A Child Development Checklist and Tips Booklet

This booklet was originally funded by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County and developed by the Pinellas Early Childhood Collaborative. It was written by early childhood professionals in your community.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. is pleased to present you with:

FOURS
Child Development Checklist & Tips
You are your child’s first and most important teacher. During your daily routines, your child is learning as he talks, plays, cuddles, and interacts with you.

For optimal growth, your child’s basic needs must be met. He needs your love and attention, consistent responses to his needs, a safe environment, and many supervised opportunities to play and explore his world. He will develop at his own rate, depending on his abilities, interests, and experiences; however, your involvement is critical in helping him reach his full potential.

This booklet contains information that is important to your child’s brain growth and learning potential. The checklists describe skills your four year old child should have and be able to do by his fifth birthday and should not be applied to children younger than four years of age.

Following each checklist are tips and suggestions you can use to support your child’s development.

If you have concerns about your child’s success in kindergarten, call FDLRS Child Find at (727)793-2723 for additional assistance. FDLRS Child Find is Florida’s early intervention system that offers programs and services to eligible children from birth to 21 years. Getting help early puts your child on the right track to learn and develop the skills he needs.

VPK and Kindergarten Resources
Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program is FREE for all children who live in Florida. Your child must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the year he starts VPK.

VPK Information ................................................................. www.vpkpinellas.net or call (727) 400-4411
Kindergarten Enrollment ..................................................... www.pcsb.org or call: (727) 588-6210

Internet Parenting Resources
Community Resources

Medical Emergencies ................................................................. 911
Poison Control ................................................................. 1-800-222-1222
SafeKids (childproof home, car seats, water safety, injury prevention) .................................................. 1-800-756-7233
Pinellas County Health Department (low cost physicals, immunizations) ............................................ (727)824-6900
Community Health Centers of Pinellas (referrals, prescriptions) ................................................................. (727)821-6701
Florida Kid Care (health insurance) .................................................................
American Red Cross (infant/child first aid & CPR classes) ................................................................. (727)446-2358
US Consumer Product Safety Hotline (unsafe or recalled products) .................................................. 1-800-638-2772
Car Seat Education and Safety .................................................................
Community Resources (clothing, emergency shelter, counseling, parent support) ......................................... 2-1-1
WIC Florida (food for women, infants, and children) ........................................................................... 1-800-342-3556
Public Library Information ................................................................. (727)441-8408
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect ................................................................. 1-800-96ABUSE
                                                                                  (1-800-962-2873)

Child Care Resources

Child Care Resource & Referral (locate child care centers and homes) .................................................. 2-1-1 or (727)210-4211
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) ........................................................................................................... (727)400-4411
School Readiness Child Care Wait List / Eligibility Requirements ......................................................... (727)400-4411
Pinellas County Child Care Licensing (history of compliance/complaints) ........................................ (727)507-4857

Child Development Resources

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) Warm Line ........................................................................ (727)545-7536
Early Steps (birth to 36 months) ............................................................................................................ (727)767-4403
Early Steps Parent Support ..................................................................................................................... (727)767-6705
FDLRS Child Find (birth to 21 years) .................................................................................................... (727)793-2723
Parenting and Child Guidance ............................................................................................................. (Helpline) 211

Project Challenge (concerns about my child's behavior in child care) ................................................

This is one in a series of five resource booklets on child development. The series also includes booklets on infant, one year old, two year old, and three year old development.

Each booklet begins with sections on Brain Development and Safety followed by Domains of Development that align with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards. The Resources page provides community and Internet resources to help meet the needs of families and young children.

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The importance of your role as a parent cannot be underestimated.

When you respond to your child with patience and compassion, you are meeting their emotional needs. Your child needs sensitivity, understanding, and connection to form secure relationships that will shape their personality and learn.

Learning experiences are strengthened through playful repetition. This will happen automatically. Children learn by doing and eventually, they must enjoy the process of discovery. Your child will gradually find their own way. Learning experiences are embedded in children's daily lives. Learning happens even when children are not aware of it. Your child will find and embrace the learning process in their own way. Learning experiences are repeated until it becomes second nature.

Your child's brain will react to positive and negative experiences.

Experiences with positive reinforcement of newly acquired skills, and exposure to stimuli, can enhance your child's brain and contribute to the positive brain growth. Providing developmentally appropriate experiences can help shape your child’s brain and contribute to the positive brain growth. Providing developmentally appropriate experiences can help shape your child’s brain and contribute to the positive brain growth.
Does your child....

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>....count one to ten objects by pointing to each object and saying the correct number?</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>....recognize and correctly identify written numerals 0-9?</td>
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<td>....add and subtract numbers up to four?</td>
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<td>....identify, copy, and create simple patterns, such as red car, blue car, red car, blue car?</td>
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<td>....match and sort items by color, size, and shape?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>....recognize and name shapes including circles, squares, triangles, and rectangles?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>....understand and use positional words, such as in, on, under, beside, and behind?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>....use measuring tools, such as measuring cups, spoons, rulers, and scales?</td>
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<td>....observe and investigate the characteristics of living plants, animals, and insects?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>....identify his five senses (sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>....recognize and understand the responsibilities of workers in your community?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>....move accurately to the beat of music and respond to changes in tempo (speed)?</td>
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**Brain Development Tips**

*Your child's brain will develop best when you:*

- talk to him often, ask questions, and show an interest in what he is doing and experiencing.
- offer a variety of healthy foods and water throughout the day.
- name, count, and describe objects.
- read to him every day.
- sing songs, play rhyming games, and listen to different kinds of music every day.
- respond to his feelings and provide words he can use to express his emotions.
- provide opportunities for him to play with problem solving toys and puzzles.
- stay calm and happy, avoiding stress and traumatic experiences.
- limit the amount of time he spends watching television and using computer games. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advises no more than two hours of educational, nonviolent programs daily.

“It’s not if your child is learning; it’s what your child is learning that’s important.”

“The bottom line on brain research? Love your children. Talk to them. Read to them.”

~ Rob Reiner
Writing

Display the writing chart.
- Spoken words and written words.
- Point to each word as you read to help him understand the connection between spoken and written words.
- Ask short what are you writing?

Encourage him to listen for the words you write and read to him later.
- Notice how the reader builds the spilling of content through written language.
- Support him as he reads his writing to you, focusing on the meaning and purpose of the story.
- Encourage him to write pretend shopping lists, notes, signs, or stories.
- Accept and praise his attempts at writing even if it's scribbles, pictures, or shapes.

Provide skills, concepts, markers, pencils, erasers, and stickers and encourage him to write.

Writing Tips

Your child's writing skills are best supported when you:
- Read books with him.
- Look doors, reading to the outdoors, and other dangerous areas.
- Encourage him to listen for the words you write and read to him later.
- Notice how the reader builds the spilling of content through written language.
- Support him as he reads his writing to you, focusing on the meaning and purpose of the story.
- Encourage him to write pretend shopping lists, notes, signs, or stories.
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Safety

Always Be AS ABC — Always Be Safe

- Choose toys that are unbreakable, washable, and non-toxic.
- Your local fire department can check for proper car seat installation.
- Ask a seat of booster seat is properly installed and buckle your seat belt, too.
- Wear your child's safety belt properly and buckle him home safely.
- Watch him closely and never leave him alone or unattended in a car.
Does your child....

...have his own pencils, crayons, markers, and paper? □ □

...share experiences with you by drawing or writing about the experience? □ □

...ask you to write words, such as asking you to write “My dog, Sam” on his drawing? □ □

...write pretend words with letters or letter-like shapes and then “read” the “words” to you? □ □

...ask you to draw shapes, numbers, letters, or words so he can copy them? □ □

...practice writing his name? □ □

...write some recognizable letters? □ □

...use wood, plastic or magnet letters to write familiar words or names? □ □

...write pretend stories, notes, letters, or recipes using pictures and letter-like shapes? □ □

• adjust the water heater temperature to 115°F or less to prevent burns.

• never leave him unattended near water (bathtub, swimming pool, or wading pool). Supervise him closely and remember that children can drown in less than 3 inches of water.

• enroll him in formal swim lessons when he is emotionally and physically ready.

• teach him simple safety rules and help him understand the importance of avoiding common dangers, such as hot appliances and moving cars.

• make sure he holds your hand while crossing the street or walking through parking areas.

• alert him to the dangers of strangers, drugs, and guns.

• keep all guns out of your house or store locked, unloaded, and uncocked guns in an out of reach, locked container. Store ammunition separately.

• attend a first aid and Pediatric CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training. (See Resources.)
Reading

- Play later sound games, such as naming objects, places, or names that start with a specific sound.
- Play matching games such as matching synonyms, antonyms, or finding the missing words in a poem.
- Join our free themed read-aloud stories in print or on restaurant/store signs, street signs, or road signs.
- Sound out familiar words as read stories.
- How much you value reading. Ask them to find the books and articles you’re reading.
- Read this morning books over and over again.
- Provide a comfortable and quiet reading area.
- Provide a piece for the books and teach how to handle books carefully.
- Provide a variety of reading materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, and recipes.

Your child’s reading skills are best supported when you:

- Practice reading aloud to your child, especially when first learning to read.
- Ask yourself, “What is happening? What will happen next?”
- Read the story and encourage your child to listen to the words and share comments or questions.
- Ask your child to tell you the story.
- Discuss special events, new words, and dialog between people, places, and things in the story.
- Look at the pictures to discover what the story is about.
- Finish the story with your child, show the characters and story events.
- Ask your child how they felt the story was and what they liked about the story.
- Discuss the story, the cover, the author, and illustrator.

Before reading a story:

- Have a routine for reading, keeping things simple and engaging.
- Cover his nose and mouth when he sneezes or coughs.
- Wash his hands before eating healthy foods in adequate amounts.
- Pour water into juice cups with little spills.
- Put on his shoes and dress himself with little assistance.
- Put together a puzzle puzzle.
- Read a poem or a riddle, write some recognizable letters of shapes.
- Hold a pencil, crayon or marker in a pencil grip between thumb and forefinger.
- Sort and handle small objects, such as tiny beads, sea shells, or toy beads.
- Cut simple shapes with scissors.
- Show, teach, and kids with scissors.
- Use pedals to ride a bicycle or riding toy skillfully navigated linings.
- Can run oncommand and stop quickly?
- Can jump, climb, hop, skip, and gallop with increasing confidence.

Does your child...?
Does your child....

- show an interest in reading by choosing his own books, listening attentively to stories, and pretending to read? [ ] [ ]
- hold books gently and carefully? [ ] [ ]
- begin at the front of the book and turn the pages one at a time from right to left? [ ] [ ]
- recite nursery rhymes and retell stories from memory? [ ] [ ]
- identify some words on street signs, restaurant signs, store signs, or food packages? [ ] [ ]
- ask what a note, letter, or sign says? [ ] [ ]
- identify the letters in his name? [ ] [ ]
- name most uppercase and lowercase letters? [ ] [ ]
- name items that begin with a particular letter, such as “D is for dog or B is for ball”? [ ] [ ]
- identify some letter sounds, such as “The letter ‘M’ says ‘mmm’”? [ ] [ ]

Physical Development Tips

Your child’s physical development skills are best supported when you:
- allow time for him to dress himself as he learns how to button, zip, and buckle his own clothing.
- take him to a park to play on climbers, slides, and swings.
- provide daily opportunities for him to run, climb, play ball, and ride tricycles.
- provide daily opportunities for him to color and draw with pencils, crayons, markers, or chalk.
- allow him to use scissors to practice cutting on a line or cutting out magazine pictures.
- allow him to use clothespins, a hole-punch, play dough, and scissors to strengthen his hand muscles.
- provide opportunities for him to use both hands to twist off plastic jar lids and bottle caps.
- make sure he has regular medical and dental checkups, up-to-date immunizations, and prompt medical attention when needed.
- encourage and model healthy eating habits and limit unhealthy, processed food items.
- establish a set bedtime and remind him to get rest.
- limit television/computer use and encourage physical play. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advises no more than two hours of educational, nonviolent programs daily.

To support your child’s success in school, promote healthy habits and provide daily opportunities for him to develop physical skills.
Lis
tening & Talking

Experiences, shares ideas and carefully as he talking with him development by language support his school and life. Child’s success in reading and writing listening, speaking.

- Use familiar words, such as please, thank you, and excuse me.
- Provide opportunities for him to deliver a message from home to school.
- Listen intently to his conversations and encourage other family members to do the same.
- Play and reading games such as finding words that rhyme or guessing the missing word in a phrase.
- Introduce new words and their meanings as you read books and engage in activities.
- Encourage him to tell you about the things he has read together.
- Ask open-ended questions such as “What do you think of how words are used?”
- Come down to his eye level to let him know what he says is interesting and important.
- Your child’s talking and listening skills are best supported when you:

List

- Yes
- Not Yet
Does your child....

- follow through when you give him two or three step directions? (Example: Take your shoes off, put them in the closet, and go get the broom.)
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- use descriptive words, such as “My puppy is small. He is white with black spots”?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- understand and follow directions?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- show an understanding of new words by using them correctly?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- sing and recite nursery rhymes making appropriate motions, such as making a climbing motion while singing “The eensy weensy spider climbed up the water spout”?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- participate in conversations, taking turns talking and not interrupting?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- use complete sentences that include two or more separate ideas, such as “I like chocolate ice cream the best, but sometimes I get vanilla with hot fudge sauce”?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- speak clearly enough for others to understand him?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- talk about everyday experiences and activities?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- ask questions using complete sentences?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- respond to questions using complete sentences?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- name the parts of familiar objects and describe what they are used for (Example: “The pot has a handle. Mommy uses it to cook my dinner”)?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- use appropriate grammar rules, such as correct tense (“I went to the park yesterday”), plurals (feet instead of foots), and pronouns (my, mine, his, or her)?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

- use manner words, such as please, thank you, and excuse me?
  - Yes
  - Not Yet

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**Learning Styles Tips**

Your child’s unique learning style is best supported when you:

- set the tone that learning is good, fun, and important.
- provide a variety of new materials and experiences to encourage his curiosity.
- encourage him to try new tasks and acknowledge his efforts without criticism.
- ask open-ended questions (What would happen if...?) to encourage a deeper understanding.
- encourage him to ask for help if his inability to solve a problem leaves him frustrated.
- model problem solving by thinking out loud as you complete a task.
- encourage him to draw his own pictures rather than providing coloring books or work books for him to copy.
- provide plenty of time for him to play so he can develop problem solving skills and increase his attention span.
- include him when you plan activities, special events, or family outings.
- encourage him to talk about recent activities and events.

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The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you.

~ B.B. King
The prime purpose of being four is to enjoy the benefits of secondary importance, to prepare for being five.

Jim Trelness

Social & Emotional Development Tips

Your child’s social and emotional development is best supported when you:

- show love for him with frequent words, hugs, and smiles.
- provide positive guidance (I love you, but I don’t like hitting). Give him choices.
- reinforce appropriate behavior by praising and encouraging him when he does something right (“I like the way you waited for your turn.”)
- make him part of the family by having him help with household chores, such as making his bed, setting the table, picking up toys, emptying trash, taking care of pets, or helping in the yard.
- teach him to use words to solve problems, such as by saying, “I don’t like it when you take my toys. Next time ask me if you can have a turn.”
- provide opportunities for him to be with other children, such as a playground, park, playground or library story time, so he can learn how to take turns, compromise, and show kindness.
- encourage him to take care of his personal routines, such as eating, brushing his teeth, toilet training, bathing, choosing clothing to wear, and dressing.