

## Typical 4 Year Olds

Area of Development	Growth Patterns	Area of Development	In the Classroom
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to focus visually on faraway objects</li> <li>• Often clumsy</li> <li>• Fine motor skills not well developed                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hold pencil in whole fist</li> <li>○ Use arm, hand, fingers as single unit</li> <li>○ May hold towards one end</li> <li>○ Light stroke</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need lots of physical activity</li> <li>• Able to sit for only short periods</li> </ul>	Vision and Fine Motor Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not ready for close visual activity                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Should do little paper and pencil work that focuses on mechanical skills</li> <li>○ Can boost literacy skills by scribbling and using inventive spelling</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unable to switch smoothly between near and far focus; should not be asked to copy from board</li> <li>• Use their whole hand to write; printing usually large</li> <li>• Awkward with writing, and other small movements</li> <li>• Learn more through large muscle activity and play</li> <li>• Need climbing apparatus on playground</li> <li>• In physical education, usually enjoy tumbling</li> <li>• Ready for pre-writing</li> <li>• Finger painting or painting with brushes at stand-up easels gives excellent practice</li> </ul>
		Gross Motor Ability	
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly, talkative</li> </ul>	Social Emotional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn from modeling</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love being with friends, may only work near not with a friend</li> <li>• Not overly dependent on adults and can make decisions on their own interests, but need adult advice</li> <li>• Need adult help finding words to express needs</li> <li>• Love “jobs”</li> <li>• Older fours are sometimes fearful or worried and may have nightmares</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need chances to practice new behavior</li> <li>• Easily redirected from inappropriate behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teacher language is very important in helping children use language instead of physical means</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Love learning and working together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Younger fours may play next to</li> <li>○ “Who’s the boss?” is often major developmental issue</li> <li>○ Can learn basic mediation skills, but teacher saying “It’s the rule “ works wonders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tend to roughhouse on the playground <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need teacher redirection and modeling of appropriate behavior</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very talkative</li> <li>• Love being read to</li> <li>• Language skills of four year olds progress rapidly</li> <li>• Expand vocabularies daily</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can follow multi-step directions and understand explanations given when they can see</li> <li>• Frequently initiate conversations, less likely to change subject of conversation to areas of personal interest and are getting better at sharing personal experiences</li> </ul>		
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have short attention spans; move quickly from one thing to next</li> <li>• Learn best by moving large muscles</li> <li>• Need to play and explore; love dress-up and drama</li> <li>• Enjoy activities that use music, rhythm, repeating patterns, and other simple learning strategies</li> </ul>	Cognitive Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love being read to</li> <li>• Love to do their own reading of picture books</li> <li>• Constantly reading their environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Labeling objects that children frequently see or use gives them opportunities to practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need many hands-on experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All classroom areas should have manipulatives</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ready to practice counting through “real” job</li> <li>• Move quickly from one thing to another</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hard to stay in one area of classroom for an extended time</li> </ul> <p>Can learn responsibilities that are carefully taught but need the teacher to model expectations</p>
--	--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## Typical 5 Year Olds

Area of Development	Growth Patterns	Area of Development	In the Classroom
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus visually on objects close at hand</li> <li>• Need lots of physical activity, including free play</li> <li>• Better control of running, jumping, other large motor movements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Still awkward with writing, handicrafts, other fine motor movements</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pace themselves well, resting before exhausted</li> <li>• Holds pencil with three-fingered, pincer-like grasp</li> <li>• Often falls out of chairs sideways</li> </ul>	Vision and Fine Motor Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still developing left-to-right visual tracking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tend to focus on one word at time when reading</li> <li>○ Often need to use pointer or finger to keep place</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Still have difficulty copying from the board</li> <li>• Occasionally reverse letters and numbers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teachers can help by accepting reversals without comment rather than correcting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ready for an introduction to manuscript printing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not able to stay within lines</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Find it hard to space letters, numbers, and words</li> <li>• Using a finger as a separator helps</li> <li>• As at four, continue to need a great deal of active outdoor and indoor activity</li> </ul>
		Gross Motor Ability	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enjoy structured games such as Duck, Duck, Goose</li> </ul>
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Likes to help, cooperate, follow rules, and “be good”, wants adult approval</li> <li>• Needs routines, along with consistent rules and discipline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respond well to clear and simple expectations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Dependent on authority, but also have trouble seeing things from another’s viewpoint</li> <li>• Need verbal permission from adults, before doing something</li> </ul>	Social Emotional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can work at quiet time, sitting activities for 15-20 minutes at a time</li> <li>• Often need their teacher’s release to move to the next task</li> <li>• Feel safe with consistent guidelines and carefully planned periods</li> <li>• Express thoughts through action, need opportunities to play in housekeeping or dramatic play areas</li> <li>• Learn and practice language skills through teacher modeling and directed role play</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literal, using and interpreting words in their usual or most basic sense</li> <li>• Express themselves in few words</li> <li>• Often do not talk about school happenings at home</li> <li>• Express fantasy more through actions and less through words than at four</li> <li>• Think out loud-talk their thoughts</li> </ul>		

Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like to copy and repeat activities</li> <li>• Often see only one way to do things</li> <li>• Bound cognitively by their senses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not ready to understand abstract concepts such as “fairness”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ascribe life and movement to inanimate objects such as stuffed animals</li> <li>• Learn best through active play and hands-on activities</li> <li>• Think intuitively rather than logically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, “It’s windy when the trees shake so it must be the shaking of the trees that makes the wind.”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Cognitive Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn best through repetition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Like to repeat stories, songs, games</li> <li>○ Need predictable schedules</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some become stuck in repetitive behavior for fear of making mistakes when trying something new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, always drawing hearts and rainbows</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Learn best through active exploration of materials</li> <li>• Seldom able to see things from another point of view</li> <li>• Think out loud before doing</li> </ul>
-----------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## Older Five Year Olds

Area of Development	Growth Patterns	Area of Development	In the Classroom
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to be restless and tire quickly</li> <li>• Awkwardly perform tasks requiring fine motor skills</li> <li>• Vary pencil grasp</li> <li>• Tilt their head to non-dominant side when writing</li> <li>• Complain that their hand gets tired from holding their pencil</li> <li>• Often stand up to work</li> </ul>	<p>Vision and Fine Motor Ability</p> <p>Gross Motor Ability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print less neatly and with more reversals than earlier in the year</li> <li>• Grasp pencil very firmly; placing pencil grips on pencils encourages relaxation</li> <li>• Reverses letters and numbers with increasing frequency</li> <li>• May find reading and writing activities frustrating if not closely related to their interests</li> <li>• Need a good deal of activity and relaxed free play outside because attention is not always focused in a gym class</li> <li>• Tire quickly; sometimes need shorter work periods than young fives</li> </ul>
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppositional; not sure whether to be good or naughty</li> <li>• Insecure with feelings and tentative in actions</li> <li>• Complain, test authority and limits, and strike out with temper tantrums</li> </ul>	Social Emotional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need consistent rules and discipline even more than earlier in the year</li> <li>• Because children are testing limits more, harsh discipline (especially for mistakes) can be devastating; they respond better to frequent reminders and redirection</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behave wonderfully at home and terribly at school, or vice versa</li> <li>• Equivocate, switching answers from “yes” to “no” and vice versa</li> </ul>		
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin giving more elaborate answers to questions</li> <li>• Frequently make auditory reversals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answer first what they heard last</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Often read out loud even when asked to read silently</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to try new activities more easily</li> <li>• Make lots of mistakes and recognize some of them</li> <li>• Learn well from direct experience</li> </ul>	Cognitive Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still use language to initiate action; begin to explain in more detail</li> <li>• Need many avenues-building with blocks, painting, etc-to express what they know</li> <li>• Need time to try their own ways of doing things even those these ways may not prove productive</li> <li>• Crave constant validation of their initiative</li> </ul>

## Typical 6 Year Olds

Area of Development	Growth Patterns	Area of Development	In the Classroom
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good visual tracking from left to right</li> <li>• More of their fingers as tools</li> <li>• Noisy and sloppy</li> <li>• In a hurry               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Speed is a hallmark of six</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Often fall backwards out of their chairs</li> <li>• Learning to distinguish left from right</li> <li>• Because they're teething, they often chew on pencils, fingernails, hair, books, etc</li> <li>• Tire easily; frequently ill</li> <li>• Enjoy being active both outdoors and in the gym</li> </ul>	<p>Vision and Fine Motor Ability</p>       <p>Gross Motor Ability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will copy from the board but find it very difficult               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Some schools use personalized whiteboards</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When writing, find spacing and staying on the line difficult</li> <li>• Ability to track visually from left to right readies them for reading instruction</li> <li>• Comfortable with a busy level of noise and activity</li> <li>• Often work standing</li> <li>• Can produce products of higher quality when encouraged to work more slowly or when teachers limit the number of complexity of tasks</li> </ul>
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to be first</li> <li>• Competitive; enthusiastic</li> <li>• Sometimes "poor sports" or dishonest               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Invent rules to help themselves win</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Anxious to do well</li> <li>• Thrive on encouragement</li> <li>• Tremendous capacity for enjoyment</li> </ul>	Social Emotional Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use tantrums, teasing, bossing, complaining, and tattling to try out relationships with authority               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Learn best when adults understand but do not excessively tolerate this behavior</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Extremely sensitive</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ likes surprises and treats</li> <li>• Can be bossy, teasing, or critical of others</li> <li>• Easily upset when hurt</li> <li>• Care a great deal about friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May have a best friend</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Less influenced by happenings at home than at school</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An ounce of encouragement may be all they need to get through a difficult situation</li> <li>○ Severe criticism can truly injure them</li> <li>• Highly competitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can overdo the need to win and be first</li> <li>○ Do better when teachers take the competitive edge off games used for learning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ready to try taking on individual and group responsibility</li> </ul>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy explaining things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sharing about things they like helps to develop language skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use boisterous and enthusiastic language</li> <li>• Love jokes and guessing games</li> <li>• Tend to complain frequently</li> </ul>		
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn best through discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Love asking questions</li> <li>○ Trying out new games and ideas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Better understand spatial and functional relationships</li> </ul>	Cognitive Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy and learn from games of all sorts; poems, riddles, and songs delight them and teach more effectively than workbooks</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very ambitious and motivated to learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May choose projects that are too hard</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enjoy the process more than the product</li> <li>• Love to color and paint</li> <li>• Engage in more elaborate cooperative dramatic play than at five</li> <li>• Increasingly interested in computers</li> <li>• Beginning to understand past and present and also how and why things happen</li> <li>• Beginning to be interested in skill and technique for their own sake</li> <li>• Like to “work”; enjoy reading and writing</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience an artistic explosion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seriously experiment with clay, paints, dancing, coloring, book making, weaving, and singing</li> <li>○ Need to feel their attempts are valued</li> <li>○ There is no right or wrong way to approach art</li> <li>○ Risk-taking now enhances later artistic expression and competence</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Proudly produce a great quality of work but are unconcerned with quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Whatever the activity- whether academics, clean-up or snack</li> <li>○ Delight in the doing, especially for themselves</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Need social studies content connected to here and now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find history difficult unless it is closely associated to present</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy and learn much from field trips followed by representational activities</li> </ul>
--	--	--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Sources:

For Typical 3 Year Olds: Child Development Tracker, PBS,

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopmenttracker/three/mathematics.html> and

Child Development Stages, Wikipedia, <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopmenttracker/three/mathematics.html>

For Typical 4 Year Olds: Child Development Tracker, PBS,

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopmenttracker/three/mathematics.html> and Wood, Chip. *Yardsticks Children in the*

*Classroom Ages 4-14*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Turner Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2007

For Typical 5 Year Olds, Older Five Year Olds, For Typical 6 Year Olds: Wood, Chip. *Yardsticks Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14*.

3<sup>rd</sup> edition Turner Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2007