



Welcome Words for your 4-4 1/2 Years Old

Pre-kindergarten Programs 2015-2016

Your 4-year-old child may be eligible to attend Durham County's NC Pre-K Program, Head Start, and/or Durham Public Schools. These programs all work to prepare 4-year-olds for kindergarten.

There are two ways to apply:

You may call 919-314-6813 beginning January 26, 2015 to **set an appointment time between** February 2 and April 10, 2015. **OR** Come by one of the following Durham County Head Start offices beginning February 2, 2015.

- 215 Seminary St. (across from McDonald's and the YMCA)
- 908 Liberty St. (Leathers Meacham)

A family counselor will assist parents in filling out the application. ****Offices are closed February 11, February 27, and March 27-April 3, 2015****

Children must be 4 years old by **August 31, 2015** (born between September 1, 2010 and August 31, 2011) to be eligible for pre-k programs.

Required materials needed from parents for application:

- Copy of child's birth certificate.
- Current child immunization records.
- Proof of current address in Durham County (lease/mortgage or utility statement.)
- Proof of **all** household income including 2014 W-2 & 1 month of Household Income, Child Support, SSI/A, etc.
- If the parent/parents are students, proof of school enrollment, scholarship awards and grants.
- Copy of child's Medicaid card, if applicable.
- Proof of Child's chronic health conditions, if applicable.
- Proof of private service plan, if applicable.

Expecting Extremes from Your 4 year Old

One minute your preschooler is loud, bossy and out-of-bounds. The next she's surprisingly calm, quiet and cooperative. What, you're wondering, is *real* 4 1/2-year-old behavior?

The answer is "Both." Although her play may be less wild and frustration easier for her to tolerate, 4 1/2 is often an age of disequilibrium. Emotions can change rapidly from laughter to tears, and there may also be an exasperating determination to do (or have) something that's off-limits, such as sparklers at the Fourth of July. When refused something she *really* wants, she'll show you her unhappiness: she may even stick out her tongue and make faces.

Her periods of calm, however, are a promise of 5-year-old behavior. Until then, she's likely to get along better with friends her own age than with siblings. She's beginning to understand the difference between good and bad behavior. She'll especially enjoy stories about your own childhood adventures. Share the things you did that were either off-limits or particularly good.

Lies and Learning to Wait

The whole truth and nothing but the truth? Don't expect it from your preschooler. At this age, your child is still learning the difference between what's real and what's not. Most fours will pin the blame for misbehavior elsewhere -- even on a pet -- rather than 'fess up. This isn't a conscious lie as much as it is a wish -- your child wishes she hadn't spilled the can of paint you asked her not to go near.

Preschoolers also live in the present. Your child wants what she wants NOW, not for her next birthday. This makes taking a badly wanted toy from a friend's house hard to resist. Remember that this is a phase nearly all preschoolers go through. In time, your child will learn to wait, and, most likely, she'll share your standards of honesty.

In the meantime, try to:

- Focus on solutions, not blame. If your child has taken something that belongs to another child, ask her to take it back. Tell her, "We need to check with your friend and her parents before you take her toys. You need to take it back and ask them."
- Beware of your own little white lies. If you don't want to open the door to a salesperson, say so through the closed door rather than pretending no one's at home.
- Let your child know that everyone makes mistakes and has accidents -- even grown-ups! Let her see you accept responsibility, apologize (or clean up the mess), and move on. She'll learn to do the same.
- Share stories about moral behavior. There's the old story of the boy who cried wolf, the tale of Pinocchio, examples from your own past, and a number of good books for preschoolers on this theme at the public library. Ask the librarian for suggestions.



Pre-School Skills

If you're worried about helping your child master her ABCs and numbers before she starts kindergarten, relax.

Leave the academics to her future teachers, but ask yourself the following questions.

- ⇒ How are my child's social and group skills?
- ⇒ How can I help her learn to respect others, sit quietly for a few minutes and pay attention, follow directions and take turns?
- ⇒ Does my child have organizing skills?
- ⇒ How does my child handle herself personally?
- ⇒ What can I do to help her handle frustration and disappointment?

Chances are that you and your child's caregiver or preschool teacher are already doing many things to build these skills, but here are a few other suggestions:

Social and Group Skills

- At mealtime, make sure everyone in the family gets time to talk. Start with 30 seconds of talking and listening, then increase it to a minute or minute and a half.
- Choose a TV show or book you and your child will both enjoy. Take turns asking each other questions such as, "What might happen to the characters after this show or book ends?"
- Play "Mother May I" or "Simon Says." These games are a fun way to practice following directions.

Organizing Skills

- Give your child a calendar and help her mark special events with stickers or colored markers. Refer to it daily, noting the month, date and day of the week.
- Help her organize her room with a shelf or bin for specific toys, puzzles, books and games. When it's time for clean up, have her start with a single category and tackle them one at a time: "Put all your books on the book shelf. Now put away all the blocks."

Personal Skills

- Help her organize her room with a shelf or bin for specific toys, puzzles, books and games.
- Let her know that everyone has bad days. You might read Judith Viorst's book *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.
- When she's disappointed, tell her that you love her, but be upbeat about her ability to move ahead.
- Help her identify her anger. If she yells, 'I hate you,' chances are she's saying, "I'm angry and I need help to sort out my feelings." Try saying, "You sound very angry about not going to your friend's house. Would you like to talk about it?"