



School Readiness Program
Provided by the WIC Program and First 5 LA

One Year to Kindergarten!

Help me get ready for Kindergarten.

This is a great time to go to preschool.

I use language in many new ways, and you may not like some of them!

4 year-olds like to tell stories, and not all of the stories are true.

I sometimes have nightmares and I am scared of monsters.

This is normal for 4 year-olds.

I may still wet my bed.

Please be patient with me.

Read to me every day.

Take me to the library. Limit TV and screen time to no more than one hour each day.



QUESTION: One year to Kindergarten! What do I need to do to get my child ready?

ANSWER: First, find out what school your child will be going to for Kindergarten. Then, go to the school and ask if they have a **pre-kindergarten program**. Pre-kindergarten programs help your child learn to sit quietly when listening to a story, learn to take turns and to pay attention. Children also learn letters, numbers, shapes, and colors. Children practice playing with other children. All of these skills will help your child to feel more comfortable in Kindergarten.



Try this!

LETTER HUNT

Go hunting with your child for the letters A, B and C, or the letters in your child's name. Say, "We're going on a B hunt. Find a B! Oh, look! There's a bank! Can you find the B on the sign? Oh look! I see a red B. Can you find it?"

QUESTION: What is my child learning about letters and numbers? How can I help?

ANSWER: Most 4 year-olds are not ready to read, but they love books, letters and numbers. Help your child make the sounds and write each letter of their name. The best thing you can do for your child is to help make books fun and exciting. Read to your child for at least 15 minutes each day.

Try this!

SAME AND DIFFERENT

Understanding same and different will help your child in kindergarten. Talk about objects in your house. How are they the same? How are they different? For example, "Look! Your fork and spoon are the same because you eat with them and they both have handles. How are they different? They are different because your spoon is round on the end and your fork has points."



QUESTION: What else can I teach my child to prepare him or her for school?

ANSWER: You can teach your child more about time. 4 year-olds understand that the day is divided into morning, afternoon and night. Teach your child the seasons of the year (winter, spring, summer and fall) and the days of the week. Help your child understand more opposites like: big and little, up and down, more and less, in front of and behind, top and bottom. There are many wonderful books about opposites.

QUESTION: What is my 4 year-old's language like?

ANSWER: Your child speaks in sentences and probably talks about what will happen in the future, what has happened in the past, and what is happening now. Other people probably understand your child almost as well as you do. F, V, S, Z, Sh, L, Th, and R are the hardest sounds. 4 year-olds like to make up words and say them just for fun. **Dr. Seuss** is a favorite author because he is so silly!



Try this!

4 year-olds can tell stories. After reading a story together, ask your child to tell the story back to you. Turn the pages and look at the pictures as you ask, "What happened first? Then what happened next? How are the characters in the story feeling? Where do they live? What's their favorite fruit? What kinds of games do they like to play?"

QUESTION: My child lied to me! What can I do?

ANSWER: Your child is learning to tell stories. Sometimes they are true stories and sometimes they are not true. First, try to understand why your 4 year-old lied. Was your child afraid of getting in trouble? Sometimes 4 year-olds lie to protect themselves from being punished. If you punish your child when he admits having done something wrong, he will learn to lie. Instead, try telling your child that you are proud when they tell the truth. Then you can work together to fix whatever your child did wrong.

Sometimes 4 year-olds say what they wish to be true instead of what is really true. Help your child understand that the more he tells the truth, the more people will believe what he is saying.

Sometimes 4 year-olds lie because they have seen the adults around them lie. Sometimes adults will lie to protect someone's feelings. Your 4 year-old will not understand this yet. Pay attention to what you say and teach your child to tell the truth by telling the truth yourself.

Try this!

BUILD-A-STORY

You and your child can build a story together. Start with, "Once upon a time," then add the first person or animal to the story. You can start with "there was a little girl" or "there was a little boy" or there was a fire breathing dragon."

Ask your child to decide what happens to that person or animal. Then you add a part to the story, then your child adds a part to the story. Don't worry if it gets pretty silly. 4 year-olds may name the little boy Prince Eyeball or King Tunafish! They love that silliness.

QUESTION: My child laughs and giggles about anything to do with the toilet and likes to use "toilet talk!" What can I do?

ANSWER: Toilet talk is very popular with 4 year-olds. Sometimes, children will stop using the words if you ignore them. If this does not work, tell your child calmly that you do not like hearing those words. Try not to get upset. Part of what makes toilet talk fun for children is seeing adults' reactions.



Try this!

GET RID OF THE MONSTERS!

Many 4 year-olds are afraid that there are monsters under their beds or in their closets. Make an anti-monster spray. Put water into a clean spray bottle. Give your child a piece of paper and some crayons and have her color a monster. Then ask her which color will make the monster go away. Have your child color over the monster with that color. Wrap the paper around the spray bottle like a label. At bedtime, say, "it's time to spray the monsters away!" Let your child spray the monsters or show you where to spray. Then say, "They are all gone. Time to go to sleep."

QUESTION: My child has nightmares. What can I do to help?

ANSWER: Many 4 year-olds have nightmares. They are not sure when a dream is real and when it's not. Sometimes they have nightmares after a scary movie, T.V. show or even a scary story. This is another reason to limit T.V. If your child has a nightmare, hold them, talk about the dream, and help them to calm down and go back to sleep.

QUESTION: How will I know if my 4 year-old needs extra help?

Answer: Talk to your doctor as soon as possible if your child does any of these things:

- Gets scared very easily
- Fights often
- Has a very hard time being separated from you
- Is not interested in other children
- Does not respond to other people
- Does not pretend
- Seems unhappy a lot
- Does not show a lot of different feelings



For children ages 2-5 years, it is recommended to limit screen time to no more than 1 hour per day of educational media. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them.

Parents who keep the TV on or focus on their phones miss opportunities to interact with their children and help them learn.

HINT: Put down your phone.

Safety Corner



- Never text while driving.
- Many 4 year-olds have grown out of their toddler car seat. Booster seats are very important for your child's safety when riding in a car, and are required for young children.
- Always carefully read the height and weight limits printed on the car seat and booster seat and make sure it is the right size for your child.
- Children this age should always ride in a booster seat in the back seat of the car. The front seat is not safe for children.



First 5 LA

First 5 LA is a child advocacy and grant making organization created by California voters to invest Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues in programs for improving the lives of children from prenatal through age 5 in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA champions health, education and safety causes concerning young children and families. For more information, please visit www.first5la.org.



The WIC Program

WIC provides nutrition and health education services, breastfeeding support, referrals to community agencies and healthy food to eligible women, infants and children under age five. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For more information, please visit www.wicworks.ca.gov.