



Growing Up: 4th Grade

Your child will develop skills and grow in a number of ways during this important year.

Physical

Fourth graders have improved coordination and often show an interest in physical activities such as jumping rope or playing a particular sport.

Students this age need a physical outlet for all of their energy. Explore your options and help your child find activities he/she enjoys (e.g., gymnastics, swimming, martial arts).

Intellectual

Fourth graders have an interest in, and a better understanding of, world events and social issues.

Be open to questions, and have age-appropriate discussions on real-world issues and events.

Emotional

Peers are important to fourth graders and they like being part of a group. The emotions of fourth graders can change quickly, and cliques and peer pressure can be an issue, especially for girls.

Encourage your child to focus on being the best he/she can be, and regularly talk to your child about how things are going with friends and at school.

"All kids need is a little help, and somebody who believes in them." Magic Johnson



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Support Your Child

4th Grade



Parent Involvement Guide

Shaping Social Growth

In fourth grade, children are developing the social skills they need to succeed in this grade, and beyond.

Dealing with Stress

There is a lot going on in fourth grade—more homework, harder classes, growing bodies, and more complex social interactions.

Regularly talk to your child about what's going on at school, provide lots of support, and teach your child some calming strategies, such as deep breathing (inhale, count to four, exhale).

Understanding Limits

Fourth graders are concerned about what's "fair" (or more likely "unfair"). They also like to test the limits—the limits of physical play, school rules, home rules, and even your patience.

Take the time to explain to your child the "why" behind school and home rules.

Balancing Family and Friends

Your fourth grader may be more interested in spending time with peers than with family, a trend that is likely to continue.

Maintain a dependable routine (e.g. nightly family dinners or weekly family outings) so that your child can expand his/her social net while having the comfort and security that comes with family.

Welcome to Fourth Grade!

In fourth grade, students have longer and more complex assignments, and they're likely to have more homework. Fourth graders are also expected to work more independently.

Your child will learn a great deal this year, but fourth grade is about more than academics. In fourth grade, students develop important social skills, and they become more responsible, self-sufficient, and independent.

In this guide you will find information that will help you help your child have a successful fourth grade year. Included in this guide are:

- ▶ tips to help your child build his/her skills in language arts and math.
- ▶ ways to help your child build social skills, deal with stress, and have healthy relationships with family and friends.
- ▶ information on the physical, intellectual, and emotional growth of fourth graders.

Your involvement and support are key to your child's success!



Learning in the Fourth Grade

Language Arts

In fourth grade, there is a focus on reading comprehension – being able to understand the meaning of what's read. Fourth graders also do a lot of writing. They write essays and reports, and they edit and proofread their writing.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Encourage independent reading by getting books at the library on topics of interest to your child. Be sure to ask your child to tell you about what he/she is reading.
- ▶ Choose a book for both of you to read, and have ongoing discussions about the characters and plot. If it's non-fiction, talk about what you've learned.
- ▶ Have family reading time—30 minutes when everyone in the family reads.
- ▶ Encourage your child to write in a journal about his/her feelings, goals, and dreams, and about things that have happened.
- ▶ Look for ways to encourage writing. Have your child write thank you notes, exchange emails with a relative (using your account), or write a letter to a friend.
- ▶ If your child expresses an opinion or preference, ask why he/she feels that way. This will help your child think about how to express his/her thoughts so that they make sense to others.

In the fourth grade, students use their reading and writing skills to complete assignments in subjects such as Social Studies and Science. For example, your child might be asked to read about volcanoes and write a report on them.

To succeed in school, it is critical that students have a solid foundation in reading and writing.

Math

In addition to working on multiplication, division, and fractions, fourth grade students are given word problems – problems that involve ideas, not just numbers.

Ways to Help at Home

- ▶ Have your fourth grader help you solve real-life math problems. For example, ask your child to help you figure out the difference in cost between two items, double a recipe, or figure out how many miles your car gets to a gallon.
- ▶ Quiz your child on multiplication facts while you're eating breakfast, driving to school, or making dinner. Keep it fun and pressure-free.
- ▶ Model problem solving. If your child asks for help with homework, verbalize your thinking as you determine how to work out a problem.

Your child may be learning math very differently from how you learned it. Let your child teach you how he/she does math!

Support Your Child

Fourth graders are learning many new skills, and they may become frustrated at times. If your child is feeling discouraged or frustrated, provide encouragement, keep a positive attitude, and be available to help.

If you have concerns about your child's progress, or are looking for additional ways to help build your child's skills at home, talk to your child's teacher.

