

Normal Development: 4 Years Old

Physical Development

- Hops, runs, skips, climbs with increasing skill.
- Tires easily.
- Is accident prone.
- Likes making loud noises, but is frightened by unexpected sounds.
- Goes to the bathroom without help (though may not wash hands).
- Makes designs and draws recognizable objects.
- Can use blunt scissors.
- Dresses self (with exception of shoes).

Emotional Development

- Sometimes still acts like a baby.
- Shows new fears (becoming aware of more dangers).
- Enjoys silliness.

Social Development

- Refers to parents as final authority.
- Continues to test parental limits.
- Uses "naughty" words to see how others react.
- Is ready for group activities.
- Talks "with" another child, but does not listen to what other child says.
- Is comfortable with other children, but shares grudgingly.
- Tattles and name-calls.
- Imitates adults.

Mental Development

- Is more likely to solve problems through words than aggressive action.
- Has a vocabulary of about 1,500 to 2,000 words.
- Speaks in 4 to 5 word sentences.
- Likes funny, exaggerated stories.
- Can count to 5.
- Identifies some shapes and colors.
- Can understand some concepts of time (yesterday, today, and tomorrow).

- Often asks "why" questions.
- Usually can put toys and materials away without adult help.
- Insists on finishing an activity or project.
- Likes to help with simple tasks.
- Starts to know difference between right and wrong.
- Shows growing ability to tell real-life from make-believe.
- Tells tall tales, but cannot always tell the difference between truth and lies.
- Believes the only viewpoint is his or her own.
- Believes 2 unrelated events can have a cause-effect relationship.

These guidelines show general progress through the developmental stages rather than fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to reach some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend.

If you have any concerns about your child's own pattern of development, check with your healthcare provider.

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