

4-year-olds

First half of the year
(from April to October)



The age when children proactively communicate
At 4 years of age, children start to show hesitance
and act by taking cues from the surrounding

with people around them.
in communicating with others,
situation.



Abilities to be nurtured	Category	Expected behavior at preschool	How teachers should interact with children at preschool
Basic life skills	Emotions	- Children gradually become accustomed to the environment and the way of spending time at preschool, and spend the day at ease feeling close to the teachers and trusting them. - Although they may sometimes throw a tantrum and/or cry, they are increasingly able to understand the situation if it is explained to them.	- Understand each child's interests and reality, and build a relationship of trust through play while showing empathy for their feelings. - Value the children's experiences when things don't go their way, by helping them become aware of the situation and how their friends feel, or waiting until they calm down.
	Physical activities	Children start to enjoy various movements such as running, jumping, and skipping. 	- Help them enjoy the fun of physical movement, through running and dancing with teachers and friends. - Provide an environment where they can experience various movements through their favorite play activities.
	The restroom	Children can wipe their bottoms and flush the toilet.	Show the children how to wipe their bottoms and how to use toilet paper.
	Eating	- Children at this stage can eat some of the things they don't like. - Children can eat with chopsticks. *Refer to the Column on page 27. 	- Give the children a lot of praise when they eat even a little of the food they don't like, to help them build confidence. - Show the children how to hold and use chopsticks at every mealtime.
	Changing clothes	Children can fold the clothes they have taken off, and button/unbutton their clothes smoothly.	Wait and see the way the children try to change their clothes on their own, and repeatedly show them how to do it if necessary.
	Tidying up	Children understand how to put things away and start to do it voluntarily. 	Help children understand methods and procedures for putting things away by using visual aids, and check if they are able to tidy up. Also, consider making it easy for children to put things away by themselves by thinking about visual cues.
	Handwashing and gargling	- Children try to brush their teeth by themselves. - Children can rinse water in their mouths and gargle. 	Have them take a look in the mirror to see if they have something around their mouths or noses, and let them know how good it feels to be clean.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)

I'm frustrated! Grr... Grr...	- When children are having a tantrum or crying, it is important that you accept their feelings with composure and talk in a calm tone of voice. - Explain why he/she is not allowed to have his/her way, as well as the situation, simply and clearly.
Why don't we walk?	- Try to walk to and from preschool. Walking on a regular basis helps develop your child's physical strength. - On days with good weather, create opportunities to play outside. Watch over children so they can play safely.
Wipe until nothing's left on the paper.	Check if children have wiped their bottoms properly each time after they use the bathroom. If not, show them how to wipe their bottoms and how to use toilet paper.
I think I'll try some... Carrots are sweet and tasty.	- Encourage children to have at least one bite of foods they dislike. - Create opportunities for children to eat with chopsticks and teach them how to use the chopsticks.
I can put on clothes by myself. Look! Wow! You can do it by yourself.	Wait and see when your child tries to change their clothes on their own. Respect his/her motivation to do it without help.
Decide where to put things away	- Designate places for the items to take to preschool so your child can prepare for the next day by themselves. - Let your child know or decide with him/her where to put the items they can use, as well as toys and tools such as scissors.
Am I brushing my teeth properly?	First, have your children brush their teeth by themselves in front of a mirror. After that, you should help them finish by properly brushing the spots they have missed.



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Ability to discover, think critically,
and express oneself



Abilities to be nurtured	Category	Expected behavior at preschool	How teachers should interact with children at preschool
Interact with things with curiosity and interest Express thoughts and feelings with words Develop vocabulary and a sense of quantity	Play	- Children enjoy doing their favorite activities repeatedly. - They enjoy singing and dancing with teachers and friends.  	- Create an environment and provide assistance based on the children's interests, so as to help them enjoy their favorite activities repeatedly. Recognize the way they have fun or try to do things in their own way by observing other children. - When children play at make-believe house or shop, the teachers also get into character and provide them with tools and materials, so they can enjoy using their imagination. - Create opportunities for children to sing songs related to the season and their lives, and to dance to music.
	Interaction with nature	Children start to take an interest in nature.  	Increase opportunities for children to take care of plants, look for insects, and play with flowers so they can familiarize themselves with nature.
	Vocabulary, writing, and quantities	- Children start to actively enjoy using what they have heard and learned in conversation. - They start to express their feelings to friends. - They start to enjoy the stories in picture books and expand their imagination when they are read to. 	- Create opportunities for the children to experience the fun of using words in daily life through riddles, the shiritori word-chain game, word-collecting games, etc. - Show them how to use words correctly and speak pleasantly. - Help them express their feelings and ideas with words and gestures, so they can experience the joy of conveying their feelings to others and actualizing their ideas while playing. - Expand their interests by reading various types of books to them.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)



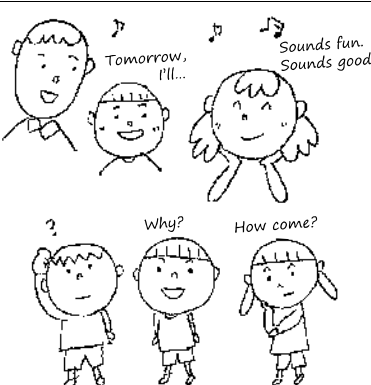
- Enjoy playing make-believe with your child and having conversations while observing the world of their imagination.
- Listen to your child singing the songs they learn at preschool and sing along.
- Accept their motivation to try things out and give them praise.**



- Familiarize children with the changing seasons (flower buds, flowers, trees, leaves, rain, puddles, wind, etc.) and animals (ants, pill bugs, snails, grasshoppers, etc.). Share in your children's joy and discoveries, and express what you think with specific words.



- When you are enjoying a conversation with the children, let them know every time they use inappropriate language for the situation. Adults should also be positive role models for children by being careful with their language and speaking in kind words.



- Be patient and wait when your child tries to express their feelings with words or gestures.**
- Going to the library with your child is also recommended. Enjoy with them the areas they are interested in, through the picture books and illustrated guides they deliberately choose.

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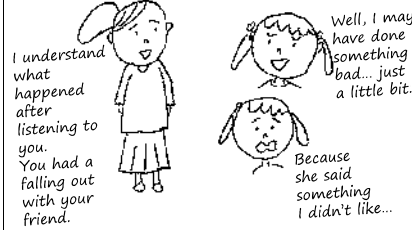
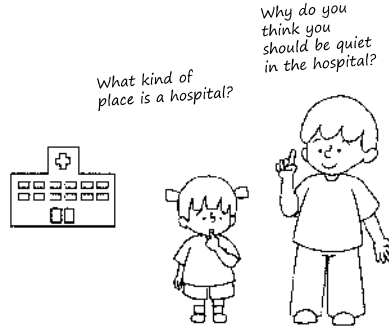


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Abilities to be nurtured	Category	Expected behavior at preschool	How teachers should interact with children at preschool
Communication skills	Greetings	- Children start to naturally exchange greetings with the people around them.	- Repeatedly show the children how to greet others on formal occasions and how to greet their seniors, to help them form a habit of greeting others politely.
	Friends	- Children enjoy interacting with friends, and gradually start to play with a few friends whom they particularly like. - They start to show emotions and preferences when it comes to friendships. 	- Help the children interact with their friends fully and enjoy playing without anxiety by dividing the playing space. - Accept their honest feelings toward their friends, while having them imagine themselves in the same position. Help them become aware of the other child's feelings and help them express their own feelings.
	Rules	- Children understand and try to follow the rules for the group and simple rules for playing.  	- Create opportunities for children to wait for their turn and take turns during play and in daily life. - Inform them of the rules they should follow outside the preschool, have them think about why they need to follow them, and repeatedly teach them that it is important to act safely.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)	
	- Exchanging greetings is the first step to communicating with others. Acknowledge when children greet others naturally, saying, "You said that nicely," and "You said it first." Repeatedly express the importance and pleasantness of greeting others.
 	- Disagreeing with friends is also an important experience for children. When your child talks about trouble with friends, listen to what they have to say instead of acting before them to solve the problem. They may tell you something that is different from what actually happened or speak as if they saw what happened, because they feel frustrated that things didn't happen as they wanted them to. Always listen closely to children and accept their feelings.
	- Enjoy playing games with rules (taking turns, waiting for the right time, etc.) together. Show how fun and pleasant it is to play by following the rules. - Teach them to observe the rules and show good manners in public places such as libraries, hospitals, buses and trains. It is important for you to show your child that you, too, observe the rules.

4-year-olds

Second half of the year
(from November to March)

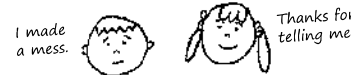
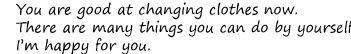
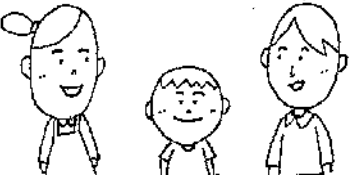


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Abilities to be nurtured	Category	Expected behavior at preschool	How teachers should interact with children at preschool
Basic life skills	Emotions	- Children start to work/play together as one team after sports events, and enjoy being with classmates. - They look forward to going into the next grade, and try to do what they are expected to do at preschool by themselves.	- Provide activities and games that the whole class can take part in, so the children can experience the fun of playing together with many people. - Give them approval when they voluntarily try to do what they are expected to do such as preparation, tidying up and duties, so they will feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.
	Take care of oneself	- Inspired by older children, the children become more active physically and start to try out various kinds of physical play. 	- Help the children play with playground equipment such as gymnastics bars, monkey bars, and balls in an open space. Also, encourage them to try out new playground equipment such as skipping ropes (short and long) and bamboo stilts by showing them how older children play with them. 
	Lead a healthy, safe life	- Children can use the bathroom without making a mess.	- Let children know how good it feels when they use the bathroom without making a mess.
	Eating	- Children understand table manners and develop good eating habits. 	- Encourage the children to feel thankful for those who prepare meals for them, as well as show them table manners and how to hold and use chopsticks.
	Engage in sufficient physical activity and exercise voluntarily	- Children at this age start to develop manual dexterity skills. They can use zippers and buttons by themselves. - Children voluntarily put away their personal belongings.	- Be patient and wait when they are trying to complete more difficult tasks, such as zipping up or buttoning a jacket. - Acknowledge the way the children voluntarily tidy up, and share how good it feels when the room is tidy.
	Handwashing and gargling	- Children become interested in their own health and growth, and voluntarily wash their hands and gargle.	- Take opportunities to show the children how to lead a healthy lifestyle in each season and how to prevent a cold, and see if they can wash their hands and gargle properly.
	Duties and helping	- Children actively take part in duties and voluntarily do things to help others. 	- Encourage the children to perform their duties with a sense of purpose.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)	
	- Accept the various emotions that children display, and listen closely to them so they can look forward to playing the next day. - Give approval when your child becomes able to do certain things, to help build confidence. - Help your child feel excited about going into the next grade by showing your own excitement.
	- Create opportunities for exercise, such as at the park, on days off. - Tell children, "Let's do it together" when they say they will not or cannot do something.
	- Encourage your child to tell you when they have made a mess in the bathroom. When they do, show them kindly how to use the toilet without making a mess for the next user.
	- It is a good idea to eat with your child in a cheerful atmosphere while showing them how to hold chopsticks, sit still at the table, and eat.
	- Give your child enough time to work on things by themselves, such as preparing for the next day and dressing themselves. - Give children a lot of praise when they do things by themselves.
	- Review the habits that your child has developed before they go into the next grade. - Ask your child to do some housework such as wiping the table before meals and folding the laundry. Show how much you appreciate the help with phrases such as "thank you" and "it helped me a lot," so he/she feels the joy and satisfaction of being helpful to others.

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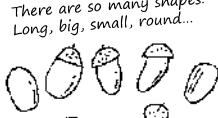
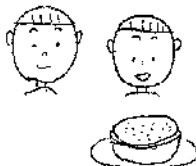
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Ability to discover, think critically, and express oneself Interact with things with curiosity and interest Express thoughts and feelings with words Develop vocabulary and a sense of quantity	Play	- Children play using their imagination, such as pretend play, trying out new things, and trying to solve problems in their own way. - They start to understand that there are differences in thinking between them and their friends. 	- Provide children with play equipment that can serve as a foundation for games (blocks, benches, etc.), so that they can enjoy playing make-believe with friends. Also, prepare various materials to help them expand and deepen their imagination. - Create opportunities for them to present their expressive play, such as by putting on plays.
	Interaction with nature	Children take interest in the changing seasons and the nature around them, and incorporate these into their play. 	- Encourage the children to enjoy creating crafts by combining the natural objects around them and preparing materials. - Create opportunities for the children to experience and take an interest in seasonal events and games, natural phenomena such as the weather, frost, and ice. 
	Vocabulary, writing, and quantities	- Children start to tell friends about the day's events and past events in their own words. - They expand their interest to include letters, numbers, various phenomena and things. - They enjoy picture books and stories, expanding their imagination.  	- Create opportunities for children to speak in front of the class about the fun they had on the day, so they can experience the joy of being heard. - Provide reference books and picture books that match the children's interest, to help them become familiar with numbers and letters naturally during play and in their daily life. - Share children's feelings when they wonder about something and think about it together. Help them experience the joy of discovery, and to interact with things with interest. - Read children picture books and stories in a relaxed atmosphere so they can immerse themselves in those worlds and expand their imagination.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)	
And then, ○○ suddenly got angry. I see. Maybe ○○ didn't like that. 	- Enjoy having many conversations with your child. - Do not compare your child with other children. Acknowledge the way they express things and show empathy for their feelings when they are having fun. - Be compassionate and listen closely to your child. - There will be differences in opinion and conflicts with peers. Help children become aware of how others feel by explaining it to them. If you have any questions or concerns about circumstances at preschool, do not hesitate to ask the school.
There are so many shapes! Long, big, small, round...  Let's collect lots of them. 	- Share children's interest and have fun with them by collecting natural objects together, such as acorns and pinecones in your neighborhood park or places you visit. - Turn your child's attention to natural phenomena, saying "it's nice weather," "it's cool today" and "it's pretty windy" while going to and from preschool.
Let's share it with everyone.  How do we divide it? Yes, that's your name. I found my name here! 	- Do not rush your child to speak or answer before they have the chance to. Try to be a good listener and have conversations in which your child can think and speak. It is important to listen till the end and accept what your child says. - At family gatherings or parties with friends, it is a good idea that you and your child greet others together, or that you encourage your child to introduce him/herself. - When your child starts to show interest in writing and quantities during play and in daily life, experience the fun and joy of using writing and expressing oneself through writing together. Also, familiarize children with numbers and quantities by comparing and counting things. - It is a good idea to play the shiritori word-chain game and the reverse word game with your child.

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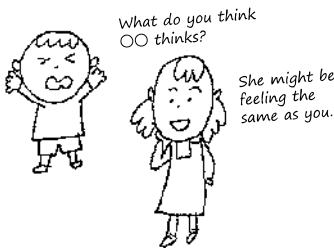


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Communication skills	Greetings	Children greet teachers and friends voluntarily. 	Show the children that there are phrases appropriate for the season and occasion. Encourage them to greet visitors and people in the community by showing them how.
	Friends	- Children start to take part in games and activities with their classmates proactively and with a sense of anticipation. - They are pleased when they feel the same as their friends do. They also start to realize there are those who feel differently from them. 	- Create opportunities for the whole class to enjoy expressive play such as dancing and acting, as well as musical activities such as singing and playing musical instruments together. - Provide activities such as recitals and farewell parties in which children cooperate with their friends, so they can experience the joy of working together to accomplish tasks and receiving recognition. - Watch over relationships between children to help them play with friends in continuation from the previous day. Also, respect their communication and interaction with each other to help them fully enjoy playing with their friends.
	Rules	Children learn more self-control as they come to terms with their feelings. 	- Talk to the children to draw out their feelings, saying, "I see, ○○, you think ~. What about you, □□?" - Show empathy and recognize when children are trying to be patient.

What is important at home (relationship with parents/guardian)	
	Help your child greet others, such as at family gatherings during the New Year holidays. It is important that you demonstrate the way you exchange greetings with people.
 	- Look for a topic from conversations with the class teacher or the classroom newsletter, and talk with your child about how he/she spent the day at preschool asking, "How was your day?" and "What did you do with your friends?". - Children tend to experience various emotions including conflict and frustration, as they have more chances to take part in activities with friends at preschool. It is a good idea to sympathize with how your child feels and provide guidance. Engage in plenty of physical play with children to improve their flexibility and help them learn how to adjust force and match others' pace. - Listen to your child and share in the fun.
	Ask your child questions to prompt them to gain awareness of how other children feel. Give them time to reflect on what happened, instead of condemning them without hearing them out. - It is a good idea that the whole family plays games with rules together, such as sugoroku (a Japanese board game) and karuta (a Japanese card game), so your child learns to be patient in waiting his/her turn and bear the frustration when losing. Give your child a lot of praise when they change their mood.