

motor development

Between 4-5 years, most children:

- Walk heel-to-toe and balance;
- Can aim objects when throwing;
- Catch balls or beanbags;
- Peddle and steer tricycles;
- Can balance on one foot;
- Use small muscles to perform tasks: cutting, tearing, gluing;
- Use scissors with control;
- Grasp writing tools with their fingers rather than fists.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we do things like:

- Use balance beams, climbing ropes and monkey bars to challenge coordination and balance;
- Begin to play organized games like kickball, catch and tag;
- Talk longer walks to local parks or points of interest;
- Put together collages using pictures, scissors, glue and other media;
- String beads together or make plastic bead collages;
- Build using small and large blocks and Legos, Lincoln Logs, etc.;
- Do supervised **woodworking** projects depending on individual children's dexterity and safety skills.

guidance

At Gretchen's House we:

- Deputize children — give them responsibilities for classroom management such as collecting scissors or choosing leaders;
- Use **natural consequences** and if/then statements to empower children to manage their own behavior;
- Address physical acting out in a swift and firm manner — time away, loss of privileges, and conferences with parents to make **behavior management plans**;
- Make children responsible for their own belongings;
- Allow children to propose reasonable alternatives in challenging situations;
- Use field trips to practice going out in society and meeting new people.

Easy ways to make a 4 year old feel powerful:

- Let them lead groups: walking, singing, dancing;
- Have them help plan upcoming activities;
- Expect them to choose their own clothing;
- Keep them in small groups so they don't feel outnumbered or overwhelmed;
- Let them do "real work:" sort recycling, take out garbage, etc.;
- Help them understand the difference between tattling and asking for help;
- Acknowledge successes publicly.

*To order reprints, contact
Gretchen's House at 734.761.2576*

Active Learning at Gretchen's House



**your
4-5 year old
child:**

**-helper-
-observer-
-buddy-**

© 2000 Gretchen's House, Inc. No portion of this brochure may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.

cognitive development

Between 4-5 years, most children:

- Begin to show interest in letters and numbers;
- Recognize their own first names when written;
- Create **representational art**;
- Follow 2- and 3- step directions;
- Categorize objects;
- Relate their own ideas and experiences with understanding;
- Recognize many shapes.

**To support these developing skills,
at Gretchen's House
we do things like:**

- Label classroom objects and belongings;
- Ask children to label their own work with their name;
- Sort objects by shape, size, color and texture; function, size, and other higher concepts;
- Have pre-writing tools available for free choice: paper, pencils, magazines for cutting pictures out, etc.;
- Use a variety of art media daily;
- Use sensory materials to explore concepts like quantity, weight, and study properties of matter;
- Begin basic math work like sets and counting.

language development

Between 4-5 years, most children:

- Speak in complete sentences;
- Are easily understood when speaking;
- Recall songs and fingerplays;
- Begin to show interest in letters, words;
- Ask and answer questions;
- Recognize their own written first name and perhaps those in their family;
- Use words to articulate their feelings;
- Can put story events in correct sequence;
- Imitate letters by scribbling;
- May recognize some letters by sight (with or without understanding that they correspond to particular sounds).

**To support these developing skills,
at Gretchen's House
we do things like:**

- Use daily circle time to tell and listen to children's stories, read books, and practice listening skills;
- Use journals to scribble, draw, or practice letters, depending on children's interests;
- Talk about sounds that letters make and look for things that begin with those sounds;
- Have children tell stories and transcribe their words;
- Listen to books on tape during rest time or during interest center activities;
- Make rebus stories with children to demonstrate that words represent things.

social-emotional development

Between 4-5 years, most children:

- Understand rules and remind others of them;
- **Separate** easily from parents;
- Play well by self and with others;
- Show consideration of others (inconsistently);
- Follow routines and schedules;
- Develop skills for calming themselves when frustrated;
- Use words rather than physical means of expressing frustration.

**To support these developing skills,
at Gretchen's House
we do things like:**

- Encourage children to work through their own disputes (with coaching, if needed);
- Model **empathic behavior**;
- Allow children to choose their own playmates, as long as choices do not hurt other children;
- Coach skills for joining groups in progress: Help children say "That looks fun, can I play?"
- Set goals for positive behavior and reward cooperation with privileges;
- Provide rest time for children to re-group and do quiet, individual activities;
- Work in small groups on daily and weekly projects like bulletin boards or building volcanoes, for example;
- Insist on polite words and behavior.