

# Growth and development of a 4-year-old child

## 4-vuotiaan lapsen kasvu ja kehitys (englanti)



A 4-year-old child is curious, talkative, and independent. The child's memory is developing, and they have a vivid imagination. Asking questions is their way to learn things.

The child relates naturally to their own body. They are interested in gender differences and where babies come from.

A 4-year-old experiences strong emotions and needs parental support to manage them.

### **Daily rhythm**

Daily routines increase a child's sense of security. A regular eating schedule and a varied diet support the child's healthy growth and development. Shared family mealtimes help to support the child's eating habits. The child follows the example of other family members. Parents decide what and when the family eats. The child can decide how much to eat.

Brushing teeth with children's fluoride toothpaste in the morning and evening is an important daily routine. After meals, a xylitol tablet can be given to the child.

### **Rest**

It is important for a child to get enough sleep and rest. When a child sleeps enough, learning new things is easier and the child is in a good mood. The need for sleep varies from child to child. Usually, a 4-year-old needs about 10–13 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Some 4-year-olds still take naps during the day. Too long naps may make it harder to fall asleep in the evening. A rest time is important, even if the child no longer takes daytime naps.

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## Screen time

Preschool children should have no more than one hour of screen time per day. Too much screen time can cause restlessness, irritability, and difficulties to concentrate. It can also disturb the child's sleep.

Familiarize yourself with videos and games that are appropriate for the child's age. Help the child find other activities and games to do as well.



Preschool children should have no more than one hour of screen time per day.

Explore programs, videos, and games together with your child.

## **Independence**

The child is able to dress up most clothes independently. Encourage the child's independence. Most of 4-year-olds no longer need diapers during the day. Bedwetting is still quite common.

## **Hand skills, physical activity and outdoor activities**

The child's movements become stronger and more agile. Fine motor skills and dexterity also develop. Through a variety of indoor and outdoor play, the child can practice these skills. You can practice activities like cycling or skiing with the child. Crafts and building games support hand skills and visual perception.

Daily outdoor time and physical activity are important for a child's health and well-being. Physical activities and being outside also help the child sleep better. A child should be active for a total of three hours every day. Physical activity means active play, for example, in the yard or at the playground. Forest trips and obstacle courses in the living room are also examples of ways a child can move.



## Speech and imagination

The child's speech is usually clear. Some speech sounds may still be incorrect. The child's imagination is active, and they ask many questions.

A 4-year-old child enjoys stories. They can focus on listening to fairy tales. A vivid imagination may increase different fears and disturb night sleep. Sometimes the child may have imaginary friends.





## Social skills and emotions

A 4-year-old child often enjoys the company of other children.

Different role-playing games are enjoyable for the child.

The child begins to compare themselves to others.

It is important for the child to receive support and encouragement from their parents. Every child has some skill they are good at.

The child is learning to manage emotions and cope with disappointments. Emotions can change quickly. It is important for the child to receive comfort and support from a parent to calm down. The child needs to know that all emotions are allowed. You can practice naming emotions and different calming techniques with the child. The child learns to consider others' feelings as well. The child can show empathy and comfort others.





**Euroopan unionin  
osarahoitama**

## **Niitty 2 Project 2023–2026**

Working together with immigrant  
families for a better everyday life

More information about the project:

<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty2/>

Family Info Material Portal:  
[tuni.fi/perheinfo](https://tuni.fi/perheinfo)

### **Sources and further information:**

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