

Dear Parents of a Four-year-old Child

We would like you to think about your child's strengths and possible needs for support using this form before the thorough health examination at the child health clinic. At the child health clinic, you will be able to discuss anything you would like related to your child's growth and development and the entire family's well-being.

1. Emotional development, social skills, interaction and playAt four years old, the child

- is curious, wants to investigate, see and show his or her skills and is sure of him or herself
- despite his or her perceived omnipotence, still craves for affection like a "little baby" that wants attention
- starts to feel responsibility and guilt
- is often afraid of the dark, strange-looking people, snakes, and the parents leaving
- tries to understand people's roles and imitate them in play, for example imitating the parents' actions and taking cues from fairy tales and television
- wants to please his or her parents and adults and strives to acquire social skills
- knows how to follow rules fairly well and especially notices when others break the rules
- feels compassion (when someone cries) and pleasure when he or she can make someone happy or console someone
- has a rich imagination and possibly an imaginary friend
- does not always understand the boundary between reality and the imaginary, and sometimes feels that imaginary things are real
- likes to play and interact with other children, tests and forms friendships
- knows how to negotiate in play and works to maintain peace
- is learning how to handle the first real arguments and needs adult support with them
- handles difficult emotions in play – fear, helplessness, sadness and loneliness.

The parents' observations about the child:

2. Attentiveness, motivation, thinking, memory and learningAt four years old, the child

- knows how to talk about his or her thoughts
- can reasons about things that he or she saw yesterday and solve problems
- can draw parallels, compare and classify things in his or her thinking
- remembers more and can recall more things
- can follow a plan
- understands and follows rules
- learns when under guidance
- believes what he or she sees – the child's observations rule his or her thinking

The parents' observations about the child:

3. Linguistic development

At four years old, the child

- understands normal speech
- tells stories and is skilled at telling about things and events (narrative speech)
- is intrigued by word games and rhymes
- uses grammatically correct sentences, including subordinate clauses
- uses adjectives in speech, can describe objects and things
- speaks clearly, although some speech sounds may be missing
- can hold a conversation, listen to others and ask questions about what is said
- asks a lot of 'why and what for?' questions and wants thorough explanations.

The parents' observations about the child:

4. Motor skills and self-direction

At four years old, the child

- has basic motor skills (such as steady walking, running, jumping) and has good balance
- can grasp a pencil
- can dress almost independently (such as zips and buttons)
- knows the names of the parts of his or her body
- goes to the toilet independently
- washes and dries his or her hands independently
- dresses and undresses independently (cannot yet tie his or her shoelaces)
- can use a fork, if not other cutlery
- can fetch something to drink and pour it from a jug
- can spread butter on bread

The parents' observations about the child: