

CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS

While reading this information, please keep in mind that all children are unique. While the sequence of development is practically the same for all children (for example, most children learn to crawl before they learn to walk), each child's rate of development is different. There is a wide variation in normal development. Some children reach developmental milestones earlier than others. Some reach them later than others. Rarely does a delay in reaching a developmental milestone mean that there is a problem. In most cases, delays turn out to be normal. Remember that premature infants generally reach developmental milestones later than other infants of the same birth age. Parents with any questions or concerns about their children's development should contact their children's health care provider.

Highlights in Physical Development

Between the ages of four and five, most children develop the eye/hand coordination to color within lines, to use a fork and a spoon skillfully, and to button and unbutton clothes with ease. Some will also be able to throw a ball overhand and catch one that is thrown to them.

By four years of age, most children can run well and can change speeds with no problem. Their balance is constantly

improving, and children this age will be able to stand on one foot with ease. Most children are able to carry a cup of water without spilling between the ages of four and five years. Most children become skillful on a tricycle at this age, and they will probably be able to make u-turns and to pedal around corners.

Self-help skills continue to improve between the ages of four and five. By four years of age, most children will be able to wash their hands and faces without help. Some may be able to brush their teeth if they're supervised by an adult.

Highlights in Cognitive/Language Development

By four years of age, most children can carry out a sequence of two-step directions. Many children can tell different coins apart between four and five years of age.

During this period, most children talk constantly. Their speaking vocabularies will grow from about 1500 words at four years to about 2000 words by five years. Children this age ask "how" and "why" questions and word meanings constantly, and they will listen very closely to the answers. Many children are also able to recite rhymes and to sing from memory. As language skills improve, children begin to enjoy jokes, silly or funny books, and silly language.

By age four, most children can count to ten and name one or two primary colors. By five, most children will be able to count to thirty.

Highlights in Social/Emotional Development

Most children between four and five years of age are gradually becoming more and more confident and independent. They may even brag and refuse to follow directions.

Children grow outward emotionally between four and five years of age. As this happens, children will begin to prefer the companionship of other children to adults, and will choose certain children as friends. Children this age will begin to play in groups, and they will tend to separate according to sex. Generally at this age, boys play with boys, and girls play with girls.



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