

YOUR
CHILD
from 3 to 5
is...

GROWING UP

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Young children are alike in many ways and show some of the same changes in growth. All children follow a timetable in their physical development. For example, children must learn to crawl before they can creep, creep before they can stand, and stand before they can walk. However, these stages may not always happen at the same age or with the same speed.

Children are individuals. Even children who are the same age can be very different. Look at two different 3-year-olds. One may be able to dress himself or herself and ride a tricycle. The other may not be able to do either.

Brothers and sisters in a family will not master the same skills at the same age. It is important that parents not compare their children's talents and abilities. *Individual differences are normal and should be accepted.*

For healthy growth, children need a chance to try out new skills. They also need time to explore what they can and cannot do. However, children may not always be successful when they practice new skills. Learning often comes slowly. Once they learn something new, children will try, try, try what they learned!

Growth Changes

The way a child grows is usually set during the preschool period. For example, children who grow fast during the early years of

life will probably be fast growers throughout life. Knowing a child's growth pattern helps parents understand his or her physical limits.

Children grow in spurts, ranging from fast to slow. During periods of fast growth, children have a lot of energy but tire easily. This makes a child moody and irritable at times. A child's appetite may be "finicky" when growth is rapid. Children also tend to be "awkward" and uncoordinated when growth is fast.



Well-coordinated children may begin to stumble over their own feet and appear clumsy during periods of fast growth.

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Periods of slower growth require less energy, so children may be more cheerful and easier to live with. Children may become less awkward and more coordinated when their growth slows down.

Muscle Development. A lot of muscle growth is taking place all over the preschooler's body. Exercise is needed so a child can use developing muscles. This may make children tired, but they recover quickly. It is through active play that children develop coordination and strength.

Large muscles in legs and arms are needed for active play such as running, jumping and riding bicycles. The preschooler shows skill and balance in running and walking but is not very graceful yet. Most children cannot skip easily until they are 5 or 6 years old.



It takes practice for children to develop coordination and strong muscles.

Small muscles in the hands and fingers are needed for eating, using scissors, tying shoe laces and working puzzles. Usually children are not able to tie a bow knot until they are 6 or 7. But young children can cut with scissors and draw with a crayon or pencil.

Between ages 4 and 6, children have established a firm preference for using the right or left hand. They will choose to use either their right or left hand for eating, drawing and cutting. Rarely will they choose to use both. Children should not be forced to be "right-handed" or "left-handed." Trying to change a child's hand preferences can cause problems in speech and learning abilities.

Physical Health. Good overall health is necessary for a child to develop normally. Consider some of the main elements of good health.

Most 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds have all of their baby teeth. Permanent teeth are developing inside the jaw. These will later replace the baby teeth. Trips to the dentist should begin during the preschool years because this is a cavity-prone time. The cavities in baby teeth must be filled to protect a child's permanent teeth. Brushing teeth after meals is also important. Candy and other sweets for snacks will stick to teeth and cause tooth decay.



It is a good habit for preschoolers to brush their teeth daily.

Rest periods are needed at some time during the preschoolers' day even if they do not really fall asleep. Some quiet time to unwind will help children relax after a busy day of play. At night, most 3- to 5-year-olds need 12 hours of sleep. It also helps to have a set time for going to bed each night.

Generally, 3- to 5-year-olds can control toilet habits during the day and night. Children are different and may not learn at the same age. An upsetting experience or excitement may cause an "accident" now and then. Punishing a child for accidents often creates more accidents. Treat failures lightly and praise successes. This builds feelings of confidence.

Now it is your turn...

Doing. Here are some activities you can do with your child:

Activities to develop large muscles

- running
- climbing
- jumping
- throwing balls
- riding tricycles and bicycles
- jumping ropes
- sliding boards and see-saws
- swinging
- hopscotch

Activities to develop small muscles

- cutting
- painting
- pasting
- drawing and coloring
- cooking activities
- puzzles
- tying and lacing
- eating
- playing with puppets

Making. Here are some things you can make with your child:

1. Make a swing out an old tire. Hang it from a sturdy tree with rope.



2. You and your child can make play dough. Mix 1 cup of flour, 1 cup of salt and ½ cup of water. Mix until firm and flexible for molding. A little food coloring makes it look even better! Let your child mold whatever he or she wants to with the play dough. Store tightly in a plastic bag or covered can.

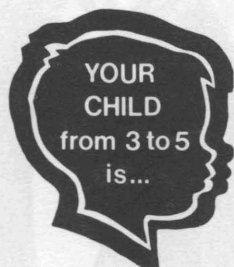


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GROWING UP!

Growth Measuring Stick

3-Year-Olds

- Weigh between 30 and 35 pounds*
- Are between 37 and 40 inches tall
- Help with dressing and undressing
- Can feed themselves
- Can run easily and smoothly
- Can unbutton large buttons and work zippers
- Can walk upstairs, alternating forward foot



4-Year-Olds

- Weigh between 35 and 40 pounds*
- Are between 40 and 43 inches tall
- Skip on one foot; can hop
- Dress and undress if clothes can be managed easily
- Can button clothes and lace shoes
- Can wash and dry hands; brush teeth
- Can walk downstairs, alternating forward foot
- Can coordinate blunt scissors
- Go to the toilet without help



5-Year-Olds

- Weigh between 40 and 45 pounds*
- Are between 43 and 46 inches tall
- Dress and undress themselves
- Tie shoelaces, but not in a bow
- Use a knife and fork
- Can ride a tricycle well
- Cut, paste and draw pictures
- Are getting some permanent teeth

*Boys may weigh 2 pounds more than girls at each age.

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