

What's Special About Me at this Age?



Character Building

- I am learning to be responsible and not lazy. Teach me to respond instantly to requests. Teach me that it is not okay for me to give someone else a chore that I have been asked to do.
- I am also learning to take responsibility for mistakes, such as breaking something.

In the past, children were taught consequences for being lazy. Girls were told they would have difficulty giving birth. Boys were told that game would take a long time to come to them. Elders remember being told, "the seal will go to the next hole if you are lazy."



Communication

- I am using speaking skills. I may be slower than others or have trouble with pronunciation. Don't pressure me. Support me with patience and practice. We develop language skills differently.
- I am learning to talk about important things in my life. Support me by having open conversations with me.



Skill Building

- I am learning to develop good habits and values. I need you to teach me to have a routine, including eating with others and going to sleep regularly. Teach me to get up early and to take responsibility for chores. Teach me gender-related responsibilities and responsibilities related to my siblings.
- I am developing my individual strengths. Encourage me and give me time to practice.

Applying Inuit Values

Pijitsirniq (Serving)



Description

Serving others means contributing to their wellbeing. Elders remember being taught the importance of serving others when they were young. They remember eagerly wanting to find ways to contribute and work hard as soon as they were big enough.

Discussion

Structure children's play so that it prepares them for contributions they can make when they are older. Teach young children that you expect them to respond to requests right away. As they can do more, give them more responsibilities. Encourage them to do their chores without being asked. Encourage them to notice what needs to be done and to do it without being asked. When you notice that a job has been done, give praise without naming the child. This will teach them to serve others without seeking praise.

Reminders

- ✓ Make sure your child's immunizations are up to date before they go to school or pre-school.
- ✓ Before school starts, have your child's vision and hearing tested. Have their development screened.

Inunnguiniq

Childrearing Advice from Inuit Elders

4 Years



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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Children and Adolescents with Special Needs

About this Age

At this age, children are ready to learn core beliefs and values. Teach them rules for life, such as not to lie, not to steal, to put things back after you use them, to be very careful with others' belongings, and to take care of one's own belongings. Teach them relationship skills, such as how to treat siblings and how to develop good friendships.

Four-year olds needs lots of independent play. Girls often develop interests in school and playing house. Boys often develop interests in hunting and machines.

At this age, children can play outside more independently and like to go on small adventures. Through playing, children learn about the natural world. As they want to explore more, go with them and teach them to respect the environment. Elders say they were taught that each rock belongs to the creator and must be cared for. They were taught that we are in a relationship with all the things on the land.

In the past, Inuit began to teach children at this age the names of important places and their characteristics. They began to teach them to hunt birds with rocks. They would also teach how to find eggs and bring them home to share, instilling the value of sharing with family and friends.

Four-year olds like to spend time with grandparents. This is a good time for grandparents to talk with young children about values and what is expected of them throughout life. This is also a good time to notice the child's unique personality and strengths.

What Parents Can Do

- **Be an active teacher.** Your whole family will benefit from your child's development. Every moment offers new learning opportunities for your child. Take every opportunity to help your child develop skills and values.
- **Help your child prepare to start school.** Talk with your child about being with a large group of children. Tell them what you expect from them when they are at school.
- **Teach your child to observe the natural world.** Teach your child to observe the weather and seasons. Ask your child to describe in detail what they observe.
- **Teach proper harvesting values.** Teach your child to leave some eggs for the mother bird and never take them all. Teach them to share everything they harvest. Always tell them to think of the needs of others, so that it becomes a habit.
- **Teach about special places and place names.** Show places to your child. Explain the place names. Tell them about any special rituals that go with the place.
- **Encourage your child to seek peace with others.** Teach your child not to seek revenge, even if they are mistreated. Teach them to resolve conflict and seek peace.
- **Teach children to never steal.** Tell children that stealing is hurtful to the victim. Teach them that any hardship they cause to others will always come back to them.

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

- At this age, focus on supporting your child to develop core values. Talk with them about situations they might encounter. You could ask, "What would you do if someone hit you for no reason?" "What would you do if you were alone in the store and you couldn't find me?" "What would you do if you saw someone hurting a baby bird?" Teach the child ethical responses to each situation. For every idea the child offers, present one of your own, too. Talk about what some of the consequences of each response might be.
- Encourage your child not to hold grudges or make enemies. Teach them that such habits will cause them hardship in life.
- Find ways to be helpful to others and have your child participate. For example, make a meal for someone who is sick.
- Notice your child's development as she faces small challenges in her life today. Her experiences now will help her face greater challenges later in life.
- Support your child's language development at this age by playing word games to name specific items. Help your child recognize and properly name items such as different birds, plants, or tools.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ Four-year olds need lots of instruction. They are forming life habits. Be selective about what your child watches on TV or pays attention to.
- ✓ Support four-year olds to be more independent, but always watch them so you can correct or teach them at important learning moments.