

Developmental Needs

The developmental process that an individual child goes through is a step-by-step progressive process in terms of his or her intellectual, physical, social and emotional aspects. All children need appropriate interventions and experiences in order to meet the developmental milestones at each stage or level of development. It is essential for parents to understand how these interventions can enhance their child's development. In this particular paper, the focus is directed towards the developmental goals and needs of a four-year old child. The four-year old child possesses special characteristics distinct of other early childhood development. The significant social relationship of a four year old focused on his / her basic family. This is the time when favorable outcomes are observed through the acquisition of purpose of direction. The child develops the ability to initiate his or her own activities. There is an increased attention span enabling them to interact with people and objects for a longer period of time. There is an increasing curiosity that leads them to ask many questions about the nature of life and people. Increasing abilities to remember and think enable them to classify objects often on the basis of appearance can be observed. This is the beginning period of greater language skills that leads them to express and share their feelings as well as to learn from others. (allthedaze.com 2006)

The four year old child falls under the operational period of development wherein the child sees the world strictly from his / her own viewpoint. (Anglin, J. 2004) Unable to even imagine that there is another way of seeing things as he or she refuses to accept anyone else's view. In this period, the child perceives the gross outward appearance of objects, but is capable of seeing only one aspect of that object at a time. For example, if a nurse tells this age child, "Take a red pill," he can focus on either red or pill, but not both.

At this stage, thinking is literal, concrete, and in the present. This drinking a medicine to take away a headache makes no sense because the medicine goes into the stomach not the head. The four-year-old preoperational child thinks in absolutes; things can only be good or bad, right or wrong, white or black, hurt or don't hurt. He or she reasons transductively (Child Development Institute 2005): going to the hospital is a punishment for something he did. He or she is animalistic: all objects have life and intention. For example, Jami, a four year old says the moon follows him wherever he goes because it is his best friend. The combination of transductive reasoning, animism and focusing on only one aspect of an object leads the child to say. "The needle (on the syringe) makes people well." He or she does not understand that there is medicine in the syringe and that it is pushed into the body through the needle. In addition, the four-year-old child judges people by the consequences to himself or herself. Thus, the nurse who gives him a shot is bad because she hurt him. Since the child of this age believes everyone sees things the way he does and knows what he or she is thinking, language is used to mimic adult conversation. He or she does not yet truly understand many of the words he or she uses.

The four-year-old child like any individual in this world needs to be loved first and foremost. For the four-year-old the love he or she needs is of a kind that she is loved "as is." They need to be loved whether they are right, wrong, happy or sad, pretty or plain. He or she needs acceptance. There is no way for a four-year-old child to be rejected even when he or she displays poor behavior. The child must always be accepted despite the instances when the behavior may not be acceptable. The child needs respect. He or she like anybody else must be treated as a valued human being. Let her or him make choices and have confidence in the child's abilities. The four-year-old child needs

understanding. He or she has to be understood by listening to him or her. An adult would not be able to understand the child if he or she does not listen to her or him. The child needs the patients from the adults. Adults do tend to expect too much from a child. However, a four-year-old child needs to be taught and told and shown again and again what ought to be. The child needs adult's consistencies. The behavior of adults surrounding the child should be consistent, meaning the behavior has to be the same today and tomorrow. Changes in rules much too often only confuse the child and makes him or her feel insecure. Other developmental needs are the adults' time, attention, companionship, empathy and flexibility among others. (LaHaye, P. 2006)

The developmental goals of the child this age are premised on the principle that "children who broaden their minds, have dreams, and are lively." (Ochanomizu University 2005). The developmental goals for a four-year-old child must be specific in terms of intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth. For a child to develop sociability he or she must learn how to properly express and share their feelings and how they appropriately play with other children. For the development of motor function a child has to be behave well and play cheerfully and freely. When it comes to the cultivation of sensibility of feelings, a four-year-old child must learn how to enjoy expressing how they have felt or what they have thought in his everyday life in their own way.

It is therefore recommended that parents do exert effort in understanding the characteristics, and needs of their four-year-old child. This way they will be able to effectively employ appropriate strategies to help their child achieve the desired developmental goals. On the part of the educator, it is helpful to remember the following

recommendations: (1) Providing an appropriate environment and support for the children, Centering on play so as to develop their ability to live flexibly. (2) Improving the instruction system so that it makes the best of teachers' skills and creates a cooperative atmosphere. (3) Promoting cooperation with parents and the community through educational counselling and help with child-care. (Ochanomizu University 2005)

References

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