

Activities for children 4 to 5 years old



Development and Behavior Toolkit for Children Birth to 5

Activities to Support Healthy Early Child Development

For more information, please contact the Cincinnati LEND program at LENDTraining@cchmc.org



Language Activities:

4-year-old skills

Language activities focus on what children say and how they listen. Developing language skills helps a child understand directions, get their needs met, and make friends.

Language Activities to Practice:

- Practice using pronouns, like his, hers, theirs, mine. "That is *his* ball."
- Describe common objects: "the ball is *round*."
- Use endings on words ("ed", "s", "ing"): played*ed*, toys*s*, running*ing*.
- Use full sentences such as "Are you coming too?" instead of "coming too?"
- Teach direction words using small toys like "on top," "under," or "next to."
- Count objects.
- Use feeling words like happy, sad, mad.
- Use their first and last name
- Follow three different instructions: "[1] Go upstairs, [2] get your toys, and [3] put them in the bin."
- Practice identifying colors, like green, blue, and red.
- Ask "what" questions, like "*What* do you want for dinner?"



Fine Motor Activities:

4-year-old skills

Activities that use the small muscle of the hand help children to be independent in their daily activities. These activities help to get them ready for writing in school.

Fine Motor Activities to Practice:

- Take off and put on a jacket.
- Stack blocks.
- Ask your child to copy your block designs.
- String beads. Start with bigger beads and move to smaller.
- Color a picture.
- Practice zippers, buttons, and snaps.
- Copy shapes and letters with different materials. Examples are shaving cream, sidewalk chalk, sand, finger paint, and crayons.
- Draw simple shapes (lines, circles, plus signs, squares, triangles).
- Copy the letters of their name.
- Copy UPPERCASE letters.
- Draw a person.
- Hold a crayon or marker with 3 fingers (tripod grasp). If this is hard, practice drawing or coloring with broken crayons.
- Use scissors to cut across a thick line.
- Complete simple interlocking/ jigsaw puzzles.



Gross Motor Activities: 4-year-old skills

Activities that use the big muscles of the body allow kids to participate in recess, gym class and at the playground.

Gross Motor Activities to Practice:

- Catch a ball with two hands.
- Throw a ball overhand.
- Climb a ladder on the playground.
- Hop up and down on one foot.
- Jump forward with 2 feet.
- Balance on one leg.
- Briefly walk on tip toes or heels.
- Walk upstairs, alternating feet.



Problem Solving Activities:

4-year-old skills

(1 of 2)

Problem Solving activities help a child think, learn, and become more independent.

Problem-Solving Activities to Practice:

- Read a book with your child and ask about what is happening (or will happen) in the story.
- Complete simple puzzles.
- Practice simple riddles, like "mother is to girl as father is to __?__ [boy]."
- Practice imitation, like making designs with blocks or drawing squares or triangles.
- Match objects or pictures. Examples are socks, forks, or spoons.
- Sort items by colors and shapes.
- Practice imaginary play skills.
- Practice answering, "Who is your friend?" or "What is your full name?"



Problem Solving Activities:

4-year-old skills

(2 of 2)

Problem Solving activities help a child think, learn, and become more independent.

Problem-Solving Activities to Practice:

- Draw simple pictures, like draw the head of a person and ask your child to add 4-6 body parts.
- Practice numbers and counting. For example, give me five blocks, hold up five fingers, count 5 items touching each one as they count.
- Practice grouping items. Examples are give me all the red blocks or point to all the big dogs.
- Practice finding objects that are the same and those that are different. Example, find the cup that is different.
- Play games to work on turn taking and following directions. Examples are Candyland or memory games [with 4 cards].



Social & Emotional Activities:

4 years

- Play make-believe with the child - let them be the leader and choose what you will play.
- Say positive things; praise the child and what they are doing.
- Set limits and be consistent with what the child can and cannot do.
- Encourage the child to use words, share toys and take turns playing games of one another's choice.
- Help the child prepare for something new using pretend play about what they might be nervous about.
- Let the child solve problems when playing with friends but be nearby to help out if needed.
- Provide opportunities for the child to be creative.
- When doing house/yard work or clean up time, allow the child to do a small part on their own. Let them empty the wastebasket or clean the crumbs off the table.



Social & Emotional Activities:

4 years

- Introduce a new feeling each day, such as boredom. Use pictures, gestures, and words. Encourage the child to use a variety of words to describe how they feel.
- Encourage activities that involve sharing, such as building with blocks, coloring with crayons, and playing dress up. Teach the child how to ask a friend for a turn. Give him/her a lot of time to play with other children.
- Take the child to the library for story hour. Children can learn about sitting in a group and listening to stories.
- Use stuffed animals to act out an argument. Talk first about how the different animals are feeling. Then, talk about different ways to come to an agreement.



Social & Emotional Activities:

5+ years

- Gently and consistently help your child manage feelings to prevent unsafe behavior.
- Give the child opportunities to play with other children and work out disagreements during play.
- Praise the child for desired behavior, such as asking for things nicely and calmly taking “no” for an answer.
- Encourage imagination through play and encourage working together. Build a store, house, puppet stage, or fire truck out of old boxes.
- Ask the child their birthday, telephone number, and first and last name. Practice what they would do if they were separated from their grown up.
- Talk about real dangers (fire, cars) and make-believe dangers (monsters under the bed) using hand-drawn pictures or pictures cut out from a magazine.
- Tell the child a favorite nursery rhyme that involves the idea of “right” and “wrong.” Discuss what kinds of choices the characters made in the story.
- Play games with the child such as Go Fish, Checkers, or CandyLand. Board games or card games that have three or more rules are great.
- Show the child examples of people from different cultures. Talk about things that are the same or different between them and others.

