

QUÉBEC EDUCATION PROGRAM

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

Preschool Education Program for 4-Year-Olds

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Table of Contents

A Program for 4-Year-Olds.....	1
Working Together on Behalf of the Child.....	4
Program Orientations	6
Program Components	9
Areas of Development, Competencies, Focuses of Development and Key Features	12

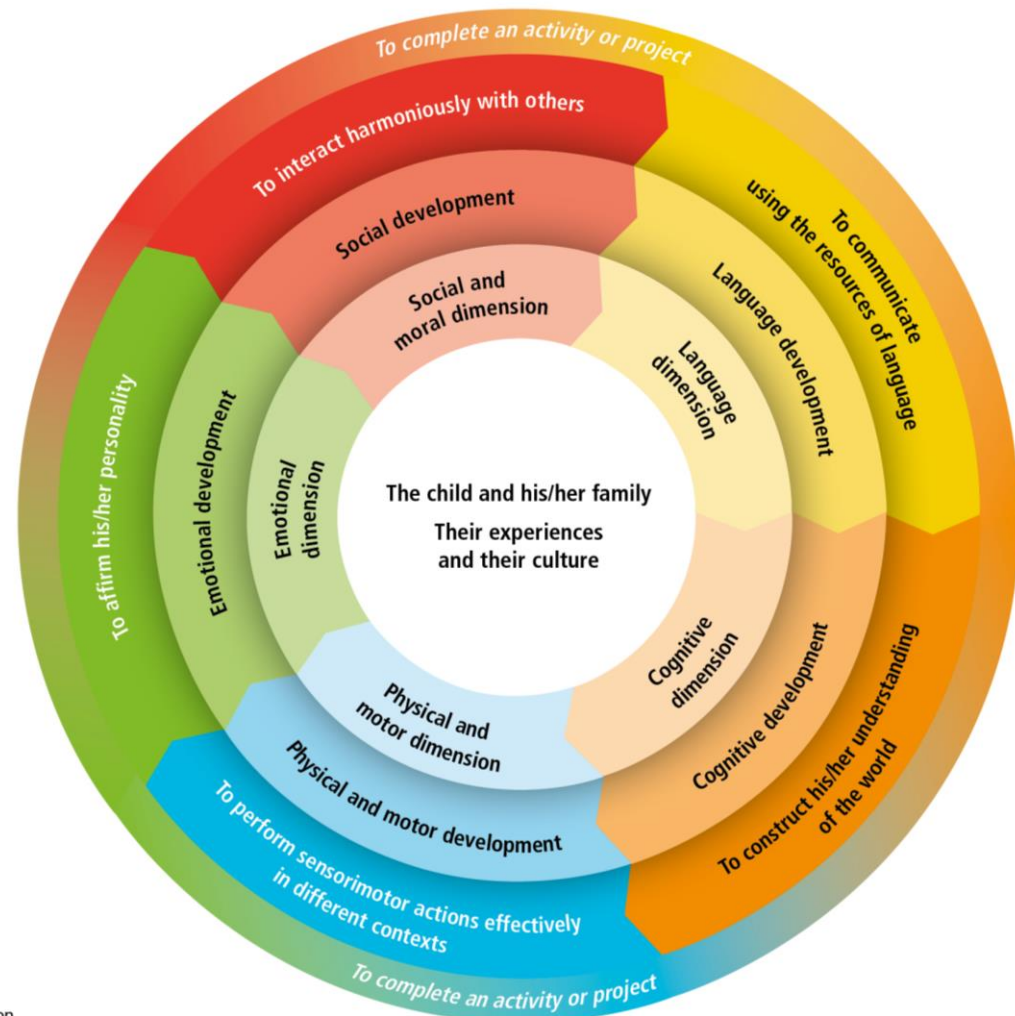
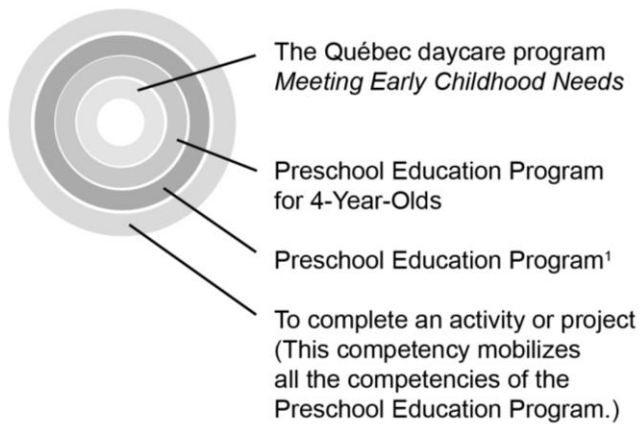
A Program for 4-Year-Olds

This program is intended to facilitate the global development of the child. It prepares children for the Preschool Education Program for 5-Year-Olds and is in line with the Québec daycare program Meeting Early Childhood Needs. The diagram on the following page illustrates how all programs are connected.

The program for 4-year-olds has a threefold mandate: to provide all children with equal opportunities; to ensure that they develop in all areas; to see to it that they believe in their abilities and discover the pleasure of learning. For this reason, the school must take the necessary steps to provide an environment that makes children and their families feel welcome and at ease.

To carry out this mandate, the entire school team must work together to create conditions conducive to learning and act with prevention in mind. Cooperation is essential to foster children's global development so that they are prepared for the Preschool Education program.

How the programs are connected ?



1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Québec Education Program: Preschool Education, Elementary Education (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001)

To provide all children with equal opportunities

The Preschool Education Program for 4-Year-Olds is intended to foster the development of all the children enrolled in it. This should provide them with an opportunity to enter preschool for 5-year-olds on an equal footing with all the other children. Support and quality practices as well as appropriate expectations should enable them to meet the challenges presented to them. Expectations that are either too high or too low may hinder their development.

The school must adopt practices conducive to optimum collaboration among all the stakeholders to ensure that the essential two-way communication between the school and the family takes place.

To foster child development in all areas

Each child arrives at school with experiences that vary according to his or her personal characteristics and family background, and each has developed his or her own range of skills and knowledge. This is why it is essential to take the child's specific situation into account and to build on the strengths encountered in each area of his or her development. Teachers can use the Preschool Education Program for 4-Year-Olds as a guide to help them more effectively observe children in action, so that they can provide children with challenges adapted to their interests and needs and make it possible for them to acquire a broader range of experiences and develop their full potential.

To help children develop a feeling of competence and a desire to learn

We know how important early success in school is. The development of physical, motor, socioaffective and cognitive skills, along with other skills associated with language, reading, writing and mathematics, is a major contributor to educational success. By attending preschool for 4-year-olds, children should be able to acquire the attitudes, strategies, behaviours and processes they need to feel valued and proud, and to be prepared for the rest of their schooling. It is mainly by having children experience success right from their initial contact with school that preschool education plays a positive and decisive role in their progress.

Working Together on Behalf of the Child

The Importance of Collaboration With Parents

A close relationship between the family and the school is important to ensure that children feel at ease when they start school, settle in and develop confidence. Since children's first educators are their parents, it is essential to recognize parents from the outset as indispensable allies who can help the school gain a better understanding of their children and meet their needs. In other words, preschool for 4-year-olds accommodates not only children but their families. Parents and children alike must be helped in the process of familiarizing themselves with the school. It is important that harmonious and effective cooperation and communication be established right from the start, and that it continue throughout children's time in school.

Parents and the school must work together to support children during this crucial phase. It is important, therefore, to seek and clearly value and promote parental cooperation from the beginning, and to establish respectful and open communication between the school and the family in order to forge a solid alliance. To achieve this, all stakeholders should coordinate their efforts and ensure that these result in a welcoming procedure that allows the school team to gain a better understanding of the children and their families, and enables the children to enjoy their first experiences in a school that is ready to welcome them. Collaboration, particularly with parents, will enable children to acquire a positive image of the school and be successful there.

Recognition of the Cultural Dimension

School plays a key role in developing children's cultural understanding. It is through contact with others that children expand and enrich their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. To meet the children's needs, the school must take an interest in the culture each child brings to school upon starting kindergarten. The various means used to nourish this culture include discussion, play experiences, stories, fairy tales, nursery rhymes and the arts¹. Visits to cultural venues (e.g. libraries, museums, theatres) can also enrich children's culture by bringing them into contact with authors and creators, artworks, museologists and artists.

The question of cultural understanding arises in a particular way in a multicultural social and academic context where ongoing dialogue is not only desirable but necessary to ensure that young children and their parents can harmoniously integrate into the structure of school life.

¹ Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Arts.

Recognition of the Teacher's Expertise

An in-depth understanding of child development and of the advantages of various pedagogical approaches enables teachers to plan rich and diversified learning contexts. Relying also on their knowledge of the children entrusted to their care and observations regarding these children's specific characteristics, teachers offer developmental activities that are both age-appropriate and tailored to the children's level of development and learning styles. Teachers help the children to expand their repertoire of actions, deepen their understanding of various concepts and increase their knowledge in accordance with their abilities and interests. In this way, teachers enable the students to experience success and develop their motivation and desire to learn in a lasting manner.

Because of their professional judgment and expertise, teachers are able to tailor their practices, approaches and interventions to the children's needs.

Planning a Smooth Transition

The start of school is also a period in which children leave the world of early childhood. This transition also marks the beginning of their school days and the construction of new relationships with their families and, of course, the school. For certain children, the changes involved in this transition can bring out certain vulnerabilities with respect to their future development. To facilitate this transition, the school must consider the specific characteristics of the children and their families in order to help them gradually adapt and adjust to this new environment.

The transition period begins during the year preceding the start of school and can last up to two years. Planning during this period is important so that children and their families feel welcome right from the time of admission. Such planning fosters joint action conducive to educational continuity across children's various life environments. The planning procedure leads to practices and initiatives in each school environment. It is carried out in conjunction with all stakeholders who work directly with children and their families. It should also facilitate the creation of networks that will become anchor points and serve as bases for future transitions.

Program Orientations

The Global Development of the Child

Global development refers to the whole range of physical, motor, emotional, social, language and cognitive development as well as to the highly specific ways in which young children develop and learn. All areas of development need to be given their due and treated synergistically. Hence teachers draw on all aspects of the program during daily activities, and do so in ways that respect children's capacity for understanding, meet their needs and match their interests. In the educational contexts presented to children, the various areas of development fit together and influence one another.

Children and Play

Play is a natural way for children to explore and understand the world around them, as it brings them into contact with people and things. From their feelings and experience, children construct a sensory and affective memory that enhances their lives. The pleasure and satisfaction they derive from play encourages them, moreover, to engage in play activities and persevere.

When playing, children learn to be autonomous, among other things; they make choices and decisions, have ideas, develop scenarios, make themselves understood, often act as conciliators or mediators, and find solutions to problems. When engaged in play, they learn to concentrate and to not be drawn away by distractions. Play has affective, social, motor and cognitive dimensions. It is also a means of communication, expression and action.

Sufficient time and space should be set aside to enable each child to be actively engaged in play, perhaps one or two 45-minute periods per day. If children are not given enough time to play, they will not fully engage in it, and the activity will remain superficial at best. Outdoor play is also important, particularly for the development of motor and social skills, and should be scheduled on a regular basis.

To develop their full potential, children do nonetheless need support so that they can become fully involved in play and gradually make it more and more complex.

A Quality Environment

The quality of the educational environment depends on the quality of interpersonal relationships, on the support provided to children in their learning and on class organization.

Relationships

Relationships between adults and children, or among children themselves, should take place in a positive, welcoming and warm environment. All adults who work with children should be very sensitive to them and attentive to their needs. It is important that children be able to maintain stable and harmonious relationships with a small number of significant individuals.

Support for the Child

Children learn in a variety of ways and their early experiences can influence their entire academic path. Providing support for children means detecting signs that are manifested through their attitudes and behaviour in the classroom, school daycare, gymnasium, etc. It also means continually considering the best and most effective ways to intervene. In this regard, teachers select the types of intervention that seem appropriate and adjust them to meet the needs of each child. They then gradually reduce the amount of support they offer in proportion to observable gains in the child's autonomy.

Classroom Organization

Classroom organization involves three dimensions: the physical environment, behaviour management and scheduled daily activities.

The classroom is organized in such a way as to foster the children's participation and to provide for various types of play (e.g. *a home centre*, *a building blocks centre*). Children find a wide range of stimulating, diversified and developmental materials.

One must also keep in mind that, in general, 4-year-olds live in an environment where technology is ubiquitous—hence the importance of facilitating access to it and making it a tool for learning.

Through the use of clear and precise instructions, behaviour management fosters a classroom atmosphere in which the needs of all are respected. Consistent and coherent instructions are likely to be understood. Children also need to be guided through the process of conflict resolution, so that they gradually become capable of resolving conflicts on their own.

Teachers also take into consideration each child's prior learning, interests and concerns, and use them as learning tools. Learning activities are provided for all the areas of development and may target a specific area in order to meet certain needs. The activities reinforce the pleasure of learning insofar as they offer challenges that children are able to meet, sometimes with a little help. More targeted interventions may be necessary at times to better support some children in certain aspects of their learning.

Children should also be given opportunities to be active, observe, manipulate objects, reflect, imagine, make connections between what they already know and what they are learning, use their memory, move about, etc. In general, 4-year-olds are able to acquire the learning set out in the program as long as they are given sufficient opportunities to do so. However, some children will need more support and encouragement. Empowered in this way, they are helped to excel in their initiatives and efforts, to develop learning strategies and to express and apply their ideas.

Observation of the Child's Progress

Observing children's progress requires an attitude of active listening and attentiveness to what is going on and what their words and actions reveal. This makes it possible to identify their skills, knowledge, learning, interests and questions. Analysis of children's learning processes, comments and work provides information on concepts that are still being formed and allows the teacher to provide them with opportunities for a variety of experiences.

Helping children to learn presupposes not only that we take an interest in them and identify their needs, strengths and difficulties, but also that we adapt our teaching strategies to them and vary our learning contexts and types of intervention, as needed. Teachers make observations related to the areas of development and take appropriate steps to help children progress.

Observation is also used to make children aware of what they are now capable of doing compared with what they were unable to do in the past. By asking them, if necessary, to describe in words what they are actually doing, the teacher enables them to become aware of what and how they are learning.

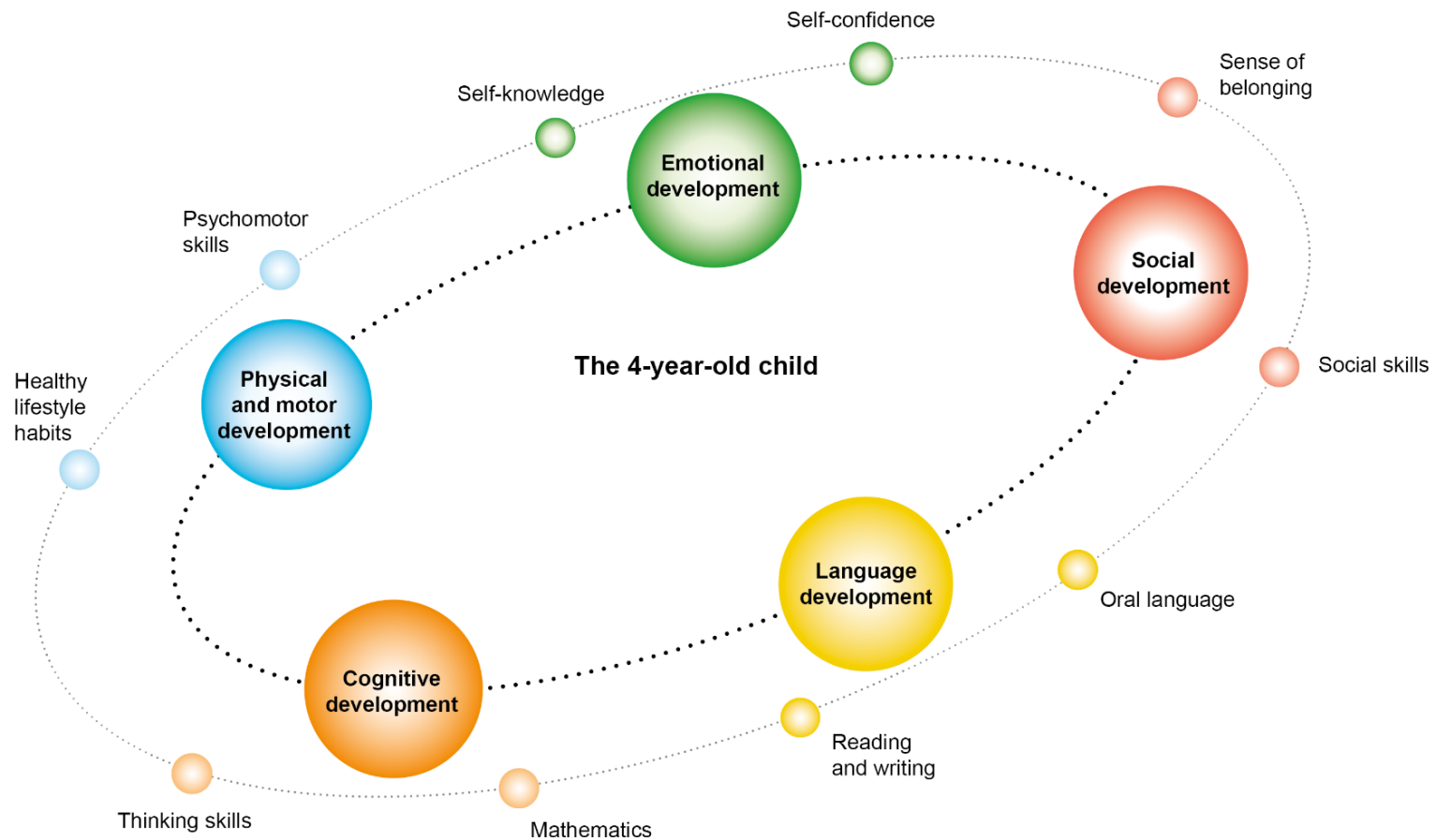
Observation also allows teachers to provide parents with information that showcases their children's "work" and that draws attention to the process, content and presentation involved. This may include samples of the work the children have done at various stages of achievement (e.g. *photographs showing them involved in activities, comments by the children and the teacher, transcriptions of discussions held with the teacher*).

Program Components

The preschool education program for 4-year-old covers five areas of development. Each of these is linked to a competency comprising two focuses of development broken down into key features. Observable behaviours and pedagogical strategies are provided as examples for each key feature. They can serve as useful guides for the teacher.

Certain typical characteristics of 4-year-old and some of the needs observed among them are also presented as guidelines. Teachers can use this information to more effectively target their interventions so as to enable children to develop their full potential.

Areas in the global development of the child and focuses of development



Areas of Development

The five areas of development selected for this program are: physical and motor development, emotional development, social development, language development and cognitive development. It is important to keep in mind that each area is an integral part of a larger whole, as can be seen from the diagrams that provide an overview of each.

Focuses of Development and Key Features

Each area targets the development of a competency and comprises two focuses of development, each of which is broken down into a certain number of key features formulated from the viewpoint of the child. Although each key feature can be individually targeted through specific interventions, the development of a competency linked to a given area of development takes place within the combination of all its key features. This development takes place gradually and it is only at the end of the Preschool Education Program that outcomes for each competency at that level are actually formulated.²

Characteristics and Needs of Children

While all children go through the same stages of development, they do so in their own way and at their own pace. Even among children in the same class, it is not unusual to see the development of certain abilities separated by gaps of up to 12 months. Such gaps may also be more pronounced in certain environments. Thus it seemed useful to describe each area of development in two parts: the usual characteristics of 4-year-olds; and the particular needs observed among some of them.

Observable Behaviours

The observable behaviours paired with each key feature are intended as examples to help teachers determine which ones to focus on. The list provided here is non-prescriptive and can be enriched by the teacher. It is not directly linked to pedagogical strategies.

The behaviours described are observable facts that show what the child succeeds in doing, either alone or with a little help. These behaviours are not necessarily the result of an intervention since the child may have learned them outside the classroom. Some of the child's behaviours during or at the end of the school year show learning that was integrated and reused in a different context following interventions by the teacher.

² Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Québec Education Program: Preschool Education, Elementary Education* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001), 51-68.

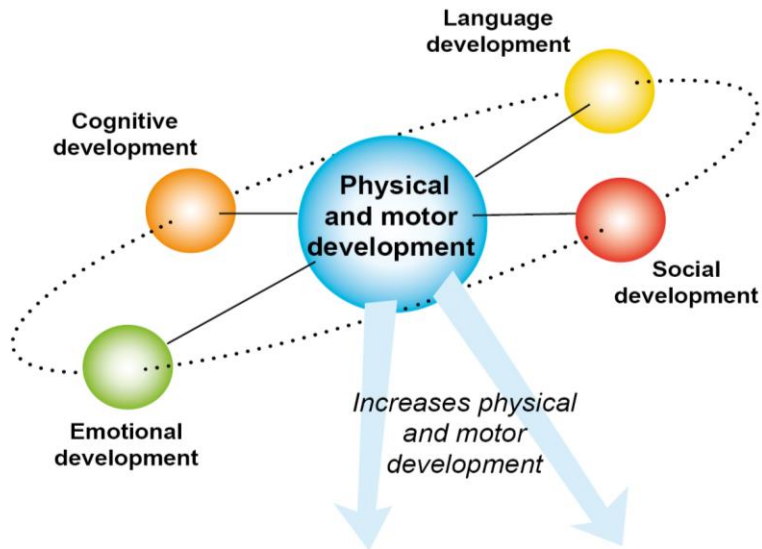
Pedagogical Strategies

Pedagogical strategies are suggested for each key feature. They identify attitudes, strategies, procedures or skills that children are likely to develop following an intervention by the teacher. There are, however, a limited number of these strategies and they are merely suggestions that can help teachers choose and plan activities.

Areas of Development, Competencies, Focuses of Development and Key Features

Areas of development and competencies	Physical and motor development Increases physical and motor development		Emotional development Builds self-esteem		Social development Maintains harmonious relationships with others		Language development Communicates by exploring spoken and written language		Cognitive development Explores the world around him/her	
	Psychomotor skills	Healthy lifestyle habits	Self-knowledge	Self-confidence	Sense of belonging	Social skills	Oral language	Reading and writing	Thinking skills	Mathematics
Key features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explores his/her sensory perceptions - Develops an awareness of his/her body - Uses his/her gross motor skills - Uses his/her fine motor skills - Explores the concepts of space and time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learns about healthy eating habits - Explores different ways of moving - Relaxes - Adopts practices associated with good personal hygiene - Learns about safety factors in his/her environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizes his/her personal characteristics - Expresses his/her emotions - Regulates his/her emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engages in positive experiences - Explores autonomy - Reacts with pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates connections with the other children - Creates connections with adults - Participates in group activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gradually assimilates rules of conduct - Makes contact with others - Regulates his/her behaviour - Resolves conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interacts verbally and non-verbally - Demonstrates his/her understanding - Expands his/her vocabulary - Expresses himself/herself orally in different ways - Demonstrates phonological awareness (phonological sensitivity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Becomes familiar with print - Recognizes some reading and writing conventions - Identifies the letters of the alphabet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses his/her reasoning skills - Draws upon his/her capacity for attention and memory - Uses his/her imagination - Explores his/her environment by engaging in activities related to arts, science, technology, history and geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explores numerical and spatial skills - Solves mathematical problems adapted to his/her level of development

Physical and Motor Development



Focuses of development

Psychomotor skills

Healthy lifestyle habits

Key features

- Explores his/her sensory perceptions
- Develops an awareness of his/her body
- Uses his/her gross motor skills
- Uses his/her fine motor skills
- Explores the concepts of space and time

- Learns about healthy eating habits
- Explores different ways of moving
- Relaxes
- Adopts practices associated with good personal hygiene
- Learns about safety factors in his/her environment

In general, 4-year-old:

- have a strong interest in activities that involve manipulating and exploring materials and objects;
- explore the different things their bodies can do, and their actions reflect their intentions;
- possess enough balance and coordination to synchronize their movements;
- have a tendency to define themselves in concrete terms on the basis of visible characteristics (e.g. *hair length and colour; clothing*);
- are naturally drawn to short, high-intensity activities;
- are able to distinguish movements associated with different parts of their body (e.g. *distinguish between what the feet do and what the hands do*);
- have the dexterity needed to grasp and manipulate objects (e.g. *knead modelling clay, make castles out of blocks*);
- can familiarize themselves with spatial situations in their environment while making qualitative judgments (e.g. *this is near or far*) and can compare two objects to determine which one is bigger;
- are able to interpret time cues or markers (e.g. know that story time comes before naptime; can say who came first or last in a race);
- develop their tastes and food preferences by discovering new foods;
- become better at finding ways to relax;
- become aware of certain dangers they may encounter in their environment.

Some children have a greater need:

- for encouragement in taking care of certain physical needs on their own (e.g. *going by themselves to the bathroom, feeding themselves*);
- to have a variety of sensory and motor experiences on a daily basis;
- to adopt good posture and to draw upon the various dimensions of their gross motor skills (coordination, dissociation, balance, inhibition);
- to overcome their fears and gain confidence in performing psychomotor activities;
- to handle different textures and to use a variety of tools;
- to engage in physical activities;
- to learn how to relax and to take part in relaxing activities;
- to provide themselves with reference points so that they can orient themselves in space and time.

Development of Psychomotor Skills

Physical and Motor Development

Key feature – Explores his/her sensory perceptions

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> handles various materials (e.g. <i>water, sand, rice, modelling clay</i>); agrees to touch a variety of textures, smell different odours, discover new flavours, etc.; assembles, aligns, stacks, piles up and fits together objects during play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discriminate by using his/her senses (sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste); become aware of the difference between heavy and light; adapt his/her actions to the weight of an object.

Key feature – Develops an awareness of his/her body

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> points out and names the main parts of his/her body; knows how many fingers and toes he/she has; imitates various gestures or movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be aware of his/her body and what it can do; feel comfortable with his/her body; explore different orientations using his/her whole body (forward, backward, to the right, to the left) or its parts (e.g. <i>tilt the head forward and backward</i>).

Key feature – Uses his/her gross motor skills

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> goes up and down the stairs one foot on each step; moves around in various ways (e.g. <i>imitates the movements of animals, follows a rhythm</i>); holds a restful pose, finds a balance point; slides, jumps, climbs, hops, stands on one foot, dances, walks, runs, etc.; throws, hits and catches a ball; adapts his/her movements to a task (e.g. <i>rolls a ball toward another child, dresses, undresses</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinate his/her movements; try different movements that involve the whole body; practise keeping his/her balance and to react when he/she loses it; learn that he/she can hold a pose (e.g. <i>sitting cross-legged</i>); slow down and control his/her movements.

Key feature – Uses his/her fine motor skills

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulates various modelling materials (e.g. <i>rolls or coils modelling clay or paste, makes balls of different sizes, or human or animal figures</i>); performs actions such as stringing beads, making towers with blocks, buttoning and unbuttoning an item of clothing, tightening and loosening a bottle cap, cutting with scissors, tearing paper; handles small objects (e.g. <i>small blocks, buttons, pompons, paper clips</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> handle various materials such as modelling clay (warm, cold, hard, soft) or finger paint to strengthen his/her fingers muscles; string beads, or use a small set of tongs to pick up small objects; properly handle and use materials placed at his/her disposal (e.g. <i>paintbrushes, scissors, touchpads</i>).

Key feature – Explores the concepts of space and time

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moves around while avoiding obstacles; refers to a calendar or pictograms representing the day's schedule to obtain a sense of the daily routine; moves around to have more space; reproduces a rhythm he/she has heard, by clapping; finds his/her place in a group, his/her locker, the bathroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> position himself/herself in space (e.g. <i>jumping through a hoop, moving around obstacles</i>); be aware of others when moving around; move at different paces (slow or fast); assimilate various concepts of time, such as “at the same time,” “before,” “after”; reproduce sequences of movements; use the concepts of space and time.

Key feature – Learns about healthy eating habits

<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> names foods; agrees to taste new foods. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop his/her taste and preferences in food by discovering new foods; recognize some healthy snacks and foods; observe, feel, touch and taste foods.
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Key feature – Explores different ways of moving

<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plays on the structures in the park or the schoolyard; spontaneously uses material designed for active play; repeats a newly learned action so as to consolidate it. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore active play indoors and out (dancing, swinging, climbing on play structures, etc.); take the initiative in active play; use several periods for active play throughout the day.
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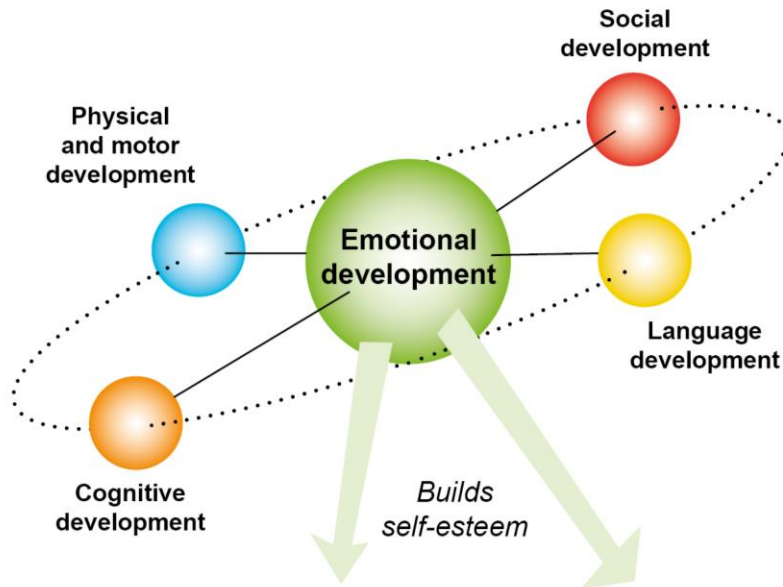
Key feature – Relaxes

<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chooses a comfortable relaxation position; recognizes the actions and objects that help him/her to relax; stays calm during naptime. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rest; try new ways of calming down (e.g. <i>deep breathing</i>); concentrate on himself/herself.
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Key feature – Adopts practices associated with good personal hygiene	
<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goes to the bathroom alone; • uses a tissue. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wash his/her hands before and after snack time; • wipe his/her mouth after eating; • sneeze into the crook of his/her arm; • put waste in the garbage can or, if something can be recycled or composted, in the appropriate bin.

Key feature – Learns about safety factors in his/her environment	
<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goes up and down the stairs safely; • moves around in the school and the classroom; • pays attention to things that may be dangerous; • can name certain safety rules. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be careful when moving around and when handling certain objects; • recognize his/her limitations (e.g. <i>to run at his/her own pace, to refrain from going too quickly, to choose manageable challenges</i>); • learn about symbols warning of the dangers associated with certain substances (e.g. <i>toxic, explosive, corrosive or flammable products</i>); • recognize certain potentially dangerous situations; • follow instructions in evacuating a building.

Emotional Development



Focuses of development

Self-knowledge

Self-confidence

Key features

- Recognizes his/her personal characteristics
- Expresses his/her emotions
- Regulates his/her emotions

- Engages in positive experiences
- Explores autonomy
- Reacts with pride

In general, 4-year-olds:

- still need the support of their parents or the adults around them to confidently explore their environment;
- understand that they are unique people with a range of characteristics that are theirs alone;
- are aware of their status within their family;
- are sensitive to how others perceive them, which increasingly plays a significant role in their self-definition;
- feel proud when they contribute to the attainment of a common goal (e.g. *doing a jigsaw puzzle with another person*);
- are learning to express and manage their emotions;
- often overestimate their skills and are not always aware of boundaries they should respect.

Some children have a greater need:

- to live in a stable and safe environment;
- to feel accepted as they are, without being judged;
- to be in contact with adults who are attentive to their needs and in a position to accommodate their emotions;
- to experience success, however modest, so that they can identify their strengths and increase their self-esteem;
- to draw on their creativity and feel proud of their accomplishments.

Development of Self-Knowledge

Emotional Development

Key feature – Recognizes his/her personal characteristics

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can say his/her given name; can say his/her age; can say the colour of his/her eyes, hair, skin, etc.; recognizes himself/herself in photographs; recognizes similarities or differences vis-à-vis other children in the class (e.g. “<i>I wear glasses,</i>” “<i>I’m taller than you</i>”); can say “just like me” when looking at a book, image, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> say his/her given name, family name, gender and age; recognize his/her own unique physical features; discover his/her tastes and interests; recognize his/her place within the family.

Key feature – Expresses his/her emotions

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is sensitive to what others say to him/her and how they say it; reacts when an event or situation concerns him/her; is increasingly capable of recognizing the signs of an emotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be aware of his/her emotions; express his/her emotions in words; talk about an emotion felt during an event; recognize emotions of joy, sadness, anger and fear.

Key feature – Regulates his/her emotions

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepts comfort from adults or friends; is increasingly capable of dealing with failure or frustration; gradually controls his/her reaction when faced with an unpleasant event; is able to wait a certain amount of time before having a need or want addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adapt his/her emotions, behaviour and attention to the requirements of a situation; use strategies to calm down; reacts appropriately when he/she is angry or made fun of.

Development of Self-Confidence

Emotional Development

Key feature – Engages in positive experiences

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is motivated to take up new challenges; selects an activity, game or project according to his/her interests; completes a game, activity or project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in experiences suited to his/her abilities; recognize situations that make him/her happy; find a way of successfully carrying out a task; show perseverance when he/she encounters a problem; recognize the value of learning.

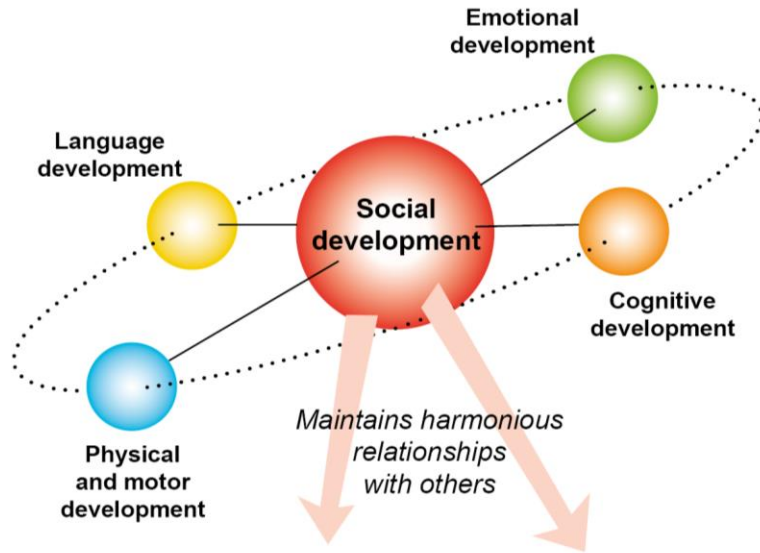
Key feature – Explores autonomy

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selects activities that most appeal to him/her; uses the reference frameworks available to him/her (e.g. <i>daily schedule, steps involved in getting dressed</i>); tries or suggests new activities willingly; tries new ways of using materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proceed by trial and error; show initiative; carry out activities without always having an adult nearby.

Key feature – Reacts with pride

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows things he/she has done, with a smile; draws appropriate attention to his/her achievements (e.g. <i>“Look what I did . . .”</i>); describes ways in which he/she has succeeded (e.g. <i>“Now I can . . .”</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appreciate his/her efforts and attempts; become aware of his/her abilities, qualities, successes and strengths.

Social Development



Focuses of development

Sense of belonging

Social skills

Key features

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates connections with the other children • Creates connections with adults • Participates in group activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually assimilates rules of conduct • Makes contact with others • Regulates his/her behaviour • Resolves conflicts |
|--|--|

In general, 4-year-olds:

- begin to acknowledge the presence of others, favouring socially acceptable forms of behaviour, such as lending, borrowing, giving, helping, accepting, exchanging and waiting;
- realize that they are growing up in an ever wider social environment within a cultural space that includes, among others, their family, teachers and friends;
- create initial emotional bonds with their peers;
- try to collaborate and cooperate with others in order to attain their goals;
- gradually become aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate depending on the context;
- manage, with help, to control their aggressive impulses in a range of situations;
- adopt socially acceptable strategies.

Some children have a greater need:

- to live in a stable and safe environment where the rules of conduct are clear and adapted to them;
- to participate frequently in activities in small or large groups when they are not familiar with this type of experience;
- to receive help in learning to express their desires, frustrations and requests;
- to be supported as they learn and assimilate the rules of conduct of the school and classroom;
- to be supported in acquiring reference and anchor points when in contact with people from a culture that is different from their own.

Development of a Sense of Belonging

Social Development

Key feature – Creates connections with the other children

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes an interest in the other children; recognizes those that are part of his/her group; accepts that another child may be different from himself/herself physically or have different preferences; recognizes similarities and differences in others (adults or children). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approach another child to play; take time to listen to others' requests; recognize that other children have the right to express their emotions and feelings; accept the specific needs of another child.

Key feature – Creates connections with adults

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks for the presence of an adult; accepts help from an adult; feels safe in class in the presence of an adult; feels comfortable in the presence of a new person, or in a new environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate with an adult in daily classroom situations; seek the support of an adult in situations where he/she feels threatened; seek the support of an adult when he/she needs help.

Key feature – Participates in group activities

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plays with other children; participates in group activities; agrees to lend or share materials and toys; puts away the materials and toys with the other children; suggests games to play; asks another child to play with him/her. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accept the invitation of others to play with them; join a game that is already under way; recognize that he/she is part of a group; accept taking turns (e.g. "it's your turn to . . ."); negotiate and plans games with others; express ideas, make suggestions.

Key feature – Gradually assimilates rules of conduct

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to tools or other concrete means (e.g. <i>pictograms, posters, role-playing, songs, signs</i>) to remember the class rules of conduct; follows the rules of conduct; complies with instructions without being reminded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop, know and understand the rules of conduct established in the class; take on responsibilities he/she can manage within the group; take care of his/her surroundings and the material at his/her disposal; follow some of the school's rules of conduct; use courtesy expressions with his/her peers and adults.

Key feature – Makes contact with others

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks around, sees what is happening, turns toward someone; points to someone or something, smiles; walks slowly toward another person, touches, holds hands, offers to share an object; asks questions to another child; comforts a crying or injured child; congratulates another child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use words rather than gestures to express his/her requests; initiate interactions with others (ability to initiate contact); suggest ideas; accept that the other children may want to play something different from him/her.

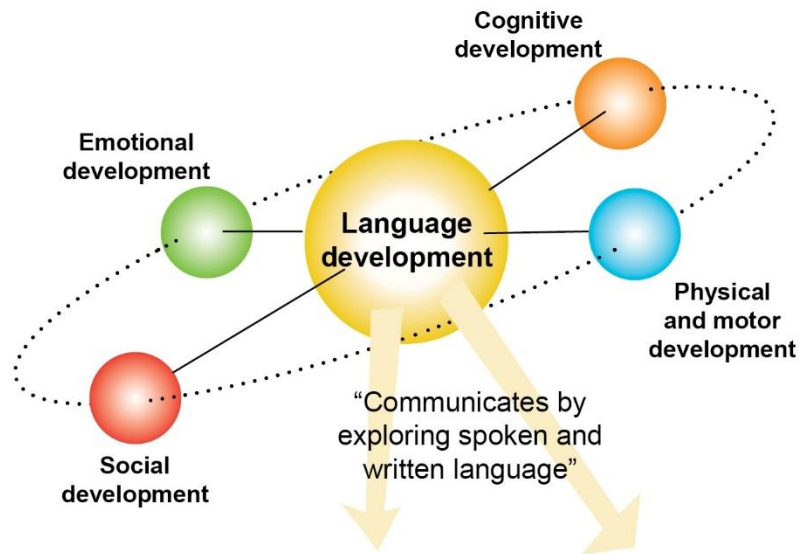
Key feature – Regulates his/her behaviour

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes the first signs of an emotion; can wait for an adult's help; verbally expresses his/her discontent, lack of understanding, or joy; shows flexibility when undergoing transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize means for developing socially acceptable behaviour; change his/her behaviour if the desired outcome is not reached; control a behaviour deemed to be socially unacceptable and caused by emotions or feelings (e.g. anger); recognize the steps he/she has successfully taken in adopting appropriate behaviours; go from a structured situation to an unstructured situation and vice versa without getting thrown off balance.

Key feature – Resolves conflicts

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> asks for an adult's help to solve a problem; describes the problem in his/her own words; makes concessions or compromises; accepts the solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use words to express a feeling or emotion concerning a disagreement without making accusations; speak using "I" statements; listen to another child's version of an event; use the approach suggested in class for resolving conflicts; make amends for any wrong he/she may sometimes cause peers; accept the amends or apologies of peers.

Language Development



Focuses of development

Development of oral language

Development of reading and writing

Key features

- Interacts verbally and non-verbally
- Demonstrates his/her understanding
- Expands his/her vocabulary
- Expresses himself/herself in different ways
- Demonstrates phonological awareness (phonological sensitivity)

- Interacts with print
- Recognizes a number of reading and writing conventions
- Identifies the letters of the alphabet

In general, 4-year-olds:

- are able to have a fairly long conversation with other children or adults when a subject interests them;
- use oral language with increasing frequency to establish and maintain social relationships with another child or an adult;
- noticeably improve their vocabulary on a daily basis with new words, longer and more complex sentences, etc.;
- give increasingly complex explanations and try to qualify what they say through the use of short words: *but, also, or, before, after, in, between, on, under, etc.*;
- grasp the meaning of more complex questions with relative ease when their mother tongue is the language of instruction;
- are able to perceive sounds;
- can extrapolate the meaning of words in various contexts;
- show an interest in writing and pay attention to the symbols used to communicate in writing.

Some children have a greater need:

- to interact with individuals who can model good oral communication as well as reading and writing behaviours. They may not be used to talking about what they have done, seen, or discovered, or the success they have had. Often one or two words are all they need to express their actions, requests or emotions (e.g. *pointing, pushing*);
- for acceptance when they express themselves (non-verbal communication, either through silence, gestures, facial expressions, etc.). Preschool is often the first place where the language spoken is different from the one spoken at home;
- for numerous opportunities to speak throughout the day;
- for numerous opportunities to become familiar with print;
- for rich and diversified cultural experiences using a wide variety of media;
- to associate school with a positive experience with the language of instruction, particularly if they are children from allophone families;
- to be in learning contexts in which literacy constitutes a pleasant experience;
- to learn new words and how to play with words, sounds and letters.

Development of Oral Language

Language Development

Key feature – Interacts verbally and non-verbally

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows, through his/her actions, an interest in and openness to communication; expresses himself/herself with the other children during play; sings or recites a nursery rhyme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in dialogue in different contexts throughout the day; listen to other children when they express themselves; ask questions; make requests.

Key feature – Demonstrates his/her understanding

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows or participates in class discussions (e.g. <i>after a story is read to the group</i>); uses words or gestures to reply to simple questions, such as “Who took your car?”; names the steps in a procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand words heard daily in class; rephrase an instruction; demonstrate, verbally or non-verbally, that he/she does not understand something; describe something he/she has produced.

Key feature – Expands his/her vocabulary

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeats words or expressions as he/she hears them even if he/she does not understand their full meaning; attempts to use new words; uses a familiar word in different contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learn new words associated with objects, actions and emotions; group related words (e.g. <i>make an idea tree, a network or diagram</i>); use the precise words the most frequently used to designate objects, actions, emotions, ICT terminology, etc.; use polite phrases and expressions.

Key feature – Expresses himself/herself orally in different ways

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constructs his/her sentences in a comprehensible manner; produces statements spontaneously during play; speaks in the first person singular; tells a story as if it came from a book (e.g. <i>Once upon a time . . .</i>); is able to form negative sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> memorize the lyrics of a short song or nursery rhyme; remember a few elements or details of a story; describe an event or an action; make increasingly complex statements (e.g. <i>I played <u>with</u> a friend <u>because</u> he is nice; I <u>think</u> that I <u>am</u> able . . .</i>).

Key feature – Demonstrates phonological awareness (phonological sensitivity)

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes a voice, sound or noise, and where it comes from; tries to follow a rhythm; reacts to rhymes he/she has heard; finds some words funnier than others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to the sounds around him/her and use various means, including ICT, to pay attention to them; explore a variety of rhythms; recognize the occurrence of words or sounds often repeated in a nursery rhyme or poem; recognize that certain words begin or end with the same sound; reproduce sequences of sounds.

Key feature – Becomes familiar with print

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows an interest in books and stories; looks through books; pretends to read by using illustrations or by remembering a story already read to him/her; recognizes drawings, pictograms, words, etc. showing the daily routine; tries to write his/her given name; writes a word or story in his/her own way (scribbles, a mix of symbols and letters); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discovers some of the purposes of reading and writing; react verbally or non-verbally to the reading of a story (mime, facial expressions, exclamations, etc.); explore non-fiction books, picture books, counting books, reading apps and e-books; match photographs of himself/herself or of friends with their given names; observe how some words are written in their environment; participate in the writing of stories on an individual or group basis (by dictating to an adult); recognize his/her given name and, at times, other given names or familiar words.

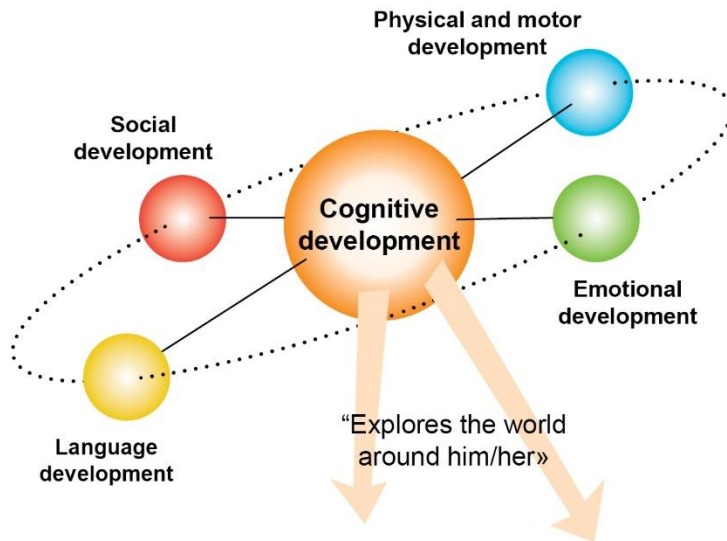
Key feature – Recognizes some reading and writing conventions

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds a book right side up; looks through a book page by page; can find the beginning of a book and its title. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognize that certain terms are associated with books (e.g. <i>page, title, book cover, author, illustrator</i>); use terms associated specifically with writing (e.g. <i>letter, word</i>).

Key feature – Identifies the letters of the alphabet

Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulates the letters of the alphabet in a variety of ways (e.g. <i>magnetic letters, letter stamps, sets of lower and upper case letters, various letter shapes</i>); uses letters in his/her attempts to write. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies the names and sounds of some letters in his/her given name; identifies the names and sounds of some letters that are meaningful for him/her; note that letters represent units of sound in oral language.

Cognitive Development



Focuses of development

Development of thinking skills

Development of mathematics

Key features

- Acquires reasoning skills
- Draws upon his/her capacity for attention and memory
- Uses his/her imagination
- Explores his/her environment by engaging in activities related to science and technology and the social sciences

- Explores numerical and spatial skills
- Solves mathematical problems adapted to his/her level of development

In general, 4-year-olds:

- often jump from one activity to another because they are naturally curious and everything that interests them grabs their immediate attention;
- are at the symbolic and intuitive thinking stage and are beginning to construct their first concepts, which can sometimes lead them to make errors in reasoning;
- view the world more from a perceptual standpoint;
- are able to make quantitative comparisons and to use words like *more and less, put together, take away, add, and share*; they also begin to count larger sets and to explore figures and measurements;
- try more and more to represent something precise in their drawings, such as a house, a human figure or a sun;
- are able to plan actions and take initiative in order to start making connections or to attain a particular goal.

Some children have a greater need:

- to be cognitively active in meaningful activities based on their interests;
- to speak regularly with others about what they do;
- to draw on what they know with the support of the adults who enter into dialogue with them and ask them questions;
- to be exposed to a range of cultural experiences in mathematics, science, technology, arts, history and geography;
- to develop certain habits essential to learning that are less frequently a part of their daily experience (e.g. asking questions, making predictions, making connections between what they already know and new learning);
- to manipulate a variety of objects that foster the exploration and construction of various concepts related to mathematics, or to explore situations that require them to plan, organize and act in order to carry out an activity.

Development of Thinking Skills

Cognitive Development

Key feature – Uses his/her reasoning skills	
<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • watches carefully how another child does something before taking action himself/herself; • looks for what he/she needs to carry out an activity or a small project (e.g. arts and crafts, construction); • asks for help whenever he/she runs into problems; • recognizes simple steps in the class routine; • asks questions (Why? How? etc.); • explains in his/her own words why something happened. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on what he/she is going to do, is doing or has done; • make connections and comparisons and develops hypotheses; • take part in developing procedures and sequences of actions.

Key feature – Draws upon his/her capacity for attention and memory	
<p>Observable behaviours</p> <p>Alone or with some help, the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follows a series of steps in order to accomplish a task (e.g. <i>get dressed, make a craft or art object</i>); • remembers words from songs and nursery rhymes; • pays attention to an object or event and can ignore distractions; • remembers an event experienced with the group. 	<p>Pedagogical strategies</p> <p>With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to a few instructions and memorize them before beginning an activity; • express what he/she has retained following oral instructions or an activity; • remember the steps involved in carrying out an activity; • remember a procedure to follow; • memorize sequences of rhythms, actions or sounds.

Key feature – Uses his/her imagination	
Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates characters and imaginary situations in his/her symbolic play; re-imagines an ordinary object as something different from what it normally is; makes something based on his/her own original idea; proposes a solution to a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore various media and materials and use them in a variety of ways; represents his/her experiences or imaginary situations; take part in symbolic play, acting out different roles and adapting to changes as play progresses; transform a real situation into an imaginary one; present his/her plays to others.

Key feature – Explores his/her environment by engaging in activities related to arts, science, technology, history and geography	
Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes the elements of his/her immediate environment; speaks about his/her family; shows interest in new materials and activities; manipulates a variety of objects, materials, instruments, etc.; explores various techniques; builds something based on an idea; tries to find a solution to a problem; works with the ICT tools at his/her disposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to a range of music, look at works of art, perform dances, invent short skits; observe his/her environment and the people and objects in it; make predictions based on causal links; investigate various subjects or themes; take an interest in non-fiction books, atlas, etc.; use elements observed in non-fiction books in his/her crafts and play.

Development of Mathematical Skills

Cognitive Development

Key feature – Explores numerical and spatial skills	
Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulates various objects to group, count, classify, compare, organize, etc.; selects games that involve counting, matching and classifying; recites a counting rhyme, for example, while pointing at objects; recognizes shapes (squares, triangles, circles, rectangles) in his/her environment; makes a construction with different objects; creates regular patterns and sequences; recognizes the difference between «a lot» and «a little»; follows a simple itinerary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> associate various elements in play areas (e.g. <i>store, house, construction</i>); sort, classify, group, compare and organize objects in his/her immediate environment; count the items in a small collection (e.g. <i>number of friends in the class who are wearing red sweaters</i>); sort or classify objects by size, colour, shape, etc.; combine figures to create new ones; move a board game piece forward after throwing a dice.

Key feature – Solves mathematical problems adapted to his/her level of development	
Observable behaviours Alone or with some help, the child:	Pedagogical strategies With support from an adult, the child is encouraged to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tries to find a solution to a problem; proceeds by trial and error. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> find various strategies for solving a problem; consider more than one possible solution.

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