

Growing & Learning at...48 Months/4 Years



What Most Children do at 48 Months:

Social-Emotional Milestones

- Pretends to be something else during play (teacher, superhero, dog)
- Asks to go play with children if none are around, like “Can I play with Alex?”
- Comforts others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend
- Avoids danger, like not jumping from tall heights at the playground
- Changes behavior based on where she is (place of worship, library, playground)

Language & Communication Milestones

- Says sentences containing four or more words
- Recites some words from a song or rhyme
- Talks about at least one thing that happened during her day, like “I played soccer.”
- Answers simple questions like “What is a coat for?” or “What is a crayon for?”

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Is able to name a few colors
- Tells what comes next in a well-known story
- Draws a person with three or more body parts

Movement & Physical Development Milestones

- Catches a large ball most of the time
- Serves herself food or pours water, with adult supervision
- Unbuttons some buttons
- Holds crayon or pencil between fingers and thumb (not in fist)

Source

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; American Academy of Pediatrics.

More information can be found in the Ages & Stages section at www.healthychildren.org

Helping 4-year-olds Learn & Grow:

- ▶ When you read with a 4-year-old, ask what’s happening in the story and what he thinks might happen next.
- ▶ Throughout the day, ask her about the color, shape, and size of things she sees.
- ▶ Encourage him to “use his words” to ask for things. For example, help him say, “Can I have a turn?” instead of taking something from someone.
- ▶ When a 4-year-old is engaging in unwanted behaviors, offer something else to do. For example, “You can’t jump on the bed. Do you want to go outside and play or put on some music and dance?”
- ▶ Take time to answer “why” questions. If you don’t know the answer, say “I don’t know,” or help her find the answer in a book, on the Internet, or from another adult.
- ▶ Count things like fingers, toys, or fruit out loud together.
- ▶ Reinforce social skills like sharing toys and taking turns.
- ▶ Show them outdoor games they can play with each other, like tag, follow-the-leader, and hide-and-seek.
- ▶ Spend time speaking to him in complete sentences, using “grown-up” words. This will improve his speaking skills, and support future reading and writing skills.
- ▶ Games like red light/green light, or freeze dance (play music and then turn it off, signaling it is time to freeze) help them learn to pause, even when excited.
- ▶ Introduce matching games and Tic-tac-toe.

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Topics to Discuss at 48-month/4-year Well-Child Doctor Visits:

- ▶ What are some things you and your child do together?
- ▶ What are some things your child likes to do?
- ▶ Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- ▶ Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- ▶ Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?
- ▶ Does your pediatrician's office offer regular developmental screenings?



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