

How Well Do You Know Your Child?

Remember how well you knew your youngster at four or five? He or she probably shared every waking thought and asked every question of you. Your child still views you as “the authority” on just about everything. Yet, we expect and want our children to develop their own tastes and interests.

Every now and then, it’s a good idea to have a “reality check.” Answer these questions as you think your child would. Then ask him or her for the answers. We’re hopeful you’ll avoid fussing or lecturing your youngster for choices you don’t agree with. Be interested, flexible and ready to learn about this wonderful unique little human being.



How well do I know my child?

- Favorite food _____
- Favorite piece of clothing _____
- Favorite movie _____
- Favorite soft drink _____
- Favorite TV show/video game _____
- Favorite music _____
- Favorite book _____
- Best friend _____
- Favorite school subject _____
- Least favorite school subject _____
- Favorite place to go for fun _____
- What I want to be _____
- Favorite vacation place _____
- Favorite thing to do _____

Take the test, then ask your child the same questions. Some answers may surprise you! Most important, you’ll show your youngster you’re interested in him or her as a person and want to stay close.

Check These Out!

Public libraries have many books, tapes and videos about parenting and child development. Use your library card to check out these and other excellent resources. Invite your young student along to check out books or tapes, too.

For special resources related to parent education and support in your community, contact local social services, schools, hospitals, libraries or United Way.

Math for kids & other people too!
/ by Theoni Pappas. (CB)

Put your eyes up here, and other school poems
/ by Kalli Dako. (CB)

Rainy day projects for children
/ Gerri Jenny, Sherrie Gould. (CB)

Taming the dragon in your child : solutions for breaking the cycle of family anger
/ Meg Eastman with Sydney Craft Rozen (B)

How to parent your “tweenager”
/ Mary Manz Simon. (B)

Tough questions : talking straight with your kids about the real world / Sheila Kitzinger and Celia Kitzinger (B)

Homework? I’ll do it later! (V)

(B) book, (V) video,
(CB) children’s book you can read to your child

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Healthy Stages

4TH GRADE

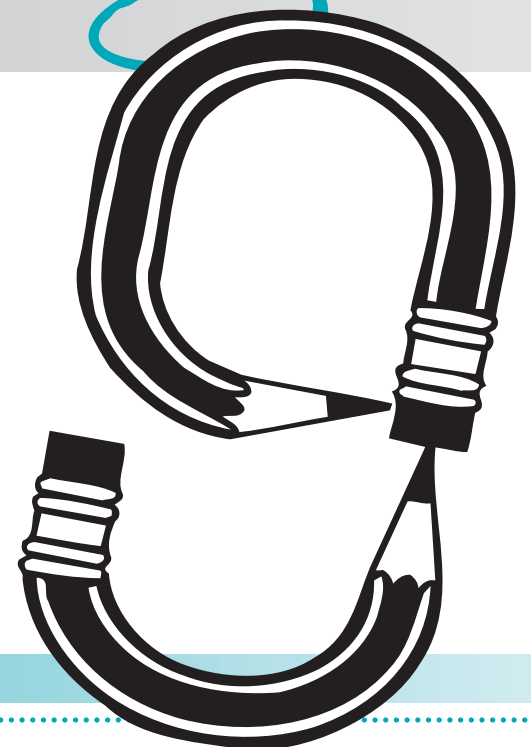
Fourth Grade: Using What We Learn to Live.
Healthy Stages is a free, once-a-year newsletter. It is designed to reach you during your child’s current grade in school. Every effort has been made to pack its short articles with helpful facts. We suggest you keep *Healthy Stages* around for the entire school year. Put it in a folder with other important information about your child. Refer to it from time to time. Its articles may help you deal with a problem or try a new approach in parenting.

Your fourth-grader is entering a new phase of learning in which reading and math skills become tools of daily living. Reading offers information and enjoyment. Math goes beyond having drills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Students use graphs, make estimates, and solve all kinds of problems with their math skills. Science

learning is also about real life situations – from understanding weather to flying kites.

Fourth graders will also learn how different lifestyles and choices affect them. They’ll find out more about what good health is, why to avoid dangers like drugs and tobacco, and how to be a friend to the environment. Does this mean you have to “know all the answers” to continue helping your child develop? Absolutely not! There can be great fun and satisfaction in searching for answers along with your student.

We hope you look forward to all that this year brings. And we hope you’ll turn to *Healthy Stages* often. We want to help you make this school year one that both you and your child will remember with joy.



I Am Nine

The typical fourth grade child is nine years old. These traits probably hold true for your fourth grader, even if he or she is slightly older or younger.

"Let me think about that!"

A nine year-old can be much more focused on tasks than he or she was at eight. She can work steadily on math problems or a science project without giving up. He can stay engrossed building a fort or a Lego structure for hours.

"I forgot."

A parent's patience can be tried by all the times a nine-year-old needs reminding: to wash hands before meals, brush teeth, hang up clothes. Keep him or her focused on daily chores and routines.

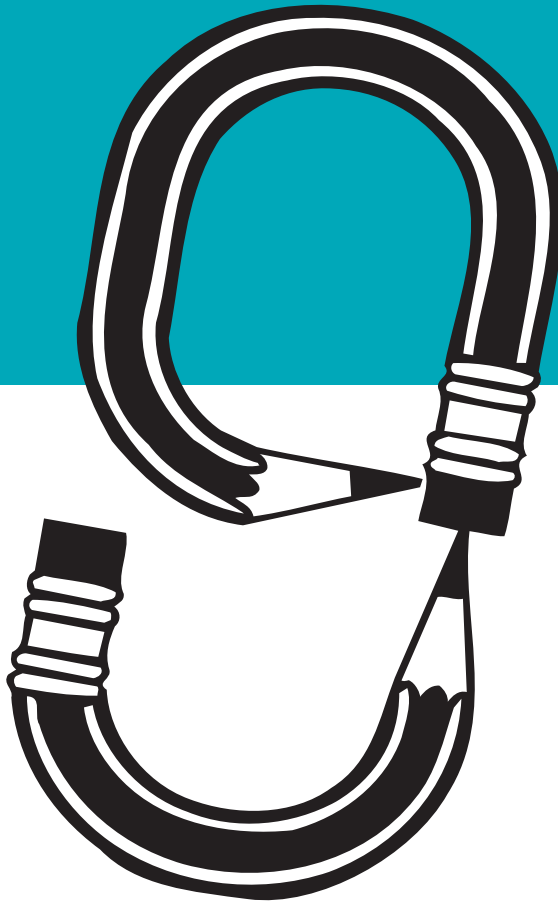
"It's not fair to blame me!"

This growing youngster can accept being disciplined, but insists on fairness. He points out who started a problem. She wants clear rules about privileges, punishments, and how things are to be done.

"I'm too big for that."

Your "little boy" or "little girl" is becoming a real individual. He or she doesn't want to be babies. You can now see the very clear outlines of this child's developing personality – gestures, interests, sense of humor, ways of thinking and talking.

Keep up the good work of answering your child's questions about sexuality. It's important, year by year, to help your child acquire the right age-appropriate information. Being able to turn to Mom or Dad for facts is vital in this area of life and learning.

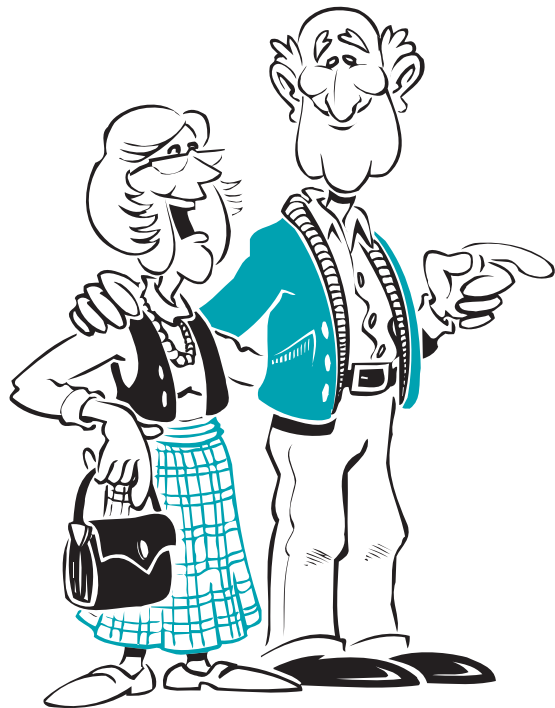
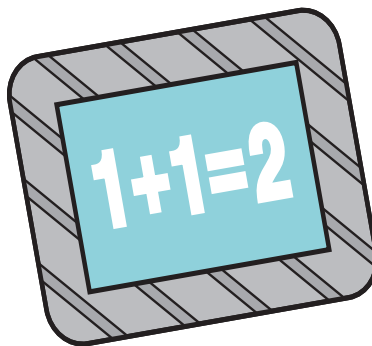


The Parent-Teacher Partnership

What to Ask Your Child's Teacher

When it's time to confer one-on-one with your fourth-grader's teacher, it makes sense to be prepared with the list of questions you most want answered. An important note: Do not corner a busy teacher at Parent's Night or a PTA meeting. Save questions for a prearranged private conference. Another hint: bring pencil and pad to take down hints you'll want to remember.

- ♥ **Does my child pay attention?** If your fourth-grader has trouble applying herself or himself at home, it might happen in school, too. Ask for suggestions to improve attention span.
- ♥ **Is homework done acceptably?** Is it correct? On time? How should I help?
- ♥ **Is my child reading at grade level?** Ask what types of help might bring results.
- ♥ **Are my child's math skills at grade level?** Again, invite suggestions for improvement.
- ♥ **What attitudes does my child bring to class?** Is he agreeable? Hard to manage? Enthusiastic? Bored? What might be done to develop a better attitude toward school?
- ♥ **Does my child get along with others?** A teacher can tell you if a child seems uneasy with classmates and suggest ways you can help a shy or lonely fourth-grader.
- ♥ **What would you have me do at home to help?** Show your child's teacher you're willing to be a partner. He or she will welcome your help on the home front.



Nurturing Yourself

Parents Need Friends

We all need friends – moms, dads, and children alike. However, with all they have to do, parents sometimes forget that they have needs, too. And one of the strongest needs is for a true friend.

A friend is someone to let off steam with. Friends are safety valves. Tell them about things that have hurt you or made you angry. You know it'll go no farther, so you feel safe venting your feelings.

A friend is someone who just listens. Friends let you pour your heart out. They don't have an immediate answer to problems. They know that what you need, more than anything is a sympathetic ear.

A friend helps you meet goals. The two of you walk for exercise. Or you take a class together. You have similar hopes. You help each other strive toward achieving them.

A friend is someone to depend on. Friends will try to rescue you from small problems, such as giving your child a ride to a school activity when you're tied up. Friends will be a shoulder to lean on in times of bigger troubles. You trust friends to be there.

If you have such friends, consider yourself lucky – and tell them how much they're appreciated. We all like to hear we're needed.

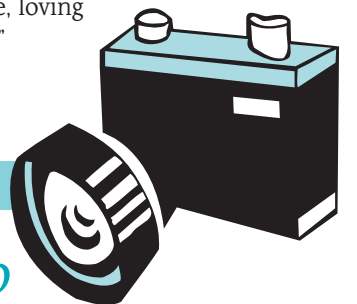
If you need such a friend, set out to make one. PTA provides great opportunities to find a friend who lives nearby and has a child the same age as yours. Church, civic league, and other regular gatherings are also good environments in which a strong lifelong friendship can flower and grow. And guess what? You may need to look no further than your own home! A spouse, a parent, a brother or a sister can turn out to be the very best of friends to you!

Keeping the Peace



Car horns honk. Radios and TVs blare. People shout. Our world is full of noise and tension. How can we bring up children who are calm, patient and reasonable? Home is the one best place for children to learn and imitate these important values, which will be important assets throughout life.

- ♥ **Strive for a peaceful environment.** Have a family meeting. Talk about the value of a quiet, pleasant home. Set standards for using a radio, TV, video game or computer. Explain that one person's enjoyment of loud rock music may be annoying to others.
- ♥ **Keep voice volume at conversation level.** Ask that family members not shout from room to room. Control your own voice level to set a good example. Yelling – whether to get attention or express anger – destroys the peace and quiet of a home.
- ♥ **De-fuse high-stress times.** Is breakfast a madhouse? Is dinnertime chaotic? Resolve to calm things down. Get everybody to prepare for school and work before going to bed. Fourth-graders can set out clothing, homework and books, so there's not a frantic free-for-all in the morning.
- ♥ **Consider having a "quiet hour."** How about establishing a time when no TV, radio or other "sound effect" is on? This can be part of your continuing effort to monitor and limit your child's TV viewing. It can create a little "island of calm" in which family members can do homework, read, meditate or work on a hobby.
- ♥ **Other calming techniques.** Saying grace before meals, with heads bowed and voices low, can give a family a sense of calmness and spirituality. Reading your child a poem or story, or having a quiet talk at bedtime can be a serene, loving way to say "Good night."



Activities For Now

Activities to Help Your Fourth Grader Develop

What a great age this is! While fourth graders still enjoy a variety of toys and games, this is also a time to introduce them to pastimes that may continue beyond childhood, providing a lifetime of enjoyment. Here are some to consider.

Woodworking. Is there a parent or grandparent who enjoys carpentry? Your student may show an interest. Now is an ideal time to provide simple, non-electrified tools, plus very specific safety instructions on when and how they may be used.

Collections of stamps, coins, cards, stuffed animals, dolls, ceramic figures or book series often begin to develop at this age and can continue throughout childhood.

Singing and acting interests may surface now. Joining the church choir, the school chorus, or a local community theater group may give your child a wonderful means of creative expression.

Day camp, summer camp and sports camp are often first tried out in fourth grade. Some of the advantages: Being away from home, out in the sunshine and open air, learning new crafts and sports, and making new friends – all in a safe, supervised, child-centered environment. If your child is ready for a camp experience, look into the many programs offered here and nearby.

Photography is a skill many youngsters seek out at this age. It's a perfect way to capture fun activities, family parties, and other special moments. Get expert advice on an inexpensive, durable, easy to operate camera. Add on a gear bag, film, and some friendly parental lessons in how to take pictures. And don't forget: there are outstanding instruction books in the library!