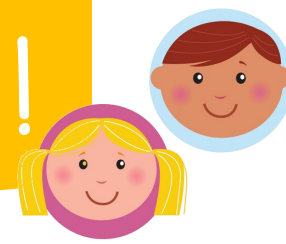




What a JOY to be FOUR!



A child's fourth birthday brings many new experiences and abilities. As children turn four, families begin to see increasing use of language, greater strength in muscles and body coordination, and advances in independence and self-control. It's always important to remember that every child grows at their own pace, so what children know and are able to do will vary. This quick-guide has been designed to support families in their understanding of their four-year-old and to enable use of community and family resources during the important year before a child goes to kindergarten! **What a JOY to be FOUR!**

	As children turn 4, they begin to:	Families support children when they:	Later in the 4-year-old year, children:
Self-Control and Interactions with Others	<p>Show confidence in stating what they need. New 4-year-olds can also begin to find appropriate ways to meet their own needs without adult support. They also can focus on tasks a little longer, wash hands and brush teeth on their own, take care of belongings, and show interest in helping adults.</p> <p>Have the confidence to separate from familiar adults and gradually show trust in other responsible adults at school or church or elsewhere in the community.</p> <p>Understand how others feel, and begin to realize their own feelings may be different from someone else. They will share more easily and begin to ask others to join in play.</p>	<p>Give children responsibilities at home at which children can be successful and tell children you are proud when tasks are completed well (which doesn't mean perfectly yet).</p> <p>Encourage children to talk with other adults they know in safe places in the community. Visiting the library and allowing your child to ask for a book helps build trust in adults outside the home.</p> <p>Encourage play with other children in safe settings. Give children words to join in play of others (say, "Can I play?") and support cooperative play with suggestions ("I see a puzzle being made at that table. Why don't you ask if you could help?")</p>	<p>Show increased responsibility in taking care of themselves as they complete tasks with fewer reminders and show positive feelings about themselves.</p> <p>Use adults as resources by asking for help when needed or talking about everyday events.</p> <p>Develop sustained friendships with other children, and join play with others easily and cooperatively.</p>
Language & Literacy (Reading & Writing)	<p>Talk more and more! Usually, most other adults understand new four-year olds when they talk.</p> <p>Follow two simple directions.</p> <p>Show joy in singing familiar songs, playing with silly rhymes, and focusing on "reading" books, which may simply be holding the book (sometimes upside down), turning the pages (not always one at a time), and talking about the pictures.</p> <p>Hold a crayon or pencil to scribble in lines of pretend print.</p>	<p>Listen and ask follow-up questions, even when the talking seems to never stop! This is a good thing. (Really!)</p> <p>Ask your child to complete tasks, labeling carefully what you need. "Pick up your toys and go to the bathroom." "Put the book away and put on your shoes."</p> <p>Sing along, make up silly rhymes, and read, read, read. Don't worry about drilling letter names. It's more important to enjoy spoken words and stories now. These experiences are important pennies in the brain bank.</p> <p>Provide plenty of paper and writing tools. Write your child's name for them so they can see it and accept attempts at writing it even if not quite right yet.</p>	<p>Tell stories about experiences using more and more details.</p> <p>Begin to follow more detailed directions, but are still limited in how many at one time, so don't give too many directions at one time yet.</p> <p>May notice that some spoken words begin with the same sound (often the sounds in their names) and begin to hold a book with the cover first, turn pages more carefully, and retell a story that has been read often.</p> <p>May begin to write their name, but letters may not be exact or in the correct order in a line just yet.</p>

As children turn 4, they begin to:

Show curiosity about the world around them, discovering what amazes them and sharing these interests with others by asking LOTS of questions.

Talk about things they do well and try hard in new tasks.

See similarities in things in their world but may not yet be able to name how things are similar.

Count and understand the idea of “how many” even though they may not be ready to count accurately yet.

Families support children when they:

Limit screen time so there is ample opportunity to explore and experience the world safely. Children need to have hands-on experience with the world. Take them to playgrounds, libraries, museums, and other community events and just play together!

Offer opportunities that stretch what your child can do but aren’t overly difficult. Praise and encourage, even when actions aren’t quite exact yet. Ask “What can we do to solve this?” when appropriate.

Listen and affirm your child’s labels, but also stretch your child a little too. “You did make a pile of trucks. I see that some are bigger. Make another pile of just the big trucks.” “All those boxes do have red on them. What else is on every box? What letters do you see?”

Provide opportunities to count every day. Count socks from the dryer, dishes as they are washed, cars passed while driving. Children need experiences with numbers. Talk about comparisons like more and less.

Later in the 4-year-old year, children:

Ask even more questions about their growing interests and begin to make connections between past and new experiences.

Show greater independence in trying new things and can suggest ways to solve a problem.

Can label characteristics of objects in their world (“Look! I made a pile of trucks!” “All those boxes have red on them.”)

May be able to count to 10 and accurately count a small group of objects five and fewer, touching each object as a new number is said.

Show increased skill in walking, running, and jumping with greater balance and control.

Show increasing skill using fingers and hands., even with smaller objects.

Calm themselves, rest with some initial adult support, and understand what can hurt them.

Allow outside time to use large muscles in walking, running, jumping, hopping. Practice is essential!

Provide small items to pick up and use like writing tools, child-safe scissors, puzzles, and games.

Establish consistent bedtime routines and help these times be calming. Talk about safety rules you have so children understand why those rules keep them safe.

May begin to hop and walk and run while changing directions quickly.

May begin to show more control with writing tools, scissors, eating utensils, but not perfectly yet.

Rest more easily, follow safety rules more independently.



Children’s Resource Center is Catawba County’s accredited child care resource & referral agency. All resource & referral services are FREE! We are trained to help you connect with the resources you are looking for ... child care, summer camps, parenting support, and more!

828-695-6565 (828-695-6515 en español)

Visit our offices at 738 4th Street SW in Hickory, NC

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am - 5pm - Website: www.childrensresourcecenter.org



KidsREADYy Catawba is an initiative of the **Catawba County Partnership for Children**
P.O. Box 3123, Hickory, NC 28603 828-695-6505 • <https://catawbakids.com> • 828-695-6505

