



The Feisty Fours

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Disclaimer: Every child is unique and may not go through the same milestones at the same time. Generally, rate of development is predictable; however, children may not proceed at the same rate. This information is a guide for an average child. Also, take your child's personality into consideration. The information below goes into depth about the personalities and interests of your child's age rather than developmental milestones, which can worry a parent. This article is to become aware and understand if your child may be more quiet, defiant, playful, exuberant, introverted. Some of these characteristics could be typical for their age and stage. Of course, your child has his or her own personality and how he sees the world and your child's sense of significance and belonging. My goal is that you become to appreciate some of these characteristics and embrace some of these new traits within your children as they are and who they become.

Big Feelings

Four-year-olds are often exuberant, energetic, boastful, bossy, and ready for anything. This can be a relief from your demanding three-and-a-half-year-old and can be exciting to be more self-expressive. Three-year-olds are often more resistant because they see adults as all powerful; however, four-year-olds realize they can do bad things and the world is not going to end. They also love and are enthusiastic about new things, people, places, and activities without criticism and ask lots of "why" questions. New information and experiences are appreciated and should be taken advantage of. Because they love so much, their hate is usually just as strong. However, they do like boundaries and limits which they often cannot find within themselves. Your four-year-old can at times be reliable in helping with chores. At this age, their motor drive is very high, the four-year-old will run and run and maybe even hit, kick, or spit when angry. Being angry though falls behind, laughter and silliness.

Your four-year-old may like to boast about all the things he or she can do. They may also compare themselves to others.

Potty Talk

Potty talk is a fun past-time for 4-year-olds. They will often talk about privates, especially the buttocks and bowel movements like "poop" and "poo-poo." This is ironic as they often want to be private when they use the bathroom. During this age and stage with your child, you may want to be careful about what you say, profanity is not uncommon with this age if heard.

Getting Older

At four-and-a-half-years-old they tend to be more self-motivated and persistently demanding. They are starting to understand authority and enjoy hearing stories of when they were little or when their parents were little, especially the stories of when they were "bad." When 4-year-olds turn five, they are more calm, quiet, self-contained, adaptable, well-adjusted and more comfortable closer to home. The transition is slow while these children try to figure out if they are easily excitable or calmer, which can be confusing for both parents and children.

Language

Your four-year-old likely loves words and tries them out in different ways. They may know as many as 1,500 words or more and can express themselves freely. Your child may ask for permission during play. "Could I have those blocks?" "Let's play this game.," or "My turn."

Friends

Children this age tend to be able to cooperate, share, take turns, and work on projects with much excitement. Your child may tend to like and have "friends" at this age and friendship is strong at this age. They often say "ok?" to make sure the child has another person's approval. Sex play can be problem at this age when children are left unsupervised. No one child should be blamed, but genitals, body parts, and functions should be explained to children as well as private areas should be kept private.

Siblings

Four-year-olds can be aggressive with siblings, especially older ones who may threaten their feelings of superiority. However, they can be gentle with baby siblings while supervised at all times. Four is unpredictable. They can play nicely and then can be rambunctious. They usually love and look up to their older brother or sister and they love being big!

Don't Push Your Preschooler

Let your child enjoy being read to and learning to read without pushing it too much. The four-year-old loves to learn and loves curiosity. Allow him or her to direct their own interests in letters and alphabet through fun games. Don't tell your child what to think, but allow your child to think on his or her own with your guidance. Provide, books, games, toys, experiences, and family and friends along with relaxation.

How to help your child

1. **Four-year-old love adventures and to explore!** Set up adventures for them. In the backyard or even around the block. Plan an excursion with him in mind.
 - a. Make treasure maps to find treasure on walks
 - b. Play hunting games and "I" spy
 - c. Keep a notebook and draw flowers, birds and cards that you might see
 - d. Play rhyming games
 - e. Engage in imaginary play
2. **Rude Talk.** When there is profanity, boasting or super silly talk, you may want to ignore and enjoy some more of the silly talk rather than the profanity. When your child makes rude remarks, you may say back "You are a "chewy chiwawa" or other silly talk.
3. **Setting Limits.** It is important to keep your four-year-old safe. Contain your child within acceptable physical limits as doors and gates may be open with an exploratory 4-year-old. Four-year-olds need clear expectations and reasonable limits. They often need to be given choices.
4. **Compliments.** Compliments work wonders at this age. They have a large appetite for compliments and will even compliment themselves if you don't.
5. **Humor.** Don't forget to enjoy this extremely amusing, lively and enthusiastic age while it lasts even if some of the behaviors are less than desirable.
6. **Do Not Worry.** Do not worry if your 4-year-old pushes limits. This extra energy and liveliness is necessary to gain balance between being an uncertain three-year-old and a quiet and adaptable 5-year-old. Provide materials and opportunities for him or her to be successful

7. **Attention.** When motor needs are achieved you may find the four-year-old to have an increased attention span and be able to sit for longer periods of time in interesting tasks.
8. **Dress up.** Children this age tend to enjoy dressing up and engaging in imaginary and dramatic play. The play can become more elaborate due to language growth and imagination.
9. **Don't argue.** Don't argue with a four-year-old. They will argue back and if they don't they will ask you "why" over and over again.