



Developmental Characteristics For FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

A child who is 48 to 60 months of age typically demonstrates a large increase in vocabulary and physical abilities. The following abilities will emerge as the child approaches age five.

COGNITIVE

Personal Curiosity/Autonomy

1. Shows an increasing curiosity and sense of adventure
2. Asks an increasing number of questions
3. Takes initiative in learning
4. Shows an interest in the printed word
5. Pays attention and concentrates on a task

Senses

1. Demonstrates accurate sense of touch (“thick” or “thin”) and smell
2. Describes foods by taste (sweet, sour and salty)
3. Reproduces a simple pattern of different items from memory
4. Ranks sounds (loud, louder, loudest; soft, softer, softest)
5. Observes objects and pictures closely

Memory

1. Recalls information previously taught

Logical Thinking

1. Interprets the main idea of a story
2. Orders pictures by times sequence to tell a story



Relationships

1. Makes a simple comparison of two objects in terms of difference (“How are a cat and dog different?”) and sameness (“How are a cat and dog alike?”)
2. Completes a statement of parallel relationships

Predicting

1. Predicts what will happen next in a story or situation
2. Predicts realistic outcomes of events (“What will happen if we go on a picnic?”)

Creativity

1. Responds well to non-directive questions (“How many ways can you think of to move across the room?”)
2. Proposes alternative ways of doing art experiences, movement activities, and story endings
3. Represents thoughts in pictures
4. Draws a human figure with major body parts
5. Participates verbally or non-verbally in imaginative play or puppetry (socio-dramatic play)
6. Acts out a familiar story or nursery rhyme as the teacher recites

LANGUAGE

Sentence Structure

1. Speaks in six, eight, ten, or more words
2. Makes relevant verbal contributions in small group discussion
3. Shows understanding of past, present, and future tenses by using proper verb form
4. Verbalizes songs and finger plays
5. Dictates own experience stories
6. Describes a sample object using color, size, shape, composition, and use
7. Describes a picture with three statements

Listening

1. Listens to directions for games and activities
2. Listens to stories of at least ten minutes in length
3. Retells five-sentence short story in sequence using own words
4. Understands prepositions

Labeling

1. Labels common everyday items such as clothing, animals, and furniture
2. Orally labels pictures and drawings (“That’s a dog.”)

Letter/Word Recognition

1. Verbally identifies letters in first name (and subsequently in last name)
2. Identifies many letters of the alphabet
3. Distinguishes words that begin with the same sound (book/boy)
4. Names two words that rhyme in a group of three (tie, road, pie)
5. Supplies a rhyming word to rhyme with a word given by the teacher
6. Associates a letter with its sound in spoken words

Self

1. Touches, names, and tells function of parts of the body (head, eyes, hands, arms, feet, legs, nose, ears, neck, trunk, ankle, knee, shoulder, wrist, elbow, and heel)
2. Verbalizes full name, address, age, birthday, and telephone number
3. Identifies expressions of feelings
4. Feels good about self and abilities

Social Studies

Interpersonal

1. Shows empathy toward other children
2. Works cooperatively with adults
3. Works and plays cooperatively with other children

Concepts

1. Begins to understand that problems can be solved by talking and not fighting
2. Understands that we wear appropriate clothing to protect us from extremes of weather
3. Understands that families share responsibilities of work and recreation
4. Begins to understand the importance of keeping the school surroundings clean and free from litter

MATH

Counting

1. Counts from 1 to _____
2. Understands ordinal positions first through fifth
3. Recognizes and orders the cardinal numerals in sequence
4. Solves simple verbal problems using numerals (“If you have two pieces of candy and I give you one more, how many will you have?”)

Classifying

1. Classifies objects by color, size, shape, and texture

Size Differences

1. Orders and compares size differences (big, bigger, biggest; small, smaller, smallest; short, shorter, shortest; long, longer, longest)

Shapes

1. Points to and names: triangle, square, rectangle, and diamond

Quantitative Concepts

1. Distinguishes between concepts of “some,” “most,” and “all”
2. Compares objects as to weight (“Which is heavier?” “Which is lighter?”)
3. Understands concepts of “full,” “half full,” and empty”
4. Understands fractions ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, whole)

Sets

1. Identifies a set as a collection of objects having a common property
2. Establishes a one-to-one correspondence through matching members of equivalent sets (matching six cowboys to six cowboy hats)
3. Distinguishes between equivalent and non-equivalent sets through matching
4. Understands that each number is one more than the preceding number (“What is one more than two?”)
5. Identifies an empty set as one having no members

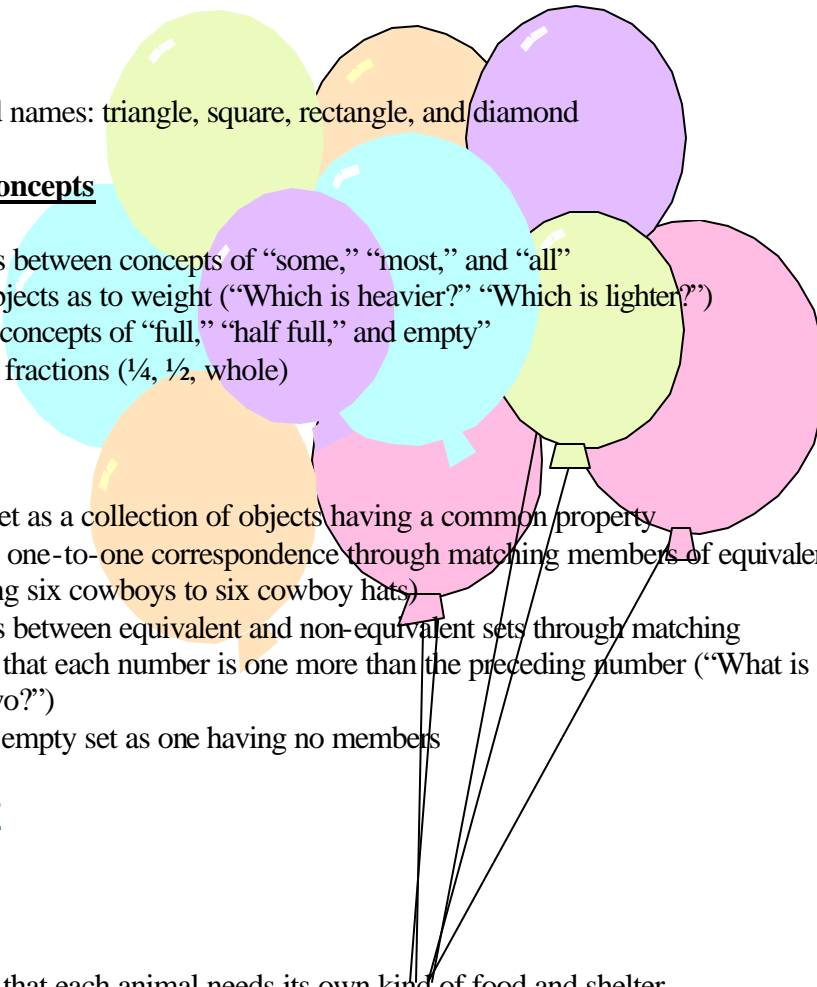
SCIENCE

Concepts

1. Understands that each animal needs its own kind of food and shelter
2. Understands that plants need water, light, warmth, and air to live
3. Understands that many foods we eat come from seeds and plants
4. Understands that some things float in water and some things sink in water
5. Understands the balance of nature—that is, animals need to eat plants, vegetables, and insects in order to live
6. Understands that plant life, and other aspects of the environment must be respected

Colors

1. Points to and names colors



GROSS MOTOR

Arm-Eye Coordination

1. Catches a ball away from body with hands only (large ball/small ball)
2. Throws a ball or beanbag with direction
3. Throws a ball into the air and catches it by self
4. Bounces and catches a ball

Body Coordination

1. Walks forward/backward on an line ten feet long without stepping off
2. Walks a line heel-to-toe eight feet long without stepping off
3. Balances on foot for five seconds
4. Stops movement activity upon teacher's direction
5. Moves body creatively upon teacher's direction
6. Claps with music

Rhythm

1. Claps and marches in time with music
2. Responds to rhythms with appropriate body movements

General Movement

1. Produces the following motions: walks backwards, runs smoothly, marches, skips, gallops, hops four times on each foot, walks heel-to-toe, and walks and runs on tiptoe

FINE MOTOR

Finger Strength and Dexterity

1. Folds and creases paper two times
2. Folds paper into halves, quarters, and diagonals

Eye-Hand Coordination

1. Strings ten small beads
2. Follows a sequence of holes when lacing
3. Works a puzzle of ten or more pieces
4. Uses crayon or pencil with control within a defined area
5. Connects a dotted outline to make a shape
6. Follows a series of dot-to-dot numerals, 1-10, to form an object
7. Reproduces shapes (circle, square, triangle, and rectangle)
8. Controls brush and paint
9. Uses scissors with control to cut along a straight line and a curved line

