



B4 School Check Training

Prereading for Registered Nurses

Purpose of Prereading

This prereading is designed to ensure all participants arrive at B4 School Check training with **a shared baseline understanding**. Training sessions assume familiarity with the core concepts below and will focus on **application and practice**, not theory.

1. Understanding the B4 School Check (Essential)

Before attending training, nurses should have a clear understanding of:

- The purpose of the B4 School Check
- The core developmental milestones for 4-year-olds
- How the B4SC fits within the Well Child / Tamariki Ora Programme

Key points you should understand before training:

- The B4SC is a population level screening programme, not a diagnostic assessment
- It aims to identify children who may benefit from early support before school
- Screening is guided by structured domains and clinical judgement

Primary reference (read):

- *Health NZ – B4 School Check overview*

<https://info.health.nz/services-support/pregnancy-birth-and-children-services/well-child-tamariki-ora/the-b4-school-check>

2. Normal Growth and Development at 4–5 Years (Essential)

Training assumes you have a **basic understanding of normal development** in 4–5-year-old children, including the wide range of what may be considered typical.

You are not expected to memorise milestones, but you should be familiar with:

- Expected language, social, motor, and cognitive development
- Differences between an **early 4-year-old** and a child nearing school age
- How developmental concerns may present in everyday functioning

Key areas to be familiar with:

- Communication and language
- Social and emotional development
- Motor (fine and gross)
- Cognitive and early learning skills

Recommended reading:

- *Plunket: Child development milestones (3–5 years)*

<https://www.plunket.org.nz/child-development/child-development-milestones/child-development-three-to-five-years/#development-four-to-five-years>

Developmental Milestones for 4-Year-Old Children – Quick Reference

Purpose

This resource supports registered nurses completing B4 School Checks by outlining key developmental milestones expected across the 4-year age range, aligned to B4SC domains.

A child presenting for B4SC may be:

- **Early 4 years** (just turned 4), or
- **Late 4 years** (approaching 5 years)

A wide range of development is **normal**. Clinical judgement should always consider:

- Child's age within the 4-year range
- Whānau (SDQ-P) and teacher (SDQ-T) perspectives
- Opportunity, environment, and culture



Speech and Language Development: Early 4-Year-Old		Referral options:
Expected observation: • Speaks in short sentences (4–6 words) • Speech mostly understood by unfamiliar adults • Follows two-step instructions • Asks simple “what” and “why” questions • May mix up tenses or pronouns	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Speech difficult to understand most of the time • Limited sentence use • Difficulty understanding simple instructions	
Speech and Language Development: Late 4-Year-Old		Referral options:
Expected observation: • Uses clear, well-structured sentences • Easily understood by unfamiliar listeners • Retells simple stories or events • Understands concepts such as size, colour, same/different • Answers “who, what, where” questions reliably	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Speech largely unclear to unfamiliar listeners • Difficulty expressing ideas or stories • Ongoing difficulty understanding instructions or questions	

Social & Emotional Development: Early 4-Year-Old	
Expected observation: - Enjoys pretend play (may change play themes frequently) - Beginning cooperative play, still learning turn taking - May have strong emotional reactions - Seeks adult support to regulate emotions	Consider referral if not yet observed: - Limited to no interest in interacting with peers - Rarely engages in pretend play - Difficulty engaging with adults or children even with support - Frequent, intense emotional distress with little recovery - Limited emotional expression or flat responses - Extreme reactions to everyday changes or demands
Social & Emotional Development: Late 4-Year-Old	
Expected observation: - Engages in shared imaginative play with rules or roles - Takes turns and shares more consistently - Increasing independence from caregivers - Talks about feelings and recognises emotions in others	Consider referral if not yet observed: - Persistent difficulty playing with others - Limited understanding of turn taking or rules - Social withdrawal or frequent conflict - Ongoing difficulty regulating emotions - Limited awareness of others’ feelings - Frequent emotional shutdown or escalation

Referral options:

- Mild concern: set a recall to contact whanau to follow up in 3/12
- VHT screening: If not completed yet, can this be related to Hearing?
- Opportunity: No ECE attendance – refer to MoE, encourage ECE and follow up in 3/12
- Parenting support: Tripple P, Incredible years, Plunket Awhina
- ECE Teacher: Reach out to teacher to gain insight and confirm if support is in place.
- Severe concern (Multiple domains): Appointment with GP, Referral to CDC

Gross Motor Skills: Early 4-Year-Old		Referral options: • Mild concern: set a recall to contact whanau to follow up in 3/12 • Opportunity: No ECE attendance – refer to MoE, encourage ECE and follow up in 3/12 • ECE Teacher: Reach out to teacher to gain insight and confirm if support is in place. • Severe concern: Appointment with GP
Expected observation: • Runs confidently • Walks upstairs alternating feet • Jumps forward with both feet • Catches a large ball using arms and body	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Frequent falling or difficulty running • Avoidance of playground equipment • Significant difference compared with peers	
Gross Motor Skills: Late 4-Year-Old		
Expected observation: • Hops on one foot • Balances on one foot for several seconds • Climbs confidently • Throws and kicks a ball with better coordination	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Difficulty with balance or coordination • Avoids physical play • Noticeable motor delay compared with peers	

Fine Motor Skills: Early 4-Year-Old		Referral options: • Mild concern: set a recall to contact whanau to follow up in 3/12 • Opportunity: No ECE attendance – refer to MoE, encourage ECE and follow up in 3/12 • ECE Teacher: Reach out to teacher to gain insight and confirm if support is in place. • Severe concern: Appointment with GP
Expected observation: • Copies shapes such as circles or crosses • Uses scissors with basic control • Builds block towers or simple structures • Dresses with assistance (buttons/zips may be hard)	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Difficulty grasping crayons or utensils • Avoids drawing or manipulating small objects • Limited hand strength or coordination	
Fine Motor Skills: Late 4-Year-Old		
Expected observation: • Draws a person with several body parts • Improved pencil control • Copies shapes or some letters • Dresses independently, manages fasteners • Toileting independent during the day	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Difficulty with controlled drawing or copying • Avoids fine motor tasks • Fatigue or frustration with writing activities	

Cognitive Development: Early 4-Year-Old			
Expected observation: • Counts a small number of objects (may be inconsistent) • Recognises some colours • Follows simple routines • Enjoys puzzles and problem-solving play	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Difficulty understanding basic concepts (e.g. colours, shapes) • Appears uninterested in problem-solving or learning activities even with adult support	Referral options: • Mild concern: set a recall to contact whanau to follow up in 3/12 • Opportunity: No ECE attendance – refer to MoE, encourage ECE and follow up in 3/12 • ECE Teacher: Reach out to teacher to gain insight and confirm if support is in place. • MoE: Referral for Early Intervention • Severe concern: Appointment with GP • Severe concern (Multiple domains): Referral to CDC	
Cognitive Development: Late 4-Year-Old			
Expected observation: • Counts to 10 or beyond • Recognises colours and shapes accurately • Begins recognising letters, especially in own name • Sustains attention for longer activities • Understands simple time concepts (before/after)	Consider referral if not yet observed: • Difficulty understanding simple number or counting concepts • Struggles with problem-solving or following rules of games • Limited curiosity or engagement in learning activities even with adult support • Difficulty remembering or applying previously learned information		

3. Role of the Registered Nurse in B4SC (Essential)

Registered nurses completing B4 School Checks are expected to meet professional and programme-specific competencies.

Before training, please ensure you understand:

- Your professional responsibilities when delivering B4SCs
- Expectations around clinical judgement, documentation, and communication
- Working within scope and knowing when to escalate concerns

Primary reference (read):

Standards of Competencies Evidence Examples for Registered Nurses Delivering B4 School Checks

www.pinnaclepractices.co.nz/assets/Resource-files/Competencies-for-Nurses-Delivering-B4-School-Checks.pdf

4. PEDS-R® Introduction to Developmental Screening Course (Essential)

The PEDS R introduction to Developmental Screening course provides an introduction to developmental screening and developmental screening tools. The site requires you to make an account and there is no cost associated with this course. The course can be accessed via this link

<https://mc.ri.learnupon.com/store/3937775-peds-r-introduction-to-developmental-screening> and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.

5. Privacy, Consent, and Information Use (Essential – Overview Only)

B4 School Checks involve **sensitive personal and health information**. Nurses must have a basic understanding of:

- Consent requirements
- Privacy obligations
- Appropriate access and use of the B4SC Information System

You are **not required to read all legislation in detail** prior to training, but you must understand that:

- Information is protected under health and privacy law
- Access to the B4SC database is conditional on signed user agreements
- Misuse of data may have serious professional consequences

Primary reference:

- *B4 School Check Information System – Authorised User Agreement*
<https://www.pinnaclepractices.co.nz/assets/Resource-files/B4-SC-User-Agreement.pdf>

Legislation – Training on these topics is completed during induction to general practice (reference only – not required reading for training):

- Privacy Act 2020
- Health Information Privacy Code 2020
- Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights

6. Observation of a B4 School Check (Recommended)

Where possible, nurses are encouraged to:

- Observe at least one B4 School Check prior to training, **or**
- Discuss the process with a B4SC nurse champion or lead provider

This supports understanding of:

- Flow of the check
- Engagement with child and whānau
- Practical considerations in different settings

If observation is not possible, this will be supported during training.