



## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT IN YOUNG CHILDREN

### **At 48 months (4 years) . . .**

- Your child likes to play with other children and has favorite games and playmates.
- Your child is beginning to share and take turns but is possessive of favorite toys and playthings.
- Your child expresses extreme emotions at times—laughs, cries, is silly, angry. She may be able to label her own feelings.
- When your child plays, he often uses real-life situations such as going to the store, school, and gas station.
- Your child may continue to have imaginary friends when playing games, sleeping at night, and going to preschool.
- Your child now understands home rules if they are short and simple.
- Your child is starting to understand danger and knows when to stay away from dangerous things.
- Your child loves silly jokes and has a sense of humor.
- Your child is beginning to control her feelings of frustration.
- Your child may use his imagination a lot, and he can be very creative.
- Your child is becoming more independent and adventurous and may be attracted to try new things.
- With her new independence, your child may be boastful and bossy at times.
- Your child may show concern and sympathy for younger siblings and playmates when they're hurt or upset. His ability to empathize—to put himself in someone else's shoes—is increasing.

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN 48 MONTHS OLD (4 YEARS OLD)

Introduce a new feeling each day using pictures, gestures, and words. Encourage your child to use a variety of words to describe how he feels.	Encourage activities that involve sharing, such as blocks, crayons, playdough, acting out stories. Give your child lots of time to play with other children.	Provide opportunities for your child to be creative. Empty containers, glue, newspapers, rubber bands, and magazines can be used for making new inventions.	Take your child to the store, to a restaurant or the library. Explore lots of new places.* Talk with her about similarities and differences in people.
When doing housework or yard work, allow your child to do a small part on her own. Let her empty the wastebasket or clean crumbs off the table.	Talk with your child about possible dangers in your home, such as electrical outlets and stovetops. Talk about outdoor dangers, too, such as crossing the street or talking with strangers.*	Encourage your child's independence. Let him fix a sandwich like peanut butter and jelly. At bedtime, let him choose his clothes to wear the next day.	Develop a conflict or argument with stuffed animals or puppets. Talk first about how the different animals are feeling. Discuss with your child how to resolve the conflict.
Tell a favorite nursery rhyme or story. Talk about what is make-believe and what is real.	Using stuffed animals or play figures, create a party or group playtime. Play different people and talk about how they might feel and act.	Tell a favorite nursery rhyme or story about "anger," and talk about positive ways the characters in the story resolved their differences.	Take your child to the library for story hour. She can learn about sitting in a group and listening to stories.
Your child is learning more about rules but will still need reminders. Talk about your family rules. Keep rules short and simple, and be consistent.	Have simple props like old clothes, boxes, and plastic utensils for playing store, fire station, and school.	Remember at least once a day to hug and cuddle and to praise your child for new skills—independence, creativity, expressing emotions, and sharing toys.	Try to have clear routines during the day, and let your child know what will happen next. Have a reading time and quiet time each day.

\*Be sure to review safety guidelines with your health care provider at each new age level.