

**Ages 4 to 5 years old****The Facts**

Understanding the stages and behaviors in your child's development is an important step in parenting. Due to children maturing at their own rates (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) they need all the support, love and encouragement you can provide. As a parent you can help!

Developmental Stages & Behaviors**4 year olds**

- Enjoy singing simple songs and repeating nursery rhymes
- Draw with crayons
- Can draw pictures of humans with head, body, arms and legs
- Are understood by most people when they talk
- Play pretend, but may not know the difference between what's real and what's pretend
- Can catch a ball
- Lace shoes, but may not be able to tie
- Have good control of their bodies
- Ask many questions
- Make up nonsense words and tell nonsense jokes
- Have a longer attention span, but still are easily distracted
- Know seasons of the year
- Begin to understand time differences
- Have a strong need for friends
- Like to follow older kids
- Are interested in rules
- Understand danger/Are aware of good and bad
- Show temper

5 year olds

- May ride bike
- Learn to dance and show rhythm
- Can walk in a straight line
- Start to lose teeth
- Know about 2,200 words
- Know name, address, age and birthday
- Can sort by size, color and shape
- Talk plainly
- Need adult supervision
- Like to make friends and please adults
- Are tattletales
- Can share
- Love to role play
- Start to become competitive
- Can tell between true and false
- Are proud of possessions

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*Not every child develops the same, that's what makes us all unique. The previous listing contained general behaviors that most children obtain at a certain age, but not all.

Helping Your Child's Development

Helping your child learn right from the start makes a big difference. Here's what you can do:

- Open up your child's imagination by gathering old clothes, hats, jewelry and other various items around the house and putting them into a box. Playing dress up and pretend allows for your child to express his/herself.
- Allow your child quiet time to play alone and/or develop his/her creativity (for example: drawing).
- Set aside a time for quiet play or rest, rather than a nap.
- Assign your child a household chore. This will help him/her learn to follow directions.
- Read often to your child and play memory games.
- Don't forget to praise your child when it's deserved!

How To Handle Discipline Problems

Even good children have bad behaviors. The following is an example of how to handle a discipline problem that occurs within the ages of 4 to 5 years:

Scenario: Your child physically hurts a playmate or uses inappropriate language.

Goal: To remind your child of the rules and limits he/she must follow without embarrassing or confronting him/her with anger.

Don't use physical actions to discipline your child. In the end, you are teaching him/her that hitting is okay. Try not to lose your temper or criticize. If so, you will set a bad example and lower your child's self-esteem.

Do listen to your child's reason for getting angry. Reinforce to him/her the appropriate words to communicate his/her feelings.

Prevention begins by being a good role model for your child. The way you express your feelings can and will rub off on him/her. Compliment your child when you see that he/she is playing well. For example: "I really liked how you asked for your turn."

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