

Physical Development: Four to Five years

After his three year-old self spent a good portion of the last year developing gross and fine motor skills, it's no wonder that your four year-old has great confidence in his physical abilities. But this confidence is not always matched by ability so he still needs close supervision when he plays.

Developmental milestone include:

- Walking confidently, one foot on each step, up and down stairs
- Using a bat and ball with confidence - he can now throw, catch and bounce a ball
- Climbing trees and ladders with ease
- Running at speed
- Jumping with two feet over objects
- Walking for a short distance along a line before falling off
- Pedalling well, and may even be learning to ride a two-wheeler with training wheels
- Hopping - although this is usually very wobbly
- Threading beads
- Learning how to swing himself on a swing - even though he'd still like you to believe that he needs you to push!
- Confidently self-dressing
- Being in charge of his own toileting - although he may still wet the bed at night.

What can I do to encourage his physical development?

- Play plenty of games with him that involve sorting and matching objects - try sorting beads into different colours or shapes before he begins threading, play Go Fish or Snap card games with him.
Give him lots of time outside playing. Use a large ball and have a game of 'cricket' with him.
- Do your teaching through playing with him - avoid the expectations of 'lessons'.
- Get down and dirty with him and do some craft. Try making playdough from scratch and then start modelling.

Signs there could be a developmental delay include:

- He is much less physically able than his peers.
- He screws up his eyes to look at some things or has trouble seeing some things, or the pupils in his eyes aren't always looking in the same direction.

REMEMBER!

All children are different and develop at different rates, so don't be overly concerned if your pre-schooler is acquiring new skills at a different rate to those around him. But if you are worried about his development, or it seems to have stalled or be going backwards, talk to a health professional.