

Welcome, Big Kid!

Here are some tips I've put together for 3-4 year olds over the years that I'd like to share with you. You are all smart and loving parents, but you probably haven't had loads of kids come through your door with different products and problems and questions and solutions. It's kind of a unique position to be in, and so here are some things I've learned! Please feel free to share anything YOU would like to add. I'd love to hear.

Safe Sleep

At this age, it's more about "happy sleep." It's a great idea to send a "special" stuffy or blanket to daycare with them, so they have that reminder of home, and so they don't get jealous if other kids bring one. We have teddies and dollies at daycare, but it's not the same as your own.

Binkies

WubbaNubs are ok now, but please don't use them for infants under 1 year old, as they are a choking hazard. Invest in a binky strap if they are still using a binky, so it doesn't get lost every five minutes!

Drinking

The best sippy cup out there is the Munchkin 360 (or similar). This is good for them because it helps them learn to drink out of a "normal" cup, and it's good for you, because it doesn't leak like most sippy cups do. Unless they toss it on the floor. Which they will. But then, every cup would leak in that scenario.

Cold Weather Gear

Toddlers do not keep their gloves on. Period. It's also really hard to get their little fingers in the finger holes of gloves. And you know what? They don't care. So here is my recommendation: Get WATERPROOF MITTENS. Make sure they are as long as possible to fit under coat sleeves. Make sure they have one of those little straps around the wrist to secure them snugly. Then put them on BEFORE you put their coats on, and put the coats over them. Works pretty well :) Just make sure their coats have large enough wrist holes that gloves will fit through...

Another great thing on coats is a hood that snaps under their chin. Since, guess what, they don't keep hats on either!

Diapers

If they are still in diapers, that's fine! They will be ready for potty training only when THEY are ready, and not before. Some ways you might know they are ready are that their diaper is dry for long periods of time, or that they tell you immediately when they poop, because they don't like the feeling of it in their diaper. You should also make sure they aren't going through another big transition at the same time (e.g. new baby). Here are some tips to help with this transition:

- Pull-ups are ONLY useful if your child is using the potty successfully 90% of the time without help. Otherwise they are just something we parents get preemptively excited about. They don't hold in the poop and pee nearly as well as regular diapers, so if your child is "mostly" still going in their diaper, get a real diaper for them to do it in.
- One trick that has worked for some kids is to put them in a dress or an oversized t-shirt, and NO undies or diapers during the day. Then they sense that there is nothing to catch the pee/poop, and hold it in until they get to the potty.
- Another idea is to pick a date, like their 3rd birthday, and create lots of excitement around using the potty by that date.
- Incentives (stickers, toys, praise, charts) work for some kids, but you'll find out pretty quickly if it works for yours.
- Keep it low-key. If your child isn't excited about potty training, and you push too hard, they might become resistant to it. Let them know everyone's body is ready to use the potty at their own speed, and when theirs is ready, they will do it. Try to keep emotion out of it if the training doesn't seem to be working right now. Yes, I know it's hard! But nobody goes to college in diapers. It will happen when they are ready!
- If they are 3 or 4, and still resistant, it may be that although they understand how to do it, they don't want to stop playing long enough to go to the bathroom. Try having the potty closer, and offering to do something fun WHILE they sit on it, like reading them a book. That way they don't feel like they're missing out by having to sit there.
- And through all of it, consistency is key. If your child has different homes they go to (Dad's house, Grandma's house), everybody needs to know the plan and be on board with it. And at Daycare, I'll follow the same plan you've chosen, but will also make suggestions if I see anything that might work better.

Wipes

Most wipes are fine, but some are exceedingly thin or exceedingly perfumed, and I find them to be a pain in the butt (hehe). My favorite out of all the brands I've experienced is Seventh Generation. They are thick, soft, easy to get out of the package, and safe for faces and hands as well as bums.

Diaper Cream

Desitin works fine, but once I discovered Boudreaux's Butt Paste, I stopped getting anything else. It is a nice, thick cream that goes on easily and smells a bit like cinammon. Not all babies need diaper cream, but if you do, try this one!