







# Developmental Milestones for Children of Primary School Age

## Year 4 – Aged 8-9

*Important context: While age-based milestones are helpful guides, they're not rigid rules. Daily living skills develop at different rates, often unevenly or asynchronously, especially for neurodivergent learners. Use these milestones as a flexible reference, always considering each individual's unique profile.*

Year 4 – 8-9 years	
<b>Self-Help Skills</b>	<p>For <b>Year 4 children (ages 8–9)</b>, self-help skills focus on becoming <b>more independent, organised, and responsible</b>, while still needing occasional reminders and support. Children at this stage are building consistency in routines rather than just learning the skills.</p> <p>Here's a clear overview:</p> <p> <b>Personal Care &amp; Independence</b></p> <p>By Year 4, most children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dress and undress independently (including for PE, though may still need reminders for speed)</li><li>• Manage basic hygiene (washing hands thoroughly, using tissues appropriately)</li><li>• Use the toilet independently and manage personal cleanliness</li><li>• Take responsibility for their belongings (coat, bag, lunchbox)</li></ul> <p> <b>Organisation &amp; Responsibility (School Life)</b></p> <p>Children typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pack and unpack their <b>school bag</b> with some independence</li><li>• Remember key items most of the time (reading book, homework, PE kit), though may need prompts</li><li>• Keep track of their own equipment (pencils, ruler, etc.)</li><li>• Follow classroom routines with minimal support</li><li>• Begin to understand responsibility for <b>homework and tasks</b></li></ul>

	<p> <b>Eating &amp; Daily Living Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat independently using cutlery confidently</li> <li>• Make simple choices about food (with guidance)</li> <li>• Clear away after themselves at school or home</li> <li>• Begin to understand basic healthy habits (e.g. drinking water, balanced eating)</li> </ul> <p> <b>Managing Themselves (Executive Skills)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow <b>2–3 step instructions</b> (e.g. “put your book away, get your coat, line up”)</li> <li>• Stay focused on a task for a reasonable period</li> <li>• Begin to manage transitions between activities with fewer reminders</li> <li>• Show early awareness of <b>time and routines</b> (though still developing)</li> </ul> <p> <b>Problem-Solving &amp; Independence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to solve simple problems before asking for help</li> <li>• Begin to show <b>resilience</b> when tasks are tricky</li> <li>• Ask for help when needed, though may still rely on adults</li> <li>• Cope with small changes in routine (with reassurance)</li> </ul> <p> <b>Home Responsibilities</b></p> <p>Many children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with simple chores (tidying room, putting toys away, setting the table)</li> <li>• Take some responsibility for personal belongings</li> <li>• Follow basic routines at home with reminders</li> </ul> <p>Also;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy pocket money and learning how to use it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Brushing own teeth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Age appropriate chores: e.g. Putting clothes away, Help with meals, Loading the washing machine, Washing and drying dishes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tie shoe laces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare snacks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social and Emotional Skills</b></p>	<p>For <b>Year 4 children (ages 8–9)</b>, social and emotional development is about building <b>stronger relationships, improving emotional control, and developing empathy</b>. Children are becoming more aware of others’ feelings and beginning to manage their own behaviour with greater independence.</p> <p>Here’s a clear breakdown:</p>

## Social Skills & Friendships

By Year 4, most children:

- Form **secure friendships**, often with shared interests
- Enjoy being part of a group and start to value **belonging**
- Can cooperate in pairs and small groups with less adult support
- Begin to **resolve minor disagreements** (though may still need guidance)
- Understand basic social rules (taking turns, listening, fairness)
- Are starting to be influenced more by **peer opinions**

## Emotional Awareness & Regulation

Children typically:

- Can identify and name a **range of emotions** (e.g. frustrated, worried, excited)
- Begin to **manage emotions**, though may still need adult support at times
- Recover more quickly from upsets than younger children
- Show growing ability to **wait, share, and take turns**
- Use simple strategies to calm themselves (talking, taking a break)

## Self-Confidence & Self-Concept

- Develop a clearer sense of their **strengths and interests**
- Show **confidence** in familiar situations, but may still need reassurance
- Begin to compare themselves to others
- Enjoy praise and recognition, which supports motivation

## Empathy & Understanding Others




- Show empathy—recognising when someone is upset or needs help
- Begin to understand that others may think or feel differently
- Can consider another person's point of view with support
- Are learning about **fairness and inclusion**







## Independence & Responsibility


- Take more responsibility for their behaviour and choices
- Follow rules and routines with less adult prompting
- Begin to reflect on their actions (e.g. "I shouldn't have done that")
- Show growing independence in social situations

## Behaviour & Moral Understanding

- Understand the difference between **right and wrong**
- Follow rules because they understand their purpose (not just to please adults)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to question fairness (“That’s not fair!”)</li> <li>• Are developing a sense of <b>justice</b>, though still quite concrete</li> </ul> <p>Also;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Able to participate in competitive and other sports.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speech and the ability to count developed further through board games.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys 'toilet' humour.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Coordination improves - able to play musical instruments.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys 'facts'. Likes to watch television. Likes 'crazes' or trends and collecting items.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication skills</b></p>	<p><b>Speaking &amp; Listening</b></p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explain their ideas clearly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Listen and respond to others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take part in discussions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow 2 and 3 part instructions with increasing accuracy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Skills</b></p>	<p>For children in <b>Year 4 (ages 8–9)</b>, physical development focuses on improving coordination, strength, stamina, and control. At this stage, most children become more confident and precise in both <b>gross motor</b> (large movements) and <b>fine motor</b> (small, detailed movements) skills.</p> <p>Here’s a clear breakdown of typical physical milestones:</p> <p> <b>Gross Motor Skills (movement &amp; coordination)</b></p> <p>By Year 4, most children can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run, jump, hop, and skip with <b>good control and rhythm</b></li> <li>• Change direction quickly and safely (agility)</li> <li>• Show <b>balance and coordination</b> in activities like gymnastics or dance</li> <li>• Throw, catch, and kick balls with <b>increasing accuracy</b></li> <li>• Take part in team games with an understanding of <b>rules and positioning</b></li> <li>• Ride a bike confidently (often without stabilisers)</li> <li>• Combine movements smoothly (e.g. running and catching)</li> </ul> <p> You may notice improved <b>stamina</b> and willingness to take part in longer physical activities</p> <p> <b>Fine Motor Skills (hand control &amp; precision)</b></p> <p>Children typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write neatly and consistently, with <b>joined handwriting</b> developing</li> <li>• Control pencil pressure and size of writing more effectively</li> <li>• Use tools like scissors, rulers, and compasses accurately</li> </ul>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw with more detail and proportion</li> <li>• Complete tasks like tying shoelaces or fastening buttons independently</li> </ul> <p> <b>Balance, Core Strength &amp; Posture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sit at a desk for longer periods with <b>good posture</b></li> <li>• Maintain balance in more challenging positions (e.g. one-legged balance)</li> <li>• Show improved <b>core strength</b>, supporting both sport and writing</li> </ul> <p> <b>Body Awareness &amp; Spatial Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how their body moves in space (important for sports and PE)</li> <li>• Judge distance and speed better (e.g. catching a ball, avoiding obstacles)</li> <li>• Follow multi-step movement instructions</li> </ul> <p> <b>Health &amp; Physical Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to understand the importance of <b>exercise, nutrition, and rest</b></li> <li>• Show awareness of how their body feels during activity (e.g. tired, out of breath)</li> <li>• Increasing independence in <b>self-care routines</b> (washing, dressing for PE)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning s</b></p> <p><b>(Secrets of Success)</b></p>	<p> <b>Learning s</b></p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stay focused on tasks for longer periods</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to work independently</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help when needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Show resilience when learning is challenging</li> </ul> <p> These are still developing but increasingly important.</p>
<p><b>Academic Skills</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Year 4 Academic Milestones (Ages 8–9)</b></p> <p><b>English</b></p> <p> <b>Reading</b></p> <p>Can they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read fluently and with increasing confidence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Show understanding by answering questions about a text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Infer meaning</b> (e.g. how a character feels)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify key ideas and begin to summarise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognise some language choices (e.g. descriptive words)</li> </ul>

 **Expected standard:** Understanding is secure, though inference may still need prompting.

### Writing

Can they:

- Write for different purposes (stories, reports, explanations)
- Organise ideas into **paragraphs**
- Use a range of sentence types (simple, compound, some complex)
- Use punctuation correctly (full stops, commas, apostrophes)
- Spell most common words accurately
- Begin to edit and improve their work


 **Expected standard:** Writing is clear and organised, with growing control.

### Mathematics

#### Number & Calculation

Can they:

- Read and write numbers up to **10,000**
- Add and subtract 4-digit numbers
- Know all **times tables up to  $12 \times 12$**  (key Year 4 goal)
- Multiply 2- and 3-digit numbers by a 1-digit number
- Begin formal written division

 **Important:** Most children take the **Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)** in Year 4.

#### Fractions & Decimals

Can they:

- Recognise and compare fractions
- Add and subtract fractions with the same denominator
- Understand decimal equivalents (e.g.  $0.5 = \frac{1}{2}$ )

#### Measurement


Can they:

- Convert between units (e.g.  $\text{cm} \leftrightarrow \text{m}$ )
- Measure and calculate **perimeter**
- Solve problems involving money and time

## Geometry & Statistics

Can they:

- Identify angles (right, acute, obtuse)
- Describe shapes and symmetry
- Interpret charts, graphs, and tables

 **Expected standard:** Accurate calculations + beginning to apply skills in problems.

## Science

Can they:

- Ask questions and carry out simple investigations
- Understand **fair testing**
- Record results (tables, charts)
- Explain findings using basic scientific vocabulary
- Learn key topics (electricity, sound, states of matter, living things)

## Foundation Subjects

**History & Geography:** Develop chronological understanding and compare different time periods and places

- Use maps and basic geographical vocabulary
- Understand historical timelines and key events

**Computing:** Write simple programs, understand algorithms, and use technology safely

**Art & Design / DT:** Plan, create, and evaluate more complex projects








**Languages (often French or Spanish):** Hold simple conversations, read and write basic phrases

## What “On Track” Looks Like in Year 4


- A child is on track if they:
- Meet most of the checklist items
- Are **secure with times tables (up to 12 × 12)**
- Can complete tasks with some independence
- Are beginning to explain their thinking

## When to look Closer

- You may want to provide extra support if a child:
- Does not know times tables fluently

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggles with reading fluency or understanding</li> <li>• Finds writing difficult to organise</li> <li>• Relies heavily on adult support</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p> <b>Big Focus in Year 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you had to prioritise, the key milestones are:</li> <li>• <b>Times tables fluency (essential for later maths)</b></li> <li>• <b>Reading comprehension (not just decoding)</b></li> <li>• <b>Paragraph writing and sentence control</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggestions if a child is falling behind or excelling</b></p>	<p> <b>If your child is falling behind (Year 4)</b></p> <p> <b>Reading support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <b>little and often (10–15 mins daily)</b></li> <li>• Take turns reading pages aloud (shared reading builds fluency)</li> <li>• Focus on understanding rather than speed</li> <li>• Ask simple, supportive questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “What just happened?”</li> <li>○ “Why do you think that happened?”</li> <li>○ “Can you find the part that tells us that?”</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p> Priority: fluency + basic comprehension</p> <p> <b>Writing support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep writing tasks short and purposeful (5–10 minutes)</li> <li>• Focus on <b>one target at a time</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sentences with capital letters/full stops</li> <li>○ spelling common words</li> <li>○ joining ideas with <i>and, but, because</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use everyday writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ shopping lists</li> <li>○ messages</li> <li>○ simple diary entries</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Say sentences aloud before writing them</li> </ul> <p> Priority: clarity and confidence, not quantity</p> <p> <b>Maths support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use concrete resources (coins, Lego, objects)</li> <li>• Strengthen <b>times tables (2–12)</b> through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ chanting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- o quick games
- Practise **mental addition/subtraction daily**
- Break word problems into steps:
  - o “What do we know?”
  - o “What do we need to find?”
- Use real-life maths:
  - o cooking (measures)
  - o shopping (money)

 Priority: number confidence and recall


### **General support strategies**

- Keep sessions short and regular (10–15 minutes max)
- Build confidence first—avoid long correction sessions
- Praise effort and thinking, not just answers
- Stay in close contact with school if concerns continue

### **If your child is excelling in Year 4**


#### **Reading extension**

- Introduce longer and more complex texts (age-appropriate novels, non-fiction)
- Ask deeper questions:
  - o “What evidence supports that?”
  - o “How has the author created tension?”
- Encourage summarising chapters in their own words

 Priority: inference and analysis


#### **Writing extension**

- Encourage structured writing:
  - o paragraphs with clear purpose
  - o introductions and conclusions
- Introduce “writer’s craft” challenges:
  - o varied sentence starters
  - o ambitious vocabulary
  - o different punctuation (speech, commas, apostrophes)
- Ask them to edit:
  - o “How could this sound more powerful?”

 Priority: style, structure, and editing


## Maths extension

- Move from answers to **reasoning**:
  - “How do you know?”
  - “Is there another way?”
- Introduce multi-step problems
- Explore patterns and logic:
  - sequences
  - puzzles
- Encourage explaining methods verbally and in writing

 Priority: reasoning and problem-solving

## Enrichment ideas

- Coding or STEM projects
- Science experiments with prediction → test → explanation
- Creative writing projects (stories, comics, scripts)
- Research topics of interest (space, history, animals, etc.)

 Priority: curiosity and independence

## What matters for both groups

### 1. Keep it consistent, not intense

Small daily habits beat occasional long sessions.

### 2. Build independence

Let them think before helping—Year 4 is a key year for this.

### 3. Protect confidence

Progress isn't always linear—confidence drives learning more than ability alone.

### 4. Use school partnership

Teachers can:

- adjust expectations
- provide interventions or extension tasks
- give insight into specific gaps or strengths

## Simple summary

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If behind → <b>simplify, repeat, build confidence</b></li><li>• If excelling → <b>deepen, extend, and challenge thinking</b></li></ul> |
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