



There is no one like your child

Every child's development is unique and complex. Although children develop through a generally predictable sequence of steps and milestones, they may not proceed through these steps in the same way or at the same time. A child's development is also greatly influenced by factors in his or her environment and the experiences he or she has. The information in this guide explains what child development experts consider to be "widely-held expectations" for what an average child might achieve within a given year. Please consider what you read in the context of your child's unique development.

The significance of social and emotional development is seen in every area of a child's life. A child will have a strong foundation for later development if he or she can manage personal feelings, understand others' feelings and needs, and interact positively with others. Differences in social and emotional development result from a child's inborn temperament, cultural influences, disabilities, behaviors modeled by adults, the level of security felt in a child's relationships with adults, and the opportunities provided for social interaction.

Below are separate sections showing how One, Two and Three year old's develop.



ONE YEAR OLD- How your child will develop this year

- Everything is new and interesting to one-year-olds. They enthusiastically use their five senses to actively explore the world around them. They find pleasure in causing things to happen and in completing basic tasks. And once a discovery is made, one-year-olds want to make it happen again and again and again!
- Emotionally, one-year-olds are just learning to recognize and manage their feelings. They experience a wide range of emotions and have tantrums when they are tired or frustrated. They may also respond to conflict by hitting, biting, screaming, or crying. One-year-olds seek autonomy and may say, "No!" to adult suggestions or insist that they, "Do byself!" Then, moments later, they might cling to an adult's leg or ask for help.
- During this year, language skills typically progress from grunting and pointing to speaking single words and experimenting with simple word combinations. Pronunciation is quite

difficult, however and familiar adults almost always need to "translate" for others. One-year-olds steadily build their vocabularies by absorbing the language around them. They are able to understand common phrases and simple directions used in routine situations.

- They take pleasure in nursery rhymes and books with single pictures of familiar and related items. They may apply their growing vocabularies by naming pictures in books read to them. Children this age also have no understanding of true "writing," but many enjoy experimenting with marks and scribbles on a surface.
- As one-year olds play, they start to build their mathematical thinking by recognizing patterns and understanding shapes. For example, they notice that night is followed by day and that socks go on feet before shoes. They begin to sort familiar objects by one characteristic, such as whether they are "hard" or "soft." They may enjoy filling and emptying containers. They know that when an object is hidden, it is still there. Many can also do simple insert puzzles when the puzzle pieces show whole objects.
- Some of the most obvious changes that you will notice in your child this year are in the area of physical development. Most one-year-olds typically move from crawling to running by about 20 months. They hold their hands out to the side or poke their bellies out for balance. They use their new mobility to push and pull toys, dance and climb. One-year-olds also improve in hand and finger coordination, but skills at this age are still immature, so they fumble and drop objects frequently.
- Is aware of others. Enjoys exploring objects with adults as a basis for establishing relationships (e.g., plays "peek-a-boo" over and over again with grandfather).
- May make simple overtures to familiar children (e.g., looks for and smiles at children at the store, offers a toy or hug to another child whether or not the gesture is welcome).
- Shows "contagious distress" when others are unhappy (e.g., at child care, starts to cry when he or she sees another child crying).
- When a conflict occurs with another child or adult, he or she often acts out physically or emotionally (e.g., another child grabs Sara's shovel, so she pushes the child and screams). Calms down when an adult helps resolve the conflict.



TWO YEAR OLD - How your child may develop this year

- Two-year-olds enjoy using their senses and motor skills to explore the world and are highly curious about unfamiliar objects, events and phenomena. They can solve simple problems with the "trial and error" method and will practice an activity many times to master it. Children this age also pretend more during play, using familiar objects and situations to process their daily experiences.
- New discoveries are also facilitated by a two-year-old's blossoming language skills that prompt many "why," "what" and "how" questions. They also understand simple directions and many common phrases used in routine situations.

- Children this age are laying the groundwork for reading and writing. They enjoy having books read to them and may pretend to "read" as they independently look through familiar books. They also make a variety of scribble marks anywhere and everywhere and may even attempt to write the first letter of their name.
- As they play and complete their daily routines, two-year-olds learn important math skills. They can use a toy to represent another object, recognize patterns with daily activities and understand concepts of time like, "tomorrow" and "yesterday." They can sort shapes, complete puzzles with eight pieces or less and stack a set of rings on a peg by size. They also understand addition and subtraction with the numbers "one" and "two."
- Physically, two-year-olds explore all the ways to travel from here to there, including rolling, crawling, creeping, walking, running, jumping and climbing. They can also kick a small ball forward, catch a rolled ball and throw a ball overhand (but with little accuracy). Two-year-olds love finger play activities (e.g., "The Itsy, Bitsy, Spider"), pounding and squeezing clay, shaking rhythm instruments and scribbling. They can turn doorknobs and unscrew lids and have improved their skills using eating utensils.
- Two-year-olds also use their motor skills to explore the creative arts. They make sounds by banging and shaking instruments and household items. They enjoy dancing upon request, doing finger plays and acting out chants and songs.
- Two-year-olds enjoy playing alongside other children, but usually keep to themselves. When conflicts arise, adults need to step in to prevent aggression and teach appropriate behaviors. Children this age are beginning to label feelings that they recognize in themselves and others. Controlling emotions is still difficult, however, so frustration may trigger emotional meltdowns. Comfort objects like blankets or teddy bears help two-year-olds cope with new situations or strong emotions.
- Enjoys playing alongside other children, but doesn't interact a great deal with them (e.g., two children sit in the sandbox, each occupied independently with pails, but with a comfortable awareness that the other child is there).
- Depending on his or her exposure to other children, may start to have favorite playmates and warm bonds with others (e.g., Anna asks about Nicholas when he is absent from the child care program for a few days).
- Shows awareness of others' feelings. May try to give basic help (e.g., watches the teacher to see if she will come to the aid of a child who is crying; pats or hugs the child who is sad).
- Looks to adults for comfort when conflict happens (e.g., when a child takes all the crayons at child care, Lauren runs to teacher and hugs her around the knees). With much adult support, begins to develop some strategies for resolving conflicts constructively (e.g., with teacher at his side, Walton says, "It MY shovel, Darrell!").



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THREE YEAR OLDS- How your child will develop this year

- Three-year-olds learn primarily through exploring, using all the senses. While playing, they are better able to ignore distractions and focus on the task at hand. They will even persist in completing something that is a bit difficult and can think more creatively and methodically when solving problems.
- Language for three-year-olds is taking off. They learn lots of new words and make major improvements in pronunciation. They communicate in simple sentences and are refining their use of grammar. Children this age begin to initiate conversations, want to talk about areas of interest and can relate personal experiences to others with the support of some prompting from grown-ups.
- Three-year-olds are also able to listen to and understand conversations, stories, songs and poems. They are learning their letters, but may also refer to numbers as "letters." They notice print in the environment and may ask what it means. They also realize that print in books tells a reader what to say. During the year, scribbles begin to appear more like letters and children may string several of these "letters" together to form mock words. They become aware of the uses for writing and may dictate words for adults to write down.
- Children this age develop their logical reasoning skills as they play. They can put together simple puzzles and understand that a whole object can be separated into parts. They are able to classify and sort objects, but usually by only one characteristic at a time. Three-year-olds identify and describe objects that are the "same" or "different." They can count up to "five," and begin to recognize written numerals "0" through "9."
- Physically, three-year-olds have improved their abilities to run, climb and perform other large-muscle activities. They can ride a tricycle or pump a swing. They can catch a large ball using two hands and their bodies. Improved finger dexterity allows them to put together simple puzzles, use tools, hold crayons with fingers instead of fists, make balls and snakes out of clay and undress without assistance.
- Emotionally, three-year-olds need familiar adults nearby for security as they explore and play. As they develop more independence, children this age begin to have real friendships with other children. When conflicts arise with peers, three-year-olds will typically seek adult assistance. They are learning to recognize the causes of feelings and will give simple help, such as a hug, to those who are upset. Three-year-olds can better manage their emotions, but may still fall apart under stress.
- Three-year-olds build on their abilities in the creative arts by developing greater control over their voices and by recognizing, naming and singing their favorite songs. Their art also begins to include recognizable subjects. Three-year-olds love dramatic play and will sometimes get so involved in their imagined scenarios that they continue their roles even after the play stops. They also prefer to use real objects and costumes in their pretend play.
- Shows an interest in other children and copies what they do (e.g., Luke jumps off the couch; his neighbor Sonia does exactly the same, laughing). Plays cooperatively with another child for a time (e.g., pretends to talk on the phone with the child).
- Begins to have real friendships, even though he or she may not understand the concept of friendship or that these relationships may not last (e.g. says, "My best friends are Nathan, Sharon, Enrique, Cassidy..." and all others in his or her class).

- Gives simple help to peers who are in need, upset, hurt, or angry (e.g., hug, comfort object, pat, encouraging word). Such attempts to give aid may not take into account the other child's characteristics or needs (e.g., offers a crying classmate his or her own stuffed animal, even though the child has another comfort object).
- Accepts compromise when resolving conflicts if it is suggested by an adult (e.g., mom says, "Jackson, you can use that swing as soon as Sheila gets off."). Seeks adults' help in resolving a conflict (e.g., goes to dad and says, "Jacob took my truck!"). Continues to learn simple alternatives to aggressive ways of dealing with conflicts (e.g., trades one doll for a desired one by saying, "You have THIS dolly, okay?").

Tips for building learning skills:

- **Let them choose.**
Give kids a chance to make simple choices, such as what to wear or what to eat for a snack.
- **Help them finish what they start.**
Children experience great satisfaction when they try and finish new things. Give them a bit of support when they need it, but be careful not to take over completely.
- **Nurture creativity.**
Encourage children to ask questions, try different ways of using materials, or offer them a wide range of new experiences.
- **Don't rush activities.**
Whether at home or in preschool, children need extended periods of time to really get involved in activities and to experience the "engagement" that is such an important foundation for learning.
- **Provide encouragement.**
All children start life eager to learn, but if adults are critical, that eagerness may disappear by the elementary grades. Look for achievements to praise and acknowledge your child's progress whenever possible.

Resources used in the packet are from PBS.org and Infants and Children by Laura E. Berk

