



### **Four Year Olds: 3 ½ to 4 ½ years**

Children ages 3 to 5 years have been labeled as “preschoolers”—the designated period of time in a child’s life just before entering formal education. Educational theorists and professionals have recognized this period of time as being vitally important in children’s development! Real learning is not reserved for the onset of formal education; rather, the preschool years is a period of time when significant growth and learning take place—in all areas of functioning—physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language.

At Growing Years, we attempt to establish positive and caring relationships with our preschoolers and their families because this provides the optimal conditions for growth. In addition, each day’s schedule and the classroom environment is intentionally planned to provide many opportunities for children to learn and grow. In this way, we hope our program promotes the development and enhances the learning of each child who attends.

Overall, preschoolers are an enthusiastic, curious, and imaginative age group that deserves our very best in terms of preparing them for the future.

#### *Communication:*

Each month the lead teacher sends home a newsletter which outlines what they will be focusing on with the High Reach Curriculum, as well as sharing words to songs and fingerplays with parents. Other information pertinent to the program is shared also.

Besides the Growing Years Parent Handbook, parents will also receive a Welcome Packet for the Four Year Old classroom which outlines information specific to that program.

Teachers may be reached any time during the day by calling the school at 989-792-8670 or by e-mailing us at [info@growingyearspreschool.com](mailto:info@growingyearspreschool.com).

#### *Daily Schedule:*

Although Four Year Olds still need a lot of flexibility in their day, they also enjoy and need some structure and routine as well. Having a routine of events throughout the day gives preschoolers a sense of security. They can begin to anticipate the order of events while becoming familiar with how those routines are carried out, such as group time, eating time, center time, and going outdoors, etc.

A typical day in the Four Year Old room might look like this:



6:30—7:00:

Children begin arriving and are greeted by staff. Belongings are placed in cubbies. Any special information for each child is shared with teachers and notated.

7:00—8:30:

Growing Years breakfast is served each day. Breakfast and lunch menus are sent home and posted each month for parents.

8:45—9:00:

Morning large group time. Teachers introduce new concepts from the High Reach curriculum for Four Year Olds, called Butterflies. They also engage in other activities such as songs, finger plays, and stories. Teachers explain what they will find at the center areas that day.

9:00-10:30:

Four Year Olds move freely about the room engaging in interest area activities, such as large motor play, sand and water play, dramatic play, blocks, writing, manipulatives, and art exploration. Open snack is also offered at this time as a center choice.

10:45—11:15:

Children are taken outdoors daily as long as weather permits. It is important for children to get fresh air and explore the outside world each day. Growing Years has a separate playground for this age group that is full of fun, developmentally appropriate equipment.

11:15—11:30

Children are encouraged to use the potty, wash up, and prepare for lunch.

11:30—12:00

Lunchtime! Children go to the library for lunch time. Teachers sit and enjoy eating with the children. Then children are encouraged to clean-up together.

12:30—2:30

After lunch and bathroom time, Four Year Olds lay down on mats for nap time and teachers pat children's backs until they fall asleep. Soft music is also played to comfort children during nap time.

2:30—3:00

Children awake from nap and are helped with using the potty.

3:00—3:15

Afternoon snack is served as a whole group, with teachers sitting and enjoying snack with the children.

3:30—4:00:

Afternoon playground time, weather permitting.



4:15—5:15:

Four Year Olds are engaged in small groups with teachers and other children for activities such as singing, reading books, or doing an art or sensory activity together.

After small group time, children move freely throughout the room where teachers have structured interest activities involving small motor development (puzzles, etc.) or large motor development, as well as opportunities for creative expression through dramatic play, building with blocks, and socializing with other three year old friends!

5:15—6:00:

Children engage in individual activities with teachers as they await pick-up by parents. Upon pick-up, teachers share news of the day's activities for each child and chat with parents.

*Curriculum:*

The Four Year Olds use the Butterfly curriculum from High Reach Learning. This fun, hands-on curriculum keeps the children actively involved as they learn to recognize letters, explore beginning sounds, understand number concepts, and much more. The Butterfly program also offers a balanced design, featuring both child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities. The skills developed in this curriculum will enhance your child's ability to cope with the academic, behavioral, and social demands necessary for a Young 5's or Kindergarten class.

Four Year Old Curriculum  
Butterfly Program Themes

September: From Head to Toe

October: Just Imagine

November: Deep in the Forest

December: Pack Your Suitcase

January: Dinosaurs are Dino-mite

February: Reach for the Stars

March: Barnyard Buddies

April: Egg-citing Events

May: Jungle Jamboree

Colors:

Red, orange, brown, green, blue, pink, yellow, purple, and white.

Shapes:

Circle, triangle, heart, square, rectangle, heart, diamond, and oval.



Numbers: 0-12

Letters: A-Z

*Other Highlights of our Four Year Old Program:*

*Weekly Bible lessons:*

Each week the classroom teacher presents a new Bible lesson to our Four Year Olds. Our Christian curriculum is non-denominational and geared towards building strong character, love and consideration for others, and making wise moral choices. Each lesson from either the Old or New Testament is shared in an attempt to make it relevant to the age group involved. To help with reinforcement of the concepts, each lesson is followed by a creative art idea.

In addition to the classroom lessons, Mrs. Anita Collins, the owner/director of Growing Years, meets with the four year olds in the library each week to help reinforce Christian concepts using flannel board stories/characters, puppets, books, songs, and fingerplays.

*Peddlesfoots Character Education Curriculum:*

Each week the Four Year Olds class participates in a character education program featuring a family of rabbits named the *Peddlesfoots*. Through the stories of their many antics and trials, children learn about the importance of becoming children of good character. The stories have been combined with exciting lesson plans and activities for teachers to extend the concepts of *trustworthiness, respect, perseverance, caring, citizenship, fairness, self-discipline, responsibility, and courage*. Besides the stories, children also enjoy the song CD, read-a-long CD, and *Peddlesfoots* puppets.

This series was written by Anita Collins, the owner/director of Growing Years, along with her son, Matthew Hill, and daughter, Lisa Workman, who are also teachers. In 2006, the *Peddlesfoots* curriculum was selected as the centerpiece of a federally funded grant—Partnerships in Character Education—that was awarded to the Saginaw Intermediate School District. After being rigorously researched for 4 years, the *Peddlesfoots* curriculum demonstrated significant increases in children's pro-social behavior as well as improved academic achievement in literacy. Separate levels of curriculum were developed for preschool, kindergarten, and first grades.

If you would like more information about our character education program, we have a website at [www.peddlesfoots.com](http://www.peddlesfoots.com) or visit [www.truesaginaw.org](http://www.truesaginaw.org).

*Special Holiday Programs:*

Believe it or not, the Four Year Olds put on 4 programs throughout the school year for parents and other family members to enjoy!

1. Children learn about the first Thanksgiving and celebrate by wearing costumes and entertaining you with songs, fingerplays, and a delightful menu of snacks.
2. Children learn about the first Christmas and celebrate by wearing costumes, re-enacting parts of the story through songs and fingerplays, sharing cookies and punch, and then being surprised by a visit from Santa!
3. Mother's Day Brunch is a hit each year as Moms are made to feel special and appreciated (we hope) through a program of songs, poems, fingerplays, and homemade gifts, followed by a brunch in their honor. (Grandmas or aunts are welcome too)
4. Daddy's Day Lunch is a great way for children to appreciate their fathers in a special way through songs, poems, fingerplays, and a special handmade gift, followed by lunch in Dad's honor. (Grandpas or uncles are welcome too)

*Music for Munchkins:*

We are so fortunate to have Mrs. Michele Spitz/Wietfeldt as our music teacher! The children love her and look forward to her weekly visits. We have a longstanding relationship with Michele as she is also the singer and music arranger for the *Peddlesfoots* series of songs.

In addition to *Music for Munchkins* playing a key role at Growing Years, Michele is busy working with children throughout the Saginaw area as she teaches music and provides entertainment for children's parties.

She is also available to sing for weddings and adult engagements. If you're interested in learning more about Michele, you can visit her website at [www.musicformunchkins.com](http://www.musicformunchkins.com).

*Developmental Milestones/Assessment:*

As part of our assessment plan, our teachers keep a *portfolio* of each child's work throughout the year to share with parents during *parent/teacher conferences*, held twice a year. This is a special time to talk about your child's growth and achievements as well as any concerns you might have.

In addition, parents will receive a *developmental milestone report* approximately every 3 months to let parents know what we are experiencing with their child at Growing Years. These reports become the vehicle we use to share our understanding of early childhood development as outlined by child development professionals.

Finally, we begin teaching *literacy appreciation*, *print awareness*, and *phonics instruction* in an attempt to build a lasting foundation for reading success!

As all of this information is reviewed throughout the year, it is important to understand that individual children may exhibit all or only a few of the behaviors for a given age group and still fall within the normal range of development. Obviously, children progress at different rates throughout all aspects of their development.