brott <https://bit.ly/2Wq14kl>
- Screen Time vs. Reading: How They Affect Your Child’s Brain, Robert Myers, PhD. <https://bit.ly/2LJ5RKc>

