

DID YOU KNOW AT 4 YEARS OLD I CAN...

Language Development

- Speak in complete sentences
- Ask many questions
- Enjoy simple songs and nonsense words
- Sometimes add "ed" to words (For example, "I goed to the door and putted the cat outdoors. He hurted me.")
- Tell you my name, address, and phone number
- Carry on elaborate conversations
- Understand the basic rules of grammar and use correct pronouns (he, she, I)
- Sing songs or tell short stories from memory
- Recognize some letters if I am taught
- Learn how to write my name if I am taught



Read aloud to me each day. Encourage me to help retell familiar stories, and sing songs and fingerplays with me. Show me that words are everywhere, such as the grocery store, restaurants, department stores, and on road signs. Give me old labels, cereal boxes, or other containers with print to help build my literacy skills. Give me paper, pencils, and crayons so I can draw and write about things I think and feel. Ask me to deliver short messages to family members.

Cognitive Development

- Place objects from largest to smallest
- Understand the concepts of tallest, biggest, same, more, on, in, under, and above
- Understand the order of daily routines such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime
- Continue an activity for 10–15 minutes
- Name six to eight colors and at least three shapes

- Follow two unrelated directions like, "Please put your milk on the table and put your coat on."
- Understand basic concepts related to number, size, weight, colors, textures, distance, position, and time
- Understand immediate passage of time (what happened yesterday), but not calendar time
- Understand and remember my own accomplishments

Play follow-the-leader with me. When I am doing simple chores, instruct me to sort objects like the silverware, colors of clothes, and other household objects. Talk to me about things being in, on, under, behind, and beside.

Physical Development

- Walk a straight line
- Hop on one foot
- Jump over objects 5–6 inches high
- Run, jump, hop, and skip around objects with ease
- Pedal a tricycle skillfully
- Stack 10 or more blocks
- Form shapes and objects out of clay or play dough
- Thread small beads on a string
- Catch, bounce, and throw a ball easily

Social/Emotional Development

- Enjoy playing with other children
- Take turns and share most of the time, but I may still be bossy



- Seek out adult approval
- Understand and obey simple rules
- Change the rule of a game as it goes
- Feel jealousy
- Persistently ask “why” questions
- Brag and boast
- Be fearful of the dark and monsters
- Understand danger and at times be quite fearful
- Have difficulty separating make-believe from reality
- “Name” call and tattle freely
- Lie sometimes to protect myself and friends (but I do not truly understand the concept of lying as my imagination often gets in the way)
- Shock others by using “forbidden” words
- Express anger verbally rather than physically, most of the time
- Still throw tantrums when frustrated
- Imitate parent of the same gender
- Tell jokes that may not make sense to adults
- Have a vivid imagination and playmates
- “Pretend” in more elaborate settings like fire station, ice cream shop, or jungle

Self-Help Skill Development

- Use a spoon, fork, and dinner knife
- Undress and dress myself without much help
- Use the toilet by myself

Teach me how to use the telephone correctly, especially in case of emergencies. Let me help you plan activities and make lists for groceries, shopping, and other errands. Teach me how to brush my teeth each day, and make sure it is part of my daily routine. Even though I will lose my baby teeth, this will establish a healthy, daily routine and keep my gums healthy. Teach me basic safety rules like looking both ways before I cross the street and holding a caregiver’s hand while crossing the street or



walking in parking lots. Also, teach me not to talk to strangers, unless they are community helpers (like a police officer or firefighter).

Sing and act this “This is the Way” fingerplay with me!

This is the way we wash our hands, (rub hands together)

Wash our hands, wash our hands.

This is the way we wash our hands,

So early in the morning.

This is the way we brush our teeth... (brush teeth with finger)

This is the way we brush our hair... (brush hair with hand)

Teach me “Down by the Bay.”

Down by the bay

Where the watermelons grow

Back to my home

I dare not go

For if I do

My mother will say

“Did you ever see a bear

Combing his hair

Down by the bay?”

Down by the bay

Where the watermelons grow

Back to my home

I dare not go

For if I do

My mother will say

“Did you ever see a bee

With a sunburned knee

Down by the bay?”

Down by the bay

Where the watermelons grow

Back to my home

I dare not go

For if I do

My mother will say
"Did you ever see a moose
Kissing a goose
Down by the bay?"

Down by the bay
Where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
My mother will say
"Did you ever see a whale
With a polka dot tail
Down by the bay?"

Here are some books that I may enjoy:

We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Helen Oxenbury
The Napping House by Audrey Wood
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
Corduroy by Don Freeman
I Like Myself by Karen Beaumont
Happy Birthday Moon! by Frank Asch
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Joffe Numeroff
Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear? by Bill Martin Jr.

There are toys you can make for me using things from around the house, like pool-noodle blocks.

Materials

pool noodles
scissors (for adult use only)

Instructions

1. Cut the pool noodles in small sections of different sizes.
2. Encourage me to build with the different blocks. Talk with me about the different colors and ask me about what I am building with the blocks.

Sleep helps me grow and develop. I should get 10–13 hours of sleep a day.

Remember that each child develops at his or her own rate, and this handout is meant only as a guide of what to expect of your child's development at this age.

For more information about parenting and developmental milestones, contact your county Extension office or visit extension.msstate.edu.

References

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