CDA

Ages & Stages

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Take this with you to learn the milestones your child has reached, what to expect next, and tips to help children develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Reprinted with permission from National Network for Child Care -NNCC. Oes-terreich, L. (1995). Ages & Stages. In L. Oesterreich, B. Holt, & S. Karas, Iowa family child care handbook [Pm 1541]. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Extension.

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California Department of Social Services funds were used by CDA in the development of this booklet.
The booklet does not necessarily reflect the position of the California Department of Social Services.

Individual Differences

Developmental milestones give a general idea about what to expect from children of different ages. However, there will always be differences between individual children. Some children begin to walk at 10 months, some at 15 months. Some toddle along quickly and smoothly, getting the "hang of it" right away. Others fall down a lot, hesitate, or even give up for a few days. Some children talk before they are 2, others talk very little before they are 3 or so. Some will always be quiet people. Some abilities become clear in one child, but may never be very strong in another.

Recognize the individual in the child and look for differences based on the following:

SENSE OF SECURITY

Some children need more consistency, more reassurance, and more confidence and trust-building than others. Insecurity sometimes can cause a child to withdraw or behave aggressively.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Some children need more active play than others. They need the opportunity to move around, jump, run, and bounce many times throughout the day. Other children need more quiet time or more rest.

RESPONSE TO STIMULATION

Children are inherently different in their tolerance to noise, activity, visual stimulation, or changes in the environment. An environment that is sensitive to this need in children will provide interesting activities as well as a quiet place to get away from the action.

THINKING STYLE

Some children think quietly through possible solutions to a problem; others push in and try the first idea that occurs to them. Some children are interested in experimenting to find out how objects work; others choose to ask friends or adults for help.

Developmental guidelines should be used as a general rule of thumb. Do not confuse earlier or faster development with better development. Early talking by a 1-year-old does not mean that the child will be a chatterbox or a brilliant conversationalist at age 10. Later talking may mean that a toddler is putting more energy into physical growth and motor exploration right now.

Development or the lack of it that falls outside the normal range may indicate a problem that requires attention. You may need to recognize possible problems and special needs, such as poor vision or hearing. Familiarity with developmental norms and with community resources can assist you in seeking professional advice about developmental questions.

Newborn to 1 Year

Throughout the first year, infants grow at a tremendously fast rate. In fact, by the end of the first year they will have tripled in birth weight. Length can be expected to double. By their first birthday, most infants will be crawling and even may be taking a timid first step! The most essential ingredient in infant care is a warm, responsive, and dependable adult caregiver. Try to spend lots of time holding, cuddling, and playing with your infant. You will be richly rewarded with babbles, smiles, and squeals of laughter.

I AM A NEWBORN!

I will change a lot in this first year of life. At first I will need milk, sleep, hugs and kisses and to hear your loving voice. You cannot "spoil" me by giving me too much attention.

As I become mobile, I will need you to provide a safe and stimulating environment to explore.

Put toys just out of my reach and I will try to get them. I need happy sounds and like to be near you.

By nine months, I may be crawling, and pulling up on furniture and grasping objects. I can now understand simple commands. I am busy. I need locks on cabinets with medicines, household cleaners, etc.

I am curious about flowers, ants, grass, stones, bugs, dirt.

I will begin needing freedom to do it all myself...until I need help, so please stay near.

YOU CAN HELP ME BY:

- Giving me lots of hugs and cuddles
- Meeting my physical needs
- Removing temptations, before they become problems
- Talking to me
- Giving me lots of fresh air

What to look out for

By 4 Months

My Weight: 10-18 pounds
My Length: 23-27 inches

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sleeps about 6 hours before waking during the night
- Averages 14-17 hours of sleep daily
- Lifts head and chest when lying on stomach
- Holds both eyes in a fixed position
- Follows a moving object or person with eyes
- Grasps rattle or finger
- Wiggles and kicks with arms and legs
- Rolls over (stomach to back)
- Sits with support

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Cries (with tears) to communicate pain, fear, discomfort, or loneliness
- Babbles or coos
- Loves to be touched and held close
- Responds to a shaking rattle or bell
- Returns a smile
- Responds to peak-a-boo games

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Explores objects with mouth
- Plays with fingers, hands, toes
- Reacts to sound of voice, rattle, bell
- Turns head toward bright colors and lights
- Recognizes bottle or breast

What to look out for

By 8 Months

My Weight: 14-23 pounds
My Length: 25-30 inches

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- First teeth begin to appear
- Drools, mouths and chews on objects
- Needs at least 3-4 feedings per day
- Reaches for cup or spoon when being fed
- Drinks from a cup with help
- Enjoys some finely-chopped solid foods
- Closes mouth firmly or turns head when no longer hungry
- May sleep 11-13 hours at night although this varies greatly
- 2-3 naps during the day
- Develops a rhythm for feeding, eliminating, sleeping, and being awake
- Eye color is established
- Rolls from back to stomach and stomach to back
- Sits alone without support and holds head erect
- Raises up on arms and knees into crawling position; rocks back and forth, but may not move forward
- Finger and thumb to pick up an object
- Transfers objects from one hand to the other
- Hair growth begins to cover head

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Responds to own name
- Shows fear of falling off high places such as table or stairs
- Spends a great deal of time watching and observing
- Responds differently to strangers and family members
- Imitates sounds, actions, and facial expressions made by others
- Shows distress if toy is taken away
- Squeals, laughs, babbles, smiles in response
- Likes to be tickled and touched
- Smiles at own reflection in mirror
- Raises arms as a sign to be held
- Recognizes family member names
- Responds to distress of others by showing distress or crying
- Shows mild to severe anxiety at separation from parent

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Cries in different ways to say he is hurt, wet, hungry, or lonely
- Makes noises to voice displeasure or satisfaction
- Looks for familiar voices and sounds
- Learns by using senses like smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing
- Focuses eyes on small objects and reaches for them
- Looks for ball rolled out of sight
- Searches for toys hidden under a blanket, basket, or container
- Explores objects by touching, shaking, banging, and mouthing
- Babbles expressively as if talking
- Enjoys dropping objects over edge of chair or crib

What to look out for

By 12 Months

My Weight: 17-27 pounds
My Length: 27-32 inches

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sleeps 11-13 hours at night
- Some babies will stop taking a morning nap; others will continue both morning and afternoon naps
- Begins to refuse bottle or weans self from breast during day
- Needs 3 meals a day with 2 snacks in between
- Enjoys drinking from a cup
- Begins to eat finger foods
- Continues to explore everything by mouth
- Enjoys opening and closing cabinet doors
- Crawls well
- Pulls self to a standing position
- Stands alone holding onto furniture for support
- Walks holding onto furniture or with adult help

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Imitates adult actions such as drinking from a cup, talking on phone
- Responds to name
- Likes to watch self in mirror
- Expresses fear or anxiety toward strangers
- Wants caregiver or parent to be in constant sight
- Offers toys or objects to others but expects them to be returned
- May become attached to a favorite toy or blanket
- Pushes away something he does not want

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Says first word
- Da-da and ma-ma or equivalent
- “Dances” or bounces to music
- Interested in picture books
- Pays attention to conversations
- Claps hands, waves bye, if prompted
- Likes to place objects inside one another

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Help infants develop a sense of trust and security by responding to their cries. Feeling secure encourages infants to try new things. Be consistent so that they will know what to expect.

Place babies in new places and new positions so that they can see you and others from different angles.

Hold and cuddle infants when feeding them. Even infants who hold their own bottle need to be held. Being held and cuddled frequently is extremely important in the development of baby's sense of self-worth and security. Holding and cuddling a baby is also a great stress releaser for an adult. Do not prop infants drinking from a bottle as it may cause choking.

Respect a baby's natural schedule. Most babies will settle into a regular routine for eating, sleeping, and soiling their diapers, but the schedule will vary depending on the baby. Some babies need to eat more frequently than some others. Some will sleep more and take longer naps.

Baby-proof everything! Store toxic substances such as dishwasher detergent, make-up, paint, or medicine up high. Put safety latches on cabinets and covers on electrical outlets. Lower crib mattresses so that older infants can't fall over the rail. Cover sharp corners of tables or shelves that infants might bump into.

Expose babies to bright colors and a variety of objects to look at. Pictures, moving objects, brightly colored or contrasting color toys attract infants.

Provide an environment rich with sound. Help infants learn to recognize common household sounds such as a vacuum cleaner, a radio, a clock, a whistling tea kettle, or a doorbell.

Provide interesting objects for infants to feel, touch, mouth, and explore. Square nylon scarves, cold metal bowls, plastic measuring cups, large wooden spoons, and wet washcloths are favorite household toys. Keep easy-to-swallow objects out of infant's reach. Babies should not be allowed to play with anything smaller than a half dollar (about 1-1/4 inch diameter).

Expose older babies to a variety of tastes and temperatures in food. Offer cold sherbet, warm oatmeal, mashed peaches, and chopped cooked carrots.

Provide opportunities for infants to smell different smells.

Lemon, vanilla, and apple juice are wonderful kitchen smells. Babies also enjoy smelling tree bark, dirt, grass, and other natural things.

Help babies develop a sense of movement and balance by gently bouncing, swaying, swooping, and swinging with them.

Talk to infants. Face infants when talking to them so they can see you and smile with you. Talk about what you are doing, familiar objects, or people. You may even want to babble back or echo sounds your baby makes, much as you would in a regular conversation. Even though an infant cannot understand everything you say, he will be learning many words that will form the basis for language later on.

Read to infants. Babies enjoy cuddling on a caregiver's lap, looking at colorful picture books, and hearing the rhythm of the caregiver's voice. With time they begin to understand that words have meaning and can be used to identify objects.

Encourage older infants to feed themselves by offering pieces of banana and soft bread sticks. Give babies a spoon with some mashed potatoes or other sticky food, and let them practice eating with a spoon. Yes, it will be messy! Be patient. Learning this skill takes lots of practice.

Play peek-a-boo. Hide your face behind a blanket and then peek out at the baby. Older babies will learn to do this themselves and will enjoy this game for a long time.

Give babies the freedom to move around. Young infants enjoy being on their backs so that they can kick, wiggle, and look around. Older infants need space and time to practice crawling, creeping, pulling up, and walking. Spending too much time in a walker, playpen, or infant swing may inhibit the development of these important skills.

Stay with infants when someone new is around. Encourage strangers to approach slowly. Introduce an infant by name, and let your child explore someone new in the safety of your presence.

What to look out for

12 to 18 Months

My Weight: 17-27 pounds
My Length: 27-32 inches

One-year-olds are delightful. Babies this age are developing a real personality and will reward you with laughter, funny faces, and affectionate hugs. First steps and first words are exciting events. Growth during this time is still rapid, but height and weight gains are not as dramatic. As growth decreases, appetite decreases and children may eat less.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Crawls well
- Stands alone, sits down
- Gestures or points to indicate wants
- Push, pull, and dump things
- Pulls off hat, socks, and mittens
- Stacks 2 blocks
- Likes to poke, twist, and squeeze
- Enjoys flushing toilets and closing doors
- Enjoys carrying small objects while walking, often one in each hand
- Holds crayon and scribbles, but with little control
- Waves bye-bye and claps hands
- Walks without help
- Enjoys holding spoon when eating, but experiences difficulty in getting spoon into mouth
- Rolls a ball to adult on request

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Becomes upset when separated from parent
- Likes to hand objects to others
- Plays alone on floor with toys
- Recognizes self in mirror or pictures
- Enjoys being held and read to
- Imitates others, especially by coughing, sneezing, or making animal sounds
- Enjoys an audience and applause

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Says 8-20 words you can understand
- Looks at person talking to your child
- Says “hi” or “bye” if reminded
- Uses expressions like oh-oh
- Asks for something by pointing or using one word
- Identifies object in a book
- Peek-a-boo
- Looks for objects that are out of sight
- Understands and follows simple 1-step directions
- Likes to take things apart

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Enjoy some "floor time" with one-year-olds each day. Crawl around together, play peek-a-boo behind the sofa, or roll a ball back and forth. Young children will love having you down on their level.

Review your baby-proofing. Children's increasing growth and mobility make it possible for them to reach unsafe heights and play with dangerous material. Get down on your knees in each room and look at things from a child's perspective. Put toxic items like paint, dishwashing detergent, medicine, and make-up in high cupboards, preferably with a safety cabinet latch.

Put together an "everyday junk box" of items that are fun to feel, poke, and squeeze. You might include plastic margarine tubs, an old sock, tissue paper to crumple, measuring cups of different sizes, a turkey baster, a nylon scarf, an egg carton, and paper cups. Remember, items smaller than a half-dollar can cause choking.

Encourage play with safe mirrors. Stand or sit with a child before a mirror. Talk with your child, make funny faces, and encourage movement.

Provide a variety of simple picture books. Children can point at objects, animals, and people as you name them. Encourage your child to name items and talk about the activities in the pictures.

Provide everyday items so that children can practice placing small items into containers. For example, let them drop clothespins into a plastic bottle. Provide containers with loose-fitting lids, and encourage children to open and close them.

Use diapering time to point to body parts and say them with an infant. Nose, ears, arms, legs, tummy, toes....

Talk frequently to children to increase language skills and encourage cooperation. You can make dressing time more interesting by pointing to and identifying the name of clothes or body parts. For instance, "See this warm, red coat? Your arms go into the sleeves. See this soft, blue cap? It goes on your head!"

Around 18 months a child may get anxious and clingy about being separated from parents and other familiar caregivers. This behavior is normal. If possible, minimize separations during this time and stick to consistent routines.

Relax and have fun dancing to music!

Encourage children to bounce, sway, and wiggle.

What to look out for

18 to 24 months

My Weight: 20-32 pounds
My Length: 30-37 inches

Children this age are truly on the go. A greater sense of independence begins to develop as children begin to walk, run, and climb with greater skill. You also may notice that toddlers this age love to imitate everything. Pretending to talk on the phone is a favorite activity.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Walks well
- Likes to run, but can't always stop and turn well
- Drinks from a straw
- Feeds self with a spoon
- Helps wash hands
- Stacks 2-4 blocks
- Tosses or rolls a large ball
- Opens cabinets, drawers, and boxes
- Bends over to pick up toy without falling
- Walks up steps with help
- Takes steps backward
- Enjoys sitting on and moving small-wheeled riding toys
- Begins to gain some control of bowels and bladder; complete control may not be achieved until around age 3. (Boys often do not complete toilet learning until age 3-1/2.)

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Likes to imitate parents' actions
- Begins to show signs of independence; says "no"
- Has difficulty sharing
- Very possessive
- Finds it difficult to wait and wants things right now!
- Gets angry sometimes and has temper tantrums
- Acts shy around strangers
- Comforts a distressed friend or parent
- Refers to self by name
- Uses the words "me" and "mine"
- Enjoys looking at picture books
- Tries to do many things by themselves
- Enjoys adult attention
- Enjoys simple pretend play like wearing hats and talking on phone
- Enjoys exploring, gets into everything, and requires constant supervision
- Generally unable to remember rules
- Often gets physically aggressive when frustrated - slaps, hits
- Shows affection by returning a hug or kiss
- May become attached to a toy or blanket

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Has a vocabulary of several hundred words, including names of toys
- Uses 2-3 word sentences
- Echoes single words that are spoken by someone else
- Talks to self and "jabbers" expressively
- Shows preferences between toys
- Likes to choose between two objects
- Hums or tries to sing
- Listens to short rhymes or finger plays
- Points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked
- Uses the words "please" and "thank you" if prompted
- Enjoys singing familiar songs

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Enjoy dancing with children to music with different rhythms. Provide simple musical instruments such as a rattle or an oatmeal box drum. Now is a good time to teach children simple fingerplays such as "Eensy Weensy Spider."

Read simple books with children every day. Choose books made of cardboard or cloth pages. Stories that have familiar objects are best. Encourage toddlers to turn pages.

Make your own scrapbook of objects or people your toddler knows by using a small, sturdy photo album.

Encourage language development by expanding on what a toddler says. When the child says "kitty," you can say, "Yes, the kitty is little and soft."

Play a simple game of "find." Place 3 familiar toys in front of a toddler and say, "Give me the --." See if he tries to find it and hand it to you.

Encourage the toddler to play dress-up by providing a full-length mirror on the wall and a "pretend box" filled with caps, scarves, and old shoes.

Talk with children about everyday things

After 18 months, language development seems to explode. Children will be learning new words at a very rapid rate.

What to look out for

Two-Year-Olds

My Weight: 22-38 pounds
My Length: 32-40 inches

Two-year-olds like to be independent! Favorite words are “Mine” and “No” and “I do it!” Emotions take on a roller coaster-like quality as 2-year-olds can go from excitement to anger to laughter within a few moments. A great deal of time is spent exploring, pushing, pulling, filling, dumping, and touching. Two-year-olds are surer of themselves and of what they can do as they grow. Their bodies stretch out, and most will lose the potbellied look during this third year of life. Their appetites lessen, and they may be particular about food. They are still growing fairly rapidly. Two-year-olds are usually interested in other children. However, social interest and physical abilities sometimes collide as a hug becomes a tackle and a gentle pat becomes a whack. You will need to teach children how to express affection appropriately.

I AM TWO YEARS OLD!

I like to have evening routines; music, story, quiet time. I will explore everything. I can be fearful and cling to my mommy or daddy. I love to imitate others, especially Mom and Dad. I am learning to talk, more to myself than others. I am developing imagination about everything around me.

My vocabulary is limited. I often make my needs and desires known in physical ways that are not always acceptable in group situations like preschool. I will resort to hitting, biting, and screaming when unable to verbalize.

I love to play with building things and play-doh. They make such good loud pounding noises. Water play can keep me occupied for longer periods of time than stories can. Such fun!!!

In the playhouse I chatter at great length with my best friends ..... Others may be in the playhouse with me but we all play by ourselves together. Sharing is a most difficult concept.

I like to do the same activity, again, again and again. I am loving, affectionate and I may even like to please you. I am often directly against what you want.

I may be rigid, not willing to wait or give in. I may even be bossy. I can have strong emotions and I hate opposite extremes at the same time.

I may have fears, especially sounds, separation anxiety, moving household objects, or a big dog. I can be very independent, a little individual at times.

YOU CAN HELP ME BY:

- Setting up daily routines
  - Noticing what I do well
  - Praising me
- Giving me two OK choices
  - Distracting me when I begin to say “No”
- Being firm with me about the rules, but calm when I forget or disagree
- Being tolerant while I grow socially
- Encourage me to use words while expressing myself
- Keeping the room environment stimulating with things to satisfy my curiosity and encourage my desire to learn by doing
- Provide me with experiences to learn about the world around me
- Not talking down to me. I may not be able to talk well but I hear quite well
- Remembering we earned the title “terrible two’s” but it’s all part of growing up and we are really quite special!

Toddlers are very attached to their caregivers.

You may find them trying out new ideas and exploring their surroundings, but still staying close to you as they need a base of support and trust.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Has almost a full set of teeth
- Walks up and down stairs by holding onto railing
- Feeds self with spoon
- Experiments by touching, smelling, and tasting
- Likes to push, pull, fill, and dump
- Can turn pages of a book
- Stacks 4-6 objects
- Scribbles vigorously with crayons or markers
- Many children (but not all) will learn to use toilet
- Walks without help
- Walks backwards
- Tosses or rolls a large ball
- Stoops or squats
- Opens cabinets, drawers
- Can bend over to pick up toy without falling

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Plays alongside others more than with them
- Acts shy around strangers
- Likes to imitate parents
- Easily frustrated
- Affectionate - hugs and kisses
- Insists on trying to do several tasks without help
- Enjoys simple make-believe like talking on phone, putting on hat
- Very possessive - offers toys to other children but then wants them back
- Needs considerable time to change activities
- Capable of frequent tantrums, which are often a result of an inability to express themselves even though he has ideas
- Can show aggressive behavior and the intent to hurt others
- Can be extremely demanding and persistent
- Destructive to objects when frustrated and angry
- Possessive about caregiver's attention; show feelings of jealousy
- Has fears and nightmares
- Has sense of humor; capable of laughter
- Shows interest in dressing, brushing hair and teeth
- Cannot sit still or play with a toy for more than a few minutes

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Enjoys simple stories, rhymes, and songs
- 2-3 word sentences
- Names toys
- Hums or tries to sing
- Enjoys looking at books
- Points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked
- Repeats words
- Interested in learning how to use common items

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Baby-proof your house again. Two-year-olds are taller and more skillful at opening doors and getting into mischief.

Read aloud to your child every day. Encourage toddlers to look at books with large pictures and sturdy pages. Simple story lines are best.

Try to expand a 2-year-old's knowledge of words and sentence structure. Let them hear the correct word order, but don't demand that they imitate you. For example, if they say "more juice," say "Anna wants more orange juice."

Encourage them to identify noises like vacuum, tap water, dogs barking, thunder, airplane, and car.

Let toddlers help you with simple chores such as picking up toys or putting clothes in the laundry basket. Encourage them to name things that you are using.

Add new information to what a child is saying. "Yes that's a blanket, a soft, warm blanket."

Give toddlers clear and simple choices. "Do you want to drink milk or juice? Do you want to wear green or blue socks?"

Provide blank paper, flattened paper grocery sacks, and computer scraps for drawing and painting. Coloring books, workbooks, and ditto sheets are not recommended.

Avoid making models of clay or drawing pictures for children to copy. They learn more by working out their own ideas, and adult-induced items can actually hinder learning and creativity.

Do not expect toddlers to share or take turns. Right now they are focused on learning how to physically handle themselves and on learning to talk. Learning to share will come later.

Provide spaces where toddlers can spend time alone. An old cardboard box or a blanket over a card table works great.

Avoid pressuring a child to be right or left handed. A few 2-year-olds will begin to show preference for one hand, but many children will continue to use both hands for a few years.

Provide safe outlets for physical activity and space exploration like small steps, boxes, barrels, tires, pulling and pushing toys, ride-on and ride-in toys.

Provide opportunities for learning about cause and effect by giving your toddler many opportunities to fill, dump, collect, gather, give, hide, and seek.

Know how to handle a temper tantrum:

- Do not yell or hit the child.
- Remain calm.
- Talk in soothing tone.
- Put your hand gently on child's arm if possible.

Play "parade" or "follow the leader."

Sing sequential songs like "Old MacDonald" to explain sequences.

Encourage verbal skills by giving simple directions like "Close the door, please" or "Would you pick up the doll?"

Encourage your toddler's love for imitation by teaching finger plays and songs. Play "you are a mirror." Stand or sit facing the child and have your child copy everything you do. Reverse roles and let the child lead while you mirror the actions.

Encourage sand, mud, clay, and water play. Toddlers enjoy messy play and learn a great deal from mixing, sifting, pouring, stirring, and shaping.

What to look out for

Three-Year-Olds

My Weight: 25-44 pounds
My Length: 34-43 inches

The 3-year-old is full of wonder and spends a lot of time watching, observing, and imitating. Their days are filled with busy exploration of their world. Three-year-olds are interested in perfecting motor skills, and it is common for them to spend the entire morning going down the slide or riding a favorite tricycle. Three-year-olds have very little memory for past events and do not understand "yesterday" and "tomorrow" the way adults do. They often repeat activities or may do and undo actions such as putting a puzzle together. These sequences are important to later understandings of change and consistency.

I AM THREE YEARS OLD!

I am full of motion. I love to twirl, tumble and jump around. When I investigate things I often express ideas through body activity. Sometimes I get irritable or overactive when I get overtired.

I am getting big now and can dress and undress myself with a little help. Running, jumping, climbing, and building with big blocks are easier for me than doing puzzles and other little things with my hands.

When you read stories to me, I like them to be about things that are familiar to me. And--I like to hear them again, again, and again!

I am starting to get some friends and enjoy doing things with them in small groups. Sometimes we do have trouble getting along because I am just beginning to learn how to share and take turns.

YOU CAN HELP ME BY:

- Having a lot of music and movement activities
- Providing small group experiences
- Being aware of my limitations both physically and socially
- Giving me suggestions for play with simple, specific directions
- Giving me opportunities to develop small muscle control by painting and coloring

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Develops a taller, thinner, adult-like appearance
- Develops a full set of baby teeth
- Eats approximately 1,300 calories daily
- Sleeps 10-12 hours at night
- Sleeps through most nights without wetting the bed (occasional accidents are still quite common)
- Uses the toilet with some help (many boys may not be ready for toilet learning until sometime during their third year)
- Puts on shoes (but cannot tie laces)
- Dresses self with some help (buttons, snaps, zippers)
- Feeds self (with some spilling)
- Tries to catch a large ball
- Throws a ball overhead
- Kicks a ball forward
- Hops on one foot
- Walks short distance on tiptoes
- Climbs up and down a small slide by self
- Pedals a tricycle
- Walks on a line

- Can stand, balance, and hop on one foot
- Jumps over a 6" barrier
- Can feed self with spoon and small fork; often butters bread with knife
- Can use toilet independently
- Can brush teeth, wash hands, get a drink
- Interested in handling food and cooking procedures

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Seeks attention and approval of adults
- Sometimes shows preference for one parent (often the parent of the opposite sex)
- Accepts suggestions and follows simple directions
- Enjoys helping with simple household tasks
- Can make simple choices between two things
- Enjoys making others laugh and being silly
- Enjoys playing alone but near other children
- Spends a great deal of time watching and observing
- Enjoys playing with other children briefly, but still does not cooperate or share well
- Enjoys hearing stories about self
- Enjoys playing "house"
- Enjoys imitating other children and adults
- Answers whether they are a boy or a girl
- Expresses interest in ethnic identities of self and others if exposed to a multicultural setting

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Talks so that 75 to 80 percent of their speech is understandable
- Talks in complete sentences of 3-5 words. "Mommy is drinking juice. There's a big dog."
- Stumbles over words sometimes - usually not a sign of stuttering
- Enjoys repeating words and sounds
- Listens attentively to short stories and books
- Likes familiar stories told without any changes in words
- Enjoys listening to stories and repeating simple rhymes
- Able to tell simple stories from pictures or books
- Enjoys singing and can carry a simple tune
- Understands "now, soon, and later"
- Asks who, what, where, and why questions
- Stacks 5-7 blocks
- Enjoys playing with clay or play dough (pounds, rolls, and squeezes it)
- Can put together a 6-piece puzzle
- Draws a circle and square
- Recognizes common everyday sounds
- Matches an object to a picture of that object
- Identifies common colors such as red, blue, yellow, green
- Can count 2-3 objects
- Can solve problems if they are simple, concrete, real, and immediate, and if wants to
- Interested in similarities and differences
- Distinguish, match, and name colors
- Interested in features of animals that make them unique
- Has good self-knowledge; can understand difference between self and younger children, but not between self and older children
- Can say his age

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Be patient with toileting. Many children (especially boys) will not be ready for toilet learning until after age 3. Accidents will happen for a while; treat accidents calmly and as matter of fact. Avoid shaming a child.

Encourage development of hand-eye coordination by providing large buttons or old beads to string on a shoe lace. Play ball - show child how to throw, catch, and kick balls of different sizes.

Show child how to hop like a rabbit, tiptoe like a bird, waddle like a duck, slither like a snake, and run like a deer. Talk frequently with your child; use short sentences, ask questions, and listen.

Add new information to your child's sentences. "Yes that's a flower - it's a tall, red flower and it smells so good." Teach your child to memorize first and last names.

Encourage interest in reading and writing by sharing a grocery list. Provide paper, small notebooks, and markers for use in dramatic play.

Count objects of interest; for example cookies, cups, napkins, or dolls. When possible, move one at a time as you and your child count. Measure, and have your child help measure and count as you follow a recipe.

Draw a face on an old sock and show your child how to "talk" with puppets.

Talk about colors, numbers, and shapes in your everyday conversation. "We need ONE egg. That's a RED car. The butter is in this SQUARE box."

Explain why and how things happen with the help of a reference book. Help your child do simple science activities like magnetic attraction, freezing water, planting seeds, making a terrarium, and flying kites on a windy day.

Provide sets - toys and other objects that go together. Discuss similarities and differences. For example, point out sequences in cooking.

Experiment with faucets, tools, light switches, knobs, latches, and toys that come apart.

Sing simple songs. Make simple rhythm instruments: oatmeal box or coffee can drums, rattles of dry beans in a box, etc. Encourage a variety of body movements and dance to music of many kinds. Play musical games such as "London Bridge," "Ring-around-the-Rosie," and "Farmer in the Dell."

Encourage free expression in art projects. Avoid asking "what" children are drawing. Three-year-olds may not know or care, but simply enjoy the process of drawing.

Share baby pictures. Talk about "When you were a baby."

Ask for help with very simple household tasks such as putting the napkins by each plate, putting socks in the drawer, watering plants, or stirring the muffin batter.

Provide books for your child to read, and read the same books to them.

Read poetry and nursery rhymes. Encourage your child to repeat a story and discuss the ideas and events. Read titles and point to important words on pages, packages, and street signs.

What to look out for

Four-Year-Olds

My Weight: 27-50 pounds
My Length: 37-46 inches

"Energetic" and "imaginative" best describe the 4-year-old. Often impatient and silly, they discover humor and spend a great deal of time being silly and telling you "jokes." A 4-year-old's language may range from silly words such as "batty-watty" to profanity. Loud, boisterous laughter may accompany such language. Imagination suddenly becomes greater than life for the 4-year-old, who often confuses reality and "make-believe." Wild stories and exaggerations are common. Four-year-olds feel good about the things they can do, show self-confidence, and are willing to try new adventures. They race up and down stairs or around corners, dash on tricycles or scooters, and pull wagons at full tilt. You still need to watch them closely as they cannot estimate their own abilities accurately and are capable of trying some outlandish and dangerous tricks.

I AM FOUR YEARS OLD!

I am in an active stage, running, hopping, jumping and climbing. I love to question "Why?" and "How?"

I need room to grow and to explore. I need lots of opportunities to see, touch and do things. I like to do things for myself. I need room to grow, but this doesn't mean letting me do anything. I still need limits set for my own protection and for others.

I'm interested in numbers and the world around me. I love being read to. Time is beginning to mean something to me. Morning, afternoon, tomorrow, yesterday all are understandable to me now.

Friends are important to me. I like playing with a few friends more than a whole lot of them. I need to learn to give and take and play cooperatively with others.

I am quite versatile and can easily change from one thing to another. I can be quiet, noisy, cozy, independent, social, indifferent, cooperative, fanciful, literal, silly, and competitive.

I like to know the rules. It gives me a feeling of sureness and confidence. I get stimulated very easily and get tired easily.

My imagination is working overtime now. When I tell stories I sometimes mix up real and make believe and need to be reminded about the difference. But--I love to exaggerate.

YOU CAN HELP ME BY:

- Giving me freedom within established guidelines
- Listening to my side of the story
- Providing opportunities for me to socialize and work cooperatively with friends
- Remembering that what you tell me I will tell the world
- Knowing that I am concerned about what you think of me
- Labeling objects and describe what's happening to me, so I can learn new words and things
- Reading to me
- Listening to me
- Showing genuine interest in me
- Being loving, affectionate, and understanding.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Uses a spoon, fork, and dinner knife skillfully
- Needs 10-12 hours sleep each night
- Dresses self without much assistance (unzip, unsnap, unbutton clothes; lace but not tie shoes)
- Feed self, brush teeth, comb hair, wash, dress, hang up clothes with little assistance
- Walks a straight line
- Hops on one foot
- Steers a tricycle skillfully
- Jumps over objects 5-6 inches high
- Jumps, hops, and skips around obstacles with ease
- Stacks 10 or more blocks
- Play dough, sometimes human and animal figures
- Threads small beads on a string
- Catches, bounces, and throws a ball easily
- Likes to gallop, turn somersaults, climb ladders and trees, hop on one foot

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Enjoys playing with other children
- Takes turns and shares (most of the time); may still be rather bossy
- Seeks out adult approval
- Understands and obeys simple rules (most of the time)
- Makes rules of games as they go along
- Talk and carries on elaborate conversations
- Capable of feeling jealous
- Persistently asks why
- Boastful - enjoys showing off and bragging about possessions
- Fearful of the dark and monsters
- Begins to understand danger - at times can become quite fearful
- Has difficulty separating make-believe from reality
- Understands the concept of lying - imagination often gets in the way
- May name call, tattle freely
- Likes to shock others by using "forbidden" words
- Expresses anger verbally rather than physically (most of the time)
- Still throws tantrums over minor frustrations
- Imitates parent of the same sex, particularly in play
- Enjoys pretending, often with imaginary playmates
- Beyond "playing house" to more elaborate settings like fire station, school, shoe store, ice cream shop
- Loves to tell jokes that may not make any sense at all to adults
- Can feel intense anger and frustration
- Has vivid imagination and sometimes imaginary playmates
- Enjoys dramatic play and role playing

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Can place objects in a line from largest to smallest
- Can recognize some letters if taught, and may be able to print own name
- Recognizes familiar words in simple books or signs (STOP sign)
- Understands the concepts of "tallest, biggest, same, more, on, in, under, and above"
- Counts 1-7 objects out loud - but not always in the right order
- Understands the order of daily routines (breakfast before lunch before dinner before bed time)
- Speaks in fairly complex sentences. "The baby ate the cookie before I could put it on the table."
- A lot of questions, including ones on birth and death
- Enjoys singing simple songs, rhymes, and nonsense words
- Adapts language to listener's level of understanding. To baby sister: "Daddy go bye-bye." To Mother: "Daddy went to the store to buy food."
- Learns name, address, and phone number, if taught
- Asks and answers who, what, when, why, and where questions
- One activity for 10-15 minutes
- Names 6-8 colors and 3 shapes
- Follows 2 unrelated directions (put your milk on the table and get your coat on)
- Basic understanding of concepts related to number, size, weight, colors, textures, distance, position, and time
- Immediate passage of time as in what happened yesterday, but does not understand calendar time
- Has long attention span and finishes activities
- Understands and remembers own accomplishments
- May add "ed" to words. "I go-ed to the door" and "put-ed the cat outdoors" or "He hurt-ed me."

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Read aloud each day and encourage your child to look at books on their own. Provide alternative reading material with a collection of outdated coupons, junk mail, newspaper ads, and old cereal boxes.

Say nursery rhymes and finger plays together. Encourage your 4-year-old to tell stories to younger children.

Encourage interest in writing and words. Provide your child with paper and notebooks for writing. Print letters and numerals on art work, and label toy shelves with pictures and words that describe objects.

Provide a variety of art experiences. Make play dough. Create collages from magazine pictures, fabric, wallpaper, and newsprint. Experiment with new media like wire and cork, soda straws, string, or yarn. Teach your child to mix different colors with paint.

Teach the use of landmarks to find his way around your neighborhood.

Four-year-olds have a strong need to feel important and worthwhile. Praise accomplishments, and provide opportunities to experience freedom and independence.

Encourage physical development. Play follow the leader. Pretend to walk like various animals. Set up an obstacle course indoors with challenges such as crawling, climbing, leaping, balancing, and running across stepping stones. Encourage walking with a beanbag on the head.

Promote respect for life and living things by letting your child help you build a bird feeder and hang it up. Record the kinds of birds observed, and teach your child to identify birds by significant characteristics like the red male and green female cardinals, the black caps and white cheeks of the chickadee.

Encourage help in planning and planting a garden. They will love to water plants daily and will enjoy measuring plant growth.

Encourage multicultural awareness through representative dolls, puppets, pictures, and books. Encourage cultural aspects of all families, and learn recipes, songs, and information about cultural celebrations.

Expand dramatic play by providing a variety of props for themes like grocery store, pizza parlor, birthday party, and firefighter.

Teach important number and space concepts.

Sort and count everything in sight, like silverware, socks, rocks, leaves, etc. Talk about things being in, on, under, behind, beside, before and after, larger than, too far, etc.

What to look out for

Five-Year-Olds

My Weight: 31-57 pounds
My Length: 39-48 inches

Five-year-olds are cheerful, energetic, and enthusiastic. They enjoy planning, and spend a great deal of time discussing who will do what. They especially enjoy dramatic play, usually with other children. Five-year-olds are more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others around them. It is less difficult for them to wait for a turn or to share toys and material. "Best friends" become very important.

Many 5-year-olds will be going to kindergarten. Be sensitive to the needs of a 5-year-old returning from school. They may want to rest, play by themselves, be free for a while from adult-directed activity, or catch up with the group happenings. Pace afternoon kindergarten children during the day with a balance of rest and activity. All-day kindergarten children need to be given every consideration when they return to home as they may be tired, talkative, hungry, or wanting to share the day's happenings.

I AM FIVE YEARS OLD!

I am more self-assured and conforming now. I respect you and your authority. I can be cooperative and self-reliant but at the same time enjoy being "silly" and a "show-off'. Now that I am so grown up, I like to take care of little kids.

I have a perception of order, form, and detail and can ask questions to get information I want to know. I am realistic. My sense of humor has developed to a point where I thoroughly enjoy and laugh heartily at funny pictures.

I feel pretty good about my world and am content with myself. I like to please you and usually try to stay on your good side. I prefer doing things I know I can accomplish successfully.

I am really into learning. Going to school is a big deal to me. Any opportunity to show off what I have learned I will take.

YOU CAN HELP ME BY:

- Answering my questions
- Encouraging me to try new things
- Allowing me the opportunity to show my "expertise"
- Understanding my strong feelings about "fair play" and rules

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Requires approximately 1,700 calories daily
- Sleeps 10-11 hours at night
- May begin to loose baby teeth
- Able to dress self with little assistance
- Learns to skip
- Throws ball overhead
- Catches bounced balls
- Rides a tricycle skillfully; may show interest in riding a bicycle with training wheels
- Balances on either foot for 5-10 seconds
- Uses a fork and knife well
- Cuts on a line with scissors
- Left or right hand dominance is established
- Walks down stairs, alternating feet without using a handrail
- Jumps over low objects
- Can run, gallop, and tumble
- Can skip and run on tiptoe
- Can jump rope
- Interested in performing tricks like standing on head, performing dance steps
- Capable of learning complex body coordination skills like swimming, ice or roller skating, and riding bicycles
- May be able to tie shoelaces
- May be able to copy simple designs and shapes

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Understands about 13,000 words
- Uses 5-8 words in a sentence
- Likes to argue and reason; use words like "because"
- Basic colors like red, yellow, blue, green, orange

- Able to memorize address and phone number
- Understands that stories have a beginning, middle, and end
- Able to remember stories and repeat them
- Enjoys creating and telling stories
- Understands that books are read from left to right, top to bottom
- Enjoys riddles and jokes
- Draws pictures that represent animals, people, and objects
- Enjoys tracing or copying letters
- Can place objects in order from shortest to tallest
- Can understand and use comparative terms like big, bigger, or biggest
- Sorts objects by size
- Identifies some letters of the alphabet and a few numbers (if taught)
- Understands "more," "less," and "same"
- Counts up to 10 objects
- Recognizes categories ("These are all animals; these are all toys.")
- Understands before and after, above, and below
- Block and dramatic play is much more elaborate and complex
- Has good attention span and can concentrate well
- Is project minded - plans buildings, play scenarios, and drawings
- Interested in cause and effect
- Can understand time concepts like yesterday, today, and tomorrow

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Invents games with simple rules
- Organizes other children and toys for pretend play
- Still confuses fantasy with reality sometimes
- Often fears loud noises, the dark, animals, and some people
- Can take turns and share, but doesn't always want to
- Expresses anger and jealousy physically
- Likes to test muscular strength and motor skills, but is not emotionally ready for competition
- Carries on conversations with other children and adults
- Excludes other children in play - best friends only
- Uses swear words or "bathroom words" to get attention
- Sometimes can be very bossy
- Likes to try new things and take risks
- Likes to make own decisions
- Notices when another child is angry or sad - more sensitive to feelings of others
- Prefers company of 1 or 2 children at a time; may become bossy or sulky when others join in
- Likes to feel grown up; boasts about self to younger, less capable children
- Begins to have a very basic understanding of right and wrong
- Plays contentedly and independently without constant supervision
- Takes turns and shares (sometimes)
- Understands and respects rules - often asks permission
- Understands and enjoys both giving and receiving
- Sometimes needs to get away and be alone
- Can understand relationships among people and similarities and differences in other families
- Seeks adult approval
- Sometimes critical of other children and embarrassed by own mistakes
- Less fearful of the world than toddlers because understands the world better
- Has a good sense of humor, and enjoys sharing jokes and laughter with adults

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Encourage body coordination and sense of balance by playing "Follow the Leader" with skipping, galloping, and hopping. Skip or jump rope to music, teach folk dances and games, provide a balance beam, a tree for climbing, and a knotted rope suspended from a sturdy frame.

Teach sack-walking and "twist-em," "statue," or "freeze" games to provide an outlet for his drive for physical activity. Play games that can teach right and left directions, like "Hokey-Pokey," "Looby-Loo," and "Simon Says."

Help your child learn to use a pair of scissors by letting your child cut out paper. Provide a plastic needle, thread, and beads to encourage small muscle development. Provide carpentry, take-apart, and put-together experiences with junk clocks and old small appliances. Teach how to repair toys and books.

Add drama to your reading sessions each day by using different voices for different characters. While reading a familiar story, stop before the end and ask your child to add his own end to the story.

Ask your child to tell you a story. Write it down and post it on the wall or refrigerator. Ask "what if" questions. What if there were 5 little pigs instead of 3? What if Little Red Riding Hood saw a rabbit instead of a wolf?

Involve your child in writing "thank-you" notes, holiday greeting cards, and letters.

Give your child opportunities to sort, group, match, count, and sequence with real life situations such as setting the table, counting the number of turns, sorting out socks, and matching fabric swatches. Lotto games and card games such as "fish" involve matching pairs.

Help your child learn to make rules and play simple games by providing opportunities for your child to play in small groups.

Observe how your child plays with other children. Teach your child to request, bargain, negotiate, and apologize.

Help your child understand and cope with strong feelings.

Give your child words to use when he is angry. "I can see you are SAD about going home, ANGRY at your friend...."

Take questions seriously. Talk to your child about what happens and why. Give answers he can understand. Specific praise helps children understand the true value of their actions. Say "Stacking those toys on the shelf that way really helped - thanks!" rather than "You did a good job!"

Provide a comfortable place to be alone. A large cardboard box makes a wonderful hideaway.

Take fears seriously. Reassure that you will make sure that nothing bad will happen to your child.

Allow some privacy in the toilet. Remind your child to wash his hands until it becomes a habit.

Be patient with the untidiness and clutter. Allow plenty of time to clean up. It helps to store and organize materials on low, open shelves so that they can be found and put away easily.

Five-year-olds will show an increasing interest in numbers. Encourage your child to count anything of interest - cups, leaves, drums, bells, meters, etc.

Encourage interest in jokes, nonsense, and riddles by reading humorous stories, riddles, and nonsense rhymes. Join them in jokes from school, books, and TV.

Give opportunities to express dramatic and creative interest. Teach your child how to move his body to dramatize the opening of a flower, falling snow, leaves, or rain; wiggly worms and snakes; and laundry blowing in the wind.

What to look out for

Six through Eight-Year-Olds

Six, seven, and eight-year-olds build on the important developments of the first 6 years of life and seem to settle down to a steadier pace of growing and learning. Young school-age children are interested in real life tasks and activities, and pretend and fantasy lessen considerably. School-agers want to make "real" jewelry, take "real" photographs, and create "real" collections.

School-age children have longer attention spans. They are more likely to stick with things until the project is finished, the problem solved, or the argument resolved. Doing things together with friends, teamwork, and following rules become very important. This age group is fascinated by rules and can develop games with extensive rules and rituals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Skilled at using scissors and small tools
- Development of permanent teeth
- Enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
- Good sense of balance
- Can catch small balls
- Can tie shoelaces
- Enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
- Can print name
- Long arms and legs may give gawky awkward appearance

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Being with friends becomes increasingly important
- Interested in rules and rituals
- Girls want to play more with girls; boys with boys
- May have a best friend and an enemy
- Strong desire to perform well, do things right
- Begins to see things from another child's point of view, but still very self-centered
- Finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
- Views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- Seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
- Generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
- May become upset when behavior or school-work is ignored

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- May reverse printed letters (b/d)
- Enjoys planning and building
- Doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
- Reading may become a major interest
- Increased problem-solving ability
- Interested in magic and tricks
- Longer attention span
- Enjoys creating elaborate collections
- Able to learn difference between left and right
- Can begin to understand time and the days of the week

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Provide opportunities for active play. Throwing at targets, running, jumping rope, tumbling, and aerobics may be of interest.

Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe, etc.

Provide opportunities for non-competitive team activities such as working a jigsaw puzzle or planting a garden.

Encourage sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.

Encourage collections by allowing your child to make special boxes or books in which to store his collections.

Encourage reading and writing by allowing your child to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, record events, go on field trips, or conduct experiments.

Help children explore their world.

Take field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods. Invite community helpers to your home.

What to look out for

Nine through Eleven-Year-Olds

Children of this age develop a sense of self and find it important to gain social acceptance and experience achievement. Friends become increasingly important. Secret codes, shared word meanings and made up languages, passwords and elaborate rituals are important ways to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Close friends are almost always of the same sex, although children in this age group are usually increasingly interested in peers of the opposite sex. Be prepared to use all your "patience" for children this age, as they tend to think that they do not need any adult care or supervision. Yet, when they are left to care for themselves, they are lonely, unhappy, and sometimes frightened.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Girls are generally as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical maturity
- Girls may begin to menstruate
- Increased body strength and hand dexterity
- Improved coordination and reaction time`

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Begins to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings
- Rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages are common
- Enjoys being a member of a club
- Increased interest in competitive sports
- Outbursts of anger are less frequent
- May belittle or defy adult authority

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Interested in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to project books
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- May be very interested in discussing a future career
- Fantasizes and daydreams about the future
- Capable of understanding concepts without having direct hands-on experience

Ideas For Caregivers

Below are some tips you can use to help children learn and develop a strong foundation for lifelong learning!

Provide time and space for child to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted will be appreciated.

When possible, allow your child to make a short call to a school friend.

Encourage your child to participate in an organized club or youth group.

Encourage child to help you with younger children, but don't overdo. Avoid burdening with too many adult responsibilities. Allow time for play and relaxation.

Provide opportunities for games of strategy, checkers, chess, and monopoly are favorites.

Remember to provide plenty of food. Older children have larger appetites than younger children and will need to eat more.

Provide opportunities to help out with real skills.

Cooking, sewing, and designing dramatic play props are useful ways to utilize their skills.

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