

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Child Development: Age 4

Physical Development

Students at this age tend to:

- ✦ Focus on faraway objects
- ✦ Have collisions and spills frequently
- ✦ Have immature fine motor skills
- ✦ Need lots of physical activity that includes running, jumping, climbing, and dancing
- ✦ Sit for short periods of time only



Language and Literacy Development

- ✦ Students at this age are **very talkative**. They enjoy learning new vocabulary words and describing different concepts by giving long explanations.
- ✦ Children at this age **love to be read to**—teachers, parents, and guardians should read to their children frequently.

Self Concept, Identity, and Motivation:

Pre-Kindergarten (PK) students begin to describe themselves in concrete terms. For example, you may hear a pre-kindergartner say, “I am a girl,” or “I have brown hair.” They call their classmates by their names, and they use their names to identify ownership. For example, you may hear in a PK classroom, “This is John’s book” or “This is my toy.”





Peer Relations

In Pre-Kindergarten classrooms, you can expect students to be very friendly, talkative, and have “bubbly” attitudes. They are happy to see you!

Students at this age love to be with their friends and you will observe students working near a friend. However, students can struggle with working with others when they are required to share.

Although they like to work with others, Pre-Kindergarten students like to be independent in completing a variety of tasks.



Moral Development

As these young students learn and grow mentally, physically, and emotionally in Pre-Kindergarten classrooms, they begin to make decisions based on their own interests, but often need adult advice on what to do next. They need adult help when trying to find words that express their needs. You may hear teachers and teacher assistants use phrases such as, “Tell her what you want,” or “Ask if he is finished.”

Pre-Kindergarten students love to imitate others and learn best through modeling. They look to adults for help in learning what behavior is appropriate and expected in a social setting.

At this age, students begin to become very empathetic towards their classmates as they identify with the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of their classmates and teachers.



Cognitive Development

As Pre-Kindergarten students develop mentally, you will observe some of the following behavior:

- Moving quickly from one thing to the next due to a short attention span
- Playing and exploring different roles—these students love drama and playing “dress up”
- Using music, rhythm, and repeating patterns to learn new things
- Practicing counting through real-world application
- Making connections with time—they are learning the differences between now and later

