



### Four-year-olds . . .

- *are energetic*
- *like to make choices*
- *are self-confident*
- *are full of wonder*

#### Physical Characteristics

- have developed large-muscle control; can hop and gallop; a few can skip; are prone to hit and kick
- are developing small-muscle control; are interested in materials that can be manipulated
- are full of energy; are incapable of sitting still for any length of time unless highly motivated
- have a short attention span
- are developing a sense of rhythm

#### Socioemotional Characteristics

- test their “world” and themselves against peers and siblings
- are nearly self-dependent in routines; focus on tasks with little interaction with others
- are brashly self-confident in their abilities
- need help to handle feelings and relate to others; can be aggressive and short-tempered
- like to make choices; resist regulations that limit freedom but begin to see the wisdom of rules
- are still self-centered but may share with a friend; like group work, games, and parties
- are becoming less sensitive, vulnerable, and demanding
- are sensitive to the feelings and attitudes of adults; can show sympathy; appreciate humor

#### Intellectual Characteristics

- wonder about everything; desire to learn more
- understand analogies; are imaginative and creative; like silliness, rhyming, and long words
- have fluent expression through play
- have animistic and anthropomorphic views
- draw symbolically; pictures have meaning for them; ideas are conveyed through color and design
- are intuitive

#### Religious Characteristics

- begin to understand God’s love by experiencing human love
- need to see that God made them and every other child unique and special
- need to experience success
- want to do kind things for others and like to be recognized for doing them
- experience awe and wonder at creation and at their own powers
- are meditative, naturally contemplative, and prayerful; can be absorbed in ritual, song, and drama
- are hindered by viewing God as a means of correction
- observe how adults handle religious matters