



When to Call: Does your preschooler need Physical Therapy?



Three and four-year-olds are developing more coordinated and skilled movement. They enjoy climbing on playground equipment, running around with friends, and are starting to participate in simple, structured exercise or sport activities. **Don't wait to schedule an evaluation if you have concerns in any of the following areas:**

• Toe Walking

Once children are able to walk on their own, their heels should touch the floor with each step they take. Not all children will "outgrow" toe walking on their own, and treatment is more effective when started early. A physical therapist can check for and address underlying issues to help your child learn to walk normally.



• Flat feet, or toes pointing in or out

Physical therapists can let you know if your child's feet are in a normal position for their developmental level. If there is a problem with the shape of your preschooler's feet, we can provide suggestions to minimize the impact to your child's development.



• Stairs

Three and four-year-olds are becoming more confident with using the stairs. At this age, they should be able to alternate their feet when going up or down steps. Younger preschoolers may want a hand-hold or use a railing for support, but will progress to using the stairs hands-free by the time they're about four years old.



• Running, jumping, and riding a tricycle

By the age of three, kids are able to run smoothly, starting and stopping with ease. They can jump down from a curb or over a small object with both feet together. Most kids can hop a few times on each foot. This is also the age that kids can learn to pedal a tricycle.



• Balance, coordination, and ball play

Children at this age can walk along a curb, placing one foot in front of the other and balancing on each foot for about five seconds. Watch to see if your child can gallop with each foot leading. They are learning to kick a moving ball, catch a small or large ball using both hands, and throw to a target from a distance of about five feet.