



Do you wonder what age children learn to do different things? Are you curious what it takes to be able to care for young children? This project will help you explore the world of child development by learning how children develop and discovering how to create safe spaces for children to learn and grow.



## Exploring 4-H Child Development

### Spark Activity: Infant Emotions

Infants show emotions in a variety of ways. The sounds they make and expressions on their face help tell caregivers how they are feeling. For this activity, look through magazines and images on the internet and find pictures of infants that show different behaviors, emotions and ways babies communicate. Cut these pictures out and glue them on construction paper. Write the emotion you think the baby is showing on the back of the paper.

Show these pictures to a parent or friend and see if they see the same emotion as you do. Talk about why your observations might be the same or different. You could also look at family photos and see if you can find pictures of your family members as babies or young children showing different emotions. Are there similarities in how your family showed emotions?



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Learn about the four areas of growth and development - physical, mental, emotional and social
- Learn how children express emotions
- Learn how children are similar and different
- Learn about important measures to keep children safe
- Learn about age-appropriate activities for children

### Intermediate

- Learn to plan fun and safe activities for children of different ages
- Learn which toys are developmentally and age appropriate for children
- Discover healthy food choices in planning and making meals
- Develop rules to prevent unsafe behaviors

### Advanced

- Explore careers in the child development field and job shadow professionals
- Learn child guidance and discipline techniques
- Learn about children with special needs and how to adapt your activities to be inclusive and safe for all children
- Develop critical thinking skills in response to emergency situations

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Create a children's game or puzzle; share results
- Showcase a book you have written, illustrated and shared with children
- Demonstrate the development of a fun and safe home-alone plan

### Service and Leadership

- Collect puzzles, games, books, and toys for a local child care center or children's hospital
- Assess the safety of community playground areas based on OSHA and ISBE rules
- Volunteer to babysit the children of friends or family
- Lead an activity at a Cloverbud meeting

### Entrepreneurship

- Team up with local schools to provide babysitting services during parent only meetings, PTO meetings, Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Write a children's book to share at a Cloverbud meeting or read at the local library
- Make baby blankets, toys or clothes to sell

### Technology Connection

- Online platforms connecting potential child care providers and families
- Start a favorite activity blog highlighting appropriate activities for different age groups
- Research careers in Child Development

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Teachers, aides, and staff from local schools to learn about careers including education and youth
- Local hospitals and pediatricians to learn about careers that involve medicine and children
- Local day care providers, after-school program workers, and library staff - careers that engage youth at different age levels

### Events

- County and state fair exhibit classes
- 4-H project workshops
- Enroll in a first aid training for children and babysitting training course through American Red Cross (<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class>).
- Classes through local libraries and community centers related to child care



### Careers Related to Child Development

Teacher  
Psychologist  
Coach

Social Worker  
Youth Worker  
Child Care Worker

## Start a Conversation

What are important skills that infants must learn?

How do they learn them?

Why is it important to encourage children while they play?

Why is it important for you to know safety rules and be able to share them with children?

What did you observe about how children of different ages show emotion?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hchilddevelopment](http://go.illinois.edu/4Hchilddevelopment)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-H.extension.illinois.edu](http://4-H.extension.illinois.edu)



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