

Ages & Stages

4-Year-Olds



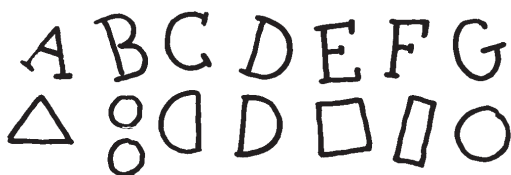
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Alabama Cooperative Extension System
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Four-year-olds have come a long way in establishing a sense of control over their bodies. They are expert walkers, runners, and climbers. Four-year-olds are also very curious and imaginative. They enjoy playing make-believe and can be remarkably creative—and sometimes silly. They need adults who can help them channel their energy and creativity in positive ways.

What's It Like To Be 4 Years Old?

- I can dress myself, except for tying my shoes.
- I can balance and hop on one foot.
- I can skip and gallop and leap.
- I can draw shapes that stand for people and buildings and flowers and other things.
- I can cut on a line.
- I can bounce and catch a ball.
- I have a longer attention span for things that interest me.



What Your 4-Year-Old Wants You To Know:

I am very curious about many things. Please answer my questions when you can.

I can dress myself, but I need a little extra time. I don't do it very well when I am rushed.

I love books and stories and rhymes and nonsense words.

Please listen to me when I talk. Your listening tells me that I'm important.

Talk with me and ask me questions about what I notice and think and feel.

It helps me to behave when you set clear and fair rules and show me how to follow them.

Please be sensitive to my fears, even if you don't understand them.

Even though I seem very independent, I still need lots of hugs and encouragement from you.

I learn how I should feel about myself by the way that you treat me. Your care and respect help me feel like I am a worthwhile person.

Every child is different. If you watch me closely, you will get clues about why I do what I do and how to help me grow.

How Do 4-Year-Olds...?

Think And Learn

- They are curious and ask many questions.
- They imitate others.
- They can name simple shapes.
- They begin to recognize letters and numbers.
- They think that nonliving things, like trees and the sun, think and feel like people do.
- They can repeat songs, finger plays, and stories.

Grow Socially And Emotionally

- They can share toys and play with others.
- They have a rigid understanding of what is right and wrong.
- They want to please and be helpful.
- They care about the feelings of others.
- They like to imagine themselves doing adult behavior.
- They have an active imagination and may occasionally show fear of ordinary things.



How Do Children Learn?

Children are natural learners. They are curious, interested, and enthusiastic about learning new things. The best way to teach young children is to provide many opportunities for physical play, new experiences, hands-on activities, games, and pretend play.

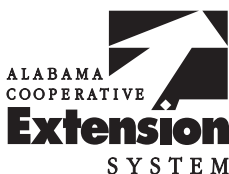
Children learn...

- by doing
- through movement
- by being noticed and encouraged
 - through their senses
 - by making things
 - through language and stories
 - by playing with other children
 - through imitation
 - through pretend play



All children grow, learn, and develop at different rates. The information in this brochure is considered typical for this age. If we do all we can to help children develop now, they will have the best chance to do well in school and in life.

This brochure was developed by the Child Care Resource Center and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.



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