

AGES 0-4

In Montana, we want what's best for our kids. We want them to be confident, respectful, and make healthy choices.

Here are tips from ParentingMontana.org that address common issues for children ages 0-4.

Visit ParentingMontana.org to find tools that address these and other issues for children at every age.

Confidence simply means a belief in self. Where does that confidence come from? Confidence begins with the trusting relationship you work to cultivate with your child. The bond you have with your child forms a solid foundation from which your child can feel safe to explore the world.

- **Infants:** Pay close attention to your infant's facial expressions, movements, and sounds. Becoming sensitive to the small differences in your infant's cries and expressions and responding to their needs will grow your infant's confidence.
- **One-year-olds:** Allow your child the chance to take steps to meet their big challenges, whether they are working on tasting new foods for the first time, exploring the objects in their environment, or attempting to communicate with new words or phrases.
- **Two-year-olds:** Use "Show me..." statements and ask them to demonstrate how they can work hard toward a goal. When a child learns a new skill, they are eager to show it off! *"Show me you can tell me what you are feeling."*
- **Three-to-four-year-olds:** Read and "pretend play" together. After reading a story together, act out the plot and use emotion words and expressions to match how the characters were feeling throughout the story. This expands their emotion vocabulary.



Listening skills can support your child's ability to engage in healthy relationships, to focus, and to learn. Your child's healthy development depends upon their ability to listen and understand what you and others are communicating.

- **Infants:** require your attention to thrive. So, why not build a special time into your routine when you are fully present to listen to what your infant has to tell you? Turn off your phone. Set a timer if needed.
- **One-year-olds:** There are a number of games and songs that require strong listening skills. Offer practice by playing these games with your child. For example, making music requires listening particularly if you introduce it as a game. *"Let's dance or play along with our instruments."* Household pots, pans, and spoons can serve as ideal instruments with which to experiment.
- **Two-year-olds:** Narrate your feelings. As you are going through your bedtime routine, talk about what you are doing each step of the way. Involve your child by asking questions. For example, you might say, *"I just yawned and am feeling sleepy. How are you feeling?"*
- **Three-to-four-year-olds:** Read together. When you read stories together, you engage in a listening activity that can be deeply connecting for both of you. Be sure and involve your child in selecting the book they want to read. Involve your child in holding the book, turning pages, and predicting what will come next. Hold onto a page before turning it and ask, *"What do you think will happen next?"* Reflect on the story, and you'll take the learning opportunity one step further. *"Do you think Little Red Riding Hood was excited to go to Grandma's House?"*

**Learn about all this and more by visiting
www.ParentingMontana.org**



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