

Welcome to Our Program!



Our Commitment to Your Family

Head Start, and other programs that serve young children offer your child a safe place to learn. We know you are your child's first teacher and want to work with you to care for him. As your partner in your child's education and care, we are dedicated to:

- Valuing your culture, beliefs, and traditions in raising your children.
- Listening to any concerns you have as your child gets ready for kindergarten.
- Supporting and encouraging you throughout your child's time in our program.
- Sharing your child's progress in our program through daily reports.
- Helping you find community resources, such as those for food, housing and medical care.
- Contacting you in case of an emergency. You can help us by keeping your child's emergency contact phone numbers updated.

Our Commitment to Your Child

We care for your 4-year-old child by meeting their physical needs, but also following health and safety guidelines, supporting her in meeting milestones, and creating strong bonds between your child and her caregivers. We encourage you to do these things at home, too. We are always available to answer any questions you may have.

Physical Development

Your 4-year-old now has the muscle strength to perform challenging activities, such as running, climbing, swinging, sliding, skipping, and jumping. We help your child build confidence in his abilities in many ways.

- We include lots of activities throughout the day that help him grow and develop.
- We include time for free play on the playground, where your child can run, ride tricycles, play with balls, and climb playground equipment. We also play games inside.



AT HOME TIP!

Try physical activities as a family! Children who see their parents enjoying physical activity are more likely to be active themselves.

Social and Emotional Development

Now that your child is 4 years old, she is working on managing her emotions and developing skills such as showing sympathy and problem solving. She is beginning to learn what it means to be a friend. She most likely will have times when she has fun, as well as times when she has arguments and hurt feelings. Yet at 4, she is able to play together with other children. While in our program, your child will have many opportunities to develop her social-emotional skills.

- We help your child to handle anger and frustration by using words to talk about her feelings.
- We allow children to help with meal setting, transitions, and other simple tasks.
- When your child asks, “Why...?” we explain in short and simple ways.
- We offer examples for how to apologize by doing so ourselves. We also help her apologize if she hurts someone’s feelings.
- We always act in a way that shows your child how she should treat others. We offer lots of reminders by praising kind behavior throughout the day.

- If we are worried about your child’s behavior, we talk with you to find out what works at home. If we talk with you and agree that we need more help, we can ask an expert in social and emotional development. Remember that each child is unique and develops at her own rate. If you have concerns, talk to us or your child’s health care professional.



AT HOME TIP!

Your children learn from you – listen to your child. Always treat him with respect.



Language and Literacy

Many people believe that children learn to read and write in kindergarten or first grade. However, basics for literacy start well before children enter school. Reading and writing skills develop as your child learns to sing a song from memory, shares her needs clearly, and shows interest in words. In our program, your child will have many examples of written and spoken language to help them learn.

- We read books every day. We ask questions to find out what your child understands about stories we read to her. We ask your child “what,” “why,” and “who” questions.
- We point out letters, play with sounds, and make rhymes.
- We talk to your child about her family, her day, and things she likes to do.



AT HOME TIP!

Take your child to the public library. She can get her own library card. She also may enjoy story time and other children's activities. Follow her lead and find books that interest her.

Learning through Play

Pretend play, dress-up, and telling stories are an important part of learning for 4-year-olds.

Your child's pretend play is more complex and imaginative now, and he can pretend play for longer periods of time. Throughout the day, he will be provided many opportunities to learn and explore.

- We create props and schedule time to help your child extend learning through pretend play.
- We provide activities, toys, and games to encourage him to try new things.

Creative Arts

Your child has more control over her hand and finger movements. Arts and crafts are becoming more exciting for her now. Her favorite activities may include writing, drawing, painting, playing card games, and building blocks. She will explore music, noticing changes in pitch, tempo, loudness, and song duration. In our program, your child will have many ways to express her creativity!

- We play music so she can dance and move.
- We sing lots of songs.
- We encourage her to make art about things she knows, like her family, house, or pets. She may include letters in her art.
- We provide activities that involve drawing and other artwork, writing, and doing puzzles.

Staying Healthy and Safe

- We provide a clean and safe environment for your child. We follow a consistent daily routine to help him grow and develop in healthy ways:
- We practice good handwashing throughout the day, especially around mealtimes and toileting.
- We include rest and quiet times during the day.
- We support you in working with your child's health care professional to make sure your child is up to date on all his immunizations (shots).
- We provide healthy meals and snacks and offer milk and water to drink.



Questions to ask your health care professional at your child's 4 year check-up:

- How can I help my child get ready for school?
- How can I help my child learn to manage feelings of anger and frustration?
- What are appropriate food portion sizes for my child?
- How can I keep my child safe at home and outside?
- When can my child switch from a car seat to a car booster seat?

Adapted from *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition, Copyright 2017. Published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.