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Celebrate!

Celebrate your four-year-old's gross motor development.

As a preschooler's gross motor skills develop, she is able to safely and successfully use an extended range of play materials. As motor coordination increases, children become capable of successfully using vehicle toys like tricycles and wagons, as well as simple push toys that represent adult tools.

From age 4 to 5 you will observe that your child:

- Will enjoy playing with push toys such as doll prams, carriages and shopping carts
- Will be able to push, balance and steer a small wheelbarrow
- Will enjoy using real tools such as small, lightweight hammers and child-safety scissors

Play!

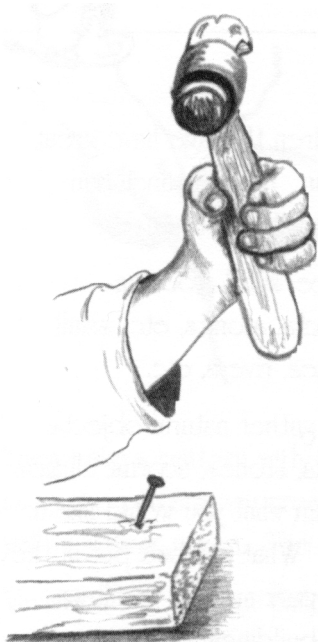
Construction City

Why this playtime activity is good for your child: Hammering a nail into a board takes eye-hand coordination and will give your four-year-old practise in gross motor skills.

What you'll need to play this activity: child-sized work bench or small worktable, small, lightweight hammer, small nails with large heads, a variety of blocks of wood including one very large, sturdy board for practising hammering nails, wood glue.

How to play *Construction City*: Begin by showing your four-year-old how to hold the hammer with her dominant hand and the nail toward the bottom with the index finger and thumb of the other hand. Tap lightly on the top of the nail to drive it slightly into the board. When the nail is securely in the board (approximately half way), remove fingers holding the nail, and finish driving the nail into the board. Repeat this step many times until your child can successfully hammer nails into a board.

Variation: Provide models of wood construction for the child to copy. For example, a triangular piece glued into the top of the same-size cube might represent a small house. Help your child use blocks of wood to make a variety of miniature buildings. Save these wooden constructions to build a play village. (See the activity on page 2.)



Share!

When you were four and played with hammer and nails, you would: _____

Celebrate!

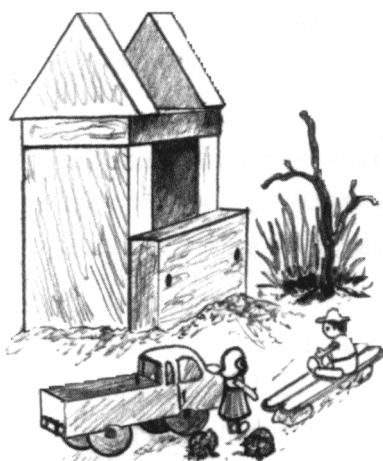
Celebrate your four-year-old's fine motor skills.

The four-year-old's fingers are much more skilled than earlier and under better control. Children this age can handle small objects such as button holes or miniature people/animal figures. Most children this age can cut on a line and colour inside bold lines.

From 4 to 5 you will observe that your child:

- Will enjoy searching for hidden picture puzzles
- Will like dolls with clothes that can be dressed and undressed
- Will enjoy play scenes such as miniature people/animal figures with supporting materials such as vehicles, fences, barns etc.

Play!



Create a play village

Why this playtime activity is good for your child: Children this age have great imaginations. A clump of moss can represent a mountain. A tiny branch can become a large tree. Blocks of wood can represent a village of houses.

What you'll need to play this activity: large work surface; sand; wooden constructions (see page 1); natural objects such as sticks, stones etc; small people/animal figures; paper cut-outs to represent lakes, rivers etc.

How to create a play village: Take an outdoor hike to gather natural objects that can be used in the play village. For example, sticks, stones, acorns, clumps of grass. Cover the work surface with sand. Explain what you would like to build, and then follow your child's lead. Ask your child, 'What shall we put in the village first? Shall we use clumps of grass to make a park area? Shall we have a lake in the village? Where shall we put these buildings?'

Variation: Small plastic people and animals can be added to the village. Your child will probably not be concerned if the pieces aren't exactly proportionate. Children this age are not concerned with ratio or models that are representational.

Share!

When you were four and we built a play village, you included: _____
