

# Your child at 4 to 5 years



All children develop at their own pace. This sheet is a guide to help you know what you might expect from your child at 4 to 5 years old. If you have concerns about your child's development, please talk with your child's doctor.

What should my child be learning?	What can I do to help?
<p><b>Gross motor skills-</b> Big body movements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk forward and backward on a line with hands on hips, toes touching heels.</li> <li>• Balance on tip toes with arms to sky.</li> <li>• Walk on tip toes hands on hips.</li> <li>• Jumps over small objects with feet together.</li> <li>• Jump forward with feet together without falling.</li> <li>• Stand on 1 foot, count to 10.</li> <li>• Hop forward on 1 foot and then on the other foot.</li> <li>• Walk up and down a flight of stairs with 1 foot on each step without rail or help.</li> <li>• Somersault forward.</li> <li>• Skip (switching from one foot to the other) and gallop (one foot leads).</li> <li>• Bounce and catch a tennis ball and a playground ball.</li> <li>• Throw a tennis ball and hit a target.</li> <li>• Kick a ball through the air.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Gross motor skills-</b> Help your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swing, climb, balance and run on different playground equipment.</li> <li>• Practice running, skipping, galloping, hopping (on 2 feet and 1 foot), chasing and stopping on command.</li> <li>• Jump in the leaves, make a snow angel or snowman, or splash in the sprinkler.</li> <li>• Play catch, pitch and throw with different size balls. Begin to practice dribbling a ball.</li> <li>• Play kickball.</li> <li>• Count taps while keeping a balloon or beach ball up in the air.</li> <li>• Throw a tennis ball or a bean bag at a target. Tape an 'X' on a fence or a tree for a target, throw into a hoop or bucket, or draw a chalk circle on the ground.</li> <li>• Have fun dancing and singing. Move to the beat. Use ribbons or scarves to make the dance more fun.</li> <li>• Act out animals. Crawl on hands and knees like a turtle, slide on the floor like a snake, hop like a bunny.</li> <li>• Make an obstacle course. Practice crawling, jumping, and walking over, under and through things.</li> <li>• Ride a balance bike, a bike with training wheels and without training wheels. Always wear a helmet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fine motor skills-</b> Play and Self Help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick out their own clothes and get dressed.</li> <li>• Zip and unzip coats and pants without help.</li> <li>• Put shoes on the correct feet without help.</li> <li>• Use a butter knife without help.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fine motor skills-</b> Help your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut with child scissors. Draw lines that make simple paths and shapes. Have your child cut along the lines.</li> <li>• Cut and glue shapes, noodles and pictures onto paper to make pictures. Draw and color with crayons and markers.</li> <li>• Make simple bracelets by putting beads on a string.</li> </ul>

<b>What should my child be learning?</b>	<b>What can I do to help?</b>
<p>Fine motor skills, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush teeth, comb hair, and wash hands without help.</li> <li>• Begin to draw letters and print their own name.</li> <li>• Cut out a circle and a square following a line with child scissors.</li> <li>• Build shapes with blocks like a pyramid or steps.</li> <li>• Hold a pencil or marker like a grownup.</li> <li>• Color in the lines.</li> <li>• Color for longer periods of time, goal of 3-5 minutes at a time.</li> </ul>	<p>Fine motor skills, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trace and draw shapes on different surfaces: chalkboards, sidewalks, mirrors, sandpaper, or paper hanging on the wall. Draw simple mazes they can complete, always moving from the left side of the paper to the right side.</li> <li>• Play with toys that need to be put together and taken apart. Build with toys like K'nex®, Lego®, and Cootie.</li> <li>• Practice pouring and measuring with sand and water. Let your child help measure while cooking.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Language and social skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand order words (first, next, last).</li> <li>• Understand time words (yesterday, today, tomorrow).</li> <li>• Understand opposites (up and down, big and little).</li> <li>• Follow longer directions (put on your pajamas, brush your teeth, and pick out a book).</li> <li>• Say 'r' 'l' 'z' 's' 'ch' sounds.</li> <li>• Begin to count to 10, name most letters of the alphabet, and know shapes.</li> <li>• Use action words in sentences like jump, play, get, got.</li> <li>• Tell short stories.</li> <li>• Ask and answer questions.</li> <li>• Other people can usually understand your child's speech.</li> <li>• Child can identify and name most familiar items in home.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Language and social skills-</b> Help your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play make believe, dress up, and play with dolls, dinosaurs and action figures. Prompt your child to use their imagination. Use clothes that encourage buttoning and zipping.</li> <li>• Play board games like Chutes and Ladders, Candyland, Go Fish, Memory, and Zingo®.</li> <li>• Play 'I spy' and guessing games like "I spy with my little eye something green.....the grass!"</li> <li>• Sort pictures and objects by color (blue or red), shape (circle or square), size (large or small), and groups (fruit or vegetable).</li> <li>• Notice their feelings like sad, happy, angry, frustrated, mad, and excited. This helps prevent temper tantrums.</li> <li>• Ask your child to name animals, food items, family members, and other objects in the house (like table, chair, living room, bathroom, toothbrush, glass, shoes, animals.)</li> <li>• Read books 10 minutes each day. Ask questions about the story. Have your child act out or tell you about the story.</li> <li>• Have your child play with toys or books for 8 to 10 minutes on their own.</li> </ul>

### What can I do to help my child develop?

- Limit your child's electronics and screen time (TV, phone, computer, and tablet). Limit electronics and screen time to a total of 60 minutes or 1 hour per day. This includes tv, phone, and computer. Give screen breaks every 10-15 minutes. See above for ideas under 'How can I help my child'.
- Do some movement and play together for at least 10 minutes every day.
- Let them pick what to play. It will show that you care about your child and want to spend time with them.
- Give your child structure and consistency to help them get ready to start school.
- Give your child praise and be patient.

### Toys to have for your child:

- Different sized balls for catch, baseball, soccer, volley ball.
- A bike and helmet. A balance bike or training wheels may be needed.
- Dress up clothes.
- Dolls or action figures for pretend play.
- Markers and coloring books or paper, safety scissors.
- Chalk for coloring on sidewalk or making lines to practice balance.
- Legos.
- Lacing cards.
- Board and card games like Uno, Jenga®, and Old Maid.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**