



## When to Call: Does your preschooler need Occupational Therapy?

Three and four-year-olds are developing more refined manipulation skills, a greater sense of independence with routine daily activities, and increased interest in peer-related play. They enjoy using their imaginations to create, imitate, and pretend during play. **Call us today to schedule an evaluation if you have concerns in any of the following areas:**



### Using hands in a coordinated manner

An occupational therapist can help your child develop the strength and coordination required to build with blocks, color with crayons, cut with scissors, and use other common classroom materials, or to adapt tasks or materials to enable successful participation in play and learning activities.



### Disruptive or inattentive behavior

Preschool-aged children can usually play with a single toy for about 10 minutes. They are able to learn basic rules and routines in a structured environment. Occupational therapists can let you know if your child's abilities to pay attention and follow directions are impacted by environmental factors such as lighting, noise, or visual clutter - or by the need for increased physical activity. Children who are over-stimulated by their environment often react in ways that seem to signal a "meltdown." Meltdowns can often be avoided by simple changes in routine or managed by implementing calming strategies.



### Eating, dressing, and hygiene

Three and four-year-olds are eating different food textures and feeding themselves with utensils. Food likes and dislikes are apparent, and they may develop "picky eating" habits. They are putting on and taking off clothing and beginning to manage fasteners such as zippers and buttons. Brushing teeth and washing hands may still require some supervision and coaching - and a little hands-on help for a thorough cleaning! Sensitivities to the way things feel on a child's body and inside the mouth may limit the foods they eat, the clothes they wear, and the activities in which they participate. When sensitivities interfere with the child's ability to participate in home and school routines, an occupational therapist can offer strategies to overcome these challenges.



### Playing with peers

Between the ages of 3 and 4, children start to show more interest in their peers and begin to join others in play and learn to take turns. Social skills are maturing, and children develop a sense of cooperation. They are able to use objects in symbolic ways and pretend to be just about anything.