

Normal Development: 3 Years Old

Physical Development

- Jumps, gallops, tiptoes, and runs smoothly.
- Can walk backwards a long distance.
- May stumble and fall often.
- Rides a tricycle.
- Can pour from a pitcher or milk carton using both hands.
- Undresses self, but needs help with dressing.
- Uses crayons.

Emotional Development

- Becomes more relaxed and flexible.
- Cries and hits at times.
- Quickly switches from shyness to high spirits and back.
- May show fear of unfamiliar objects or activities.
- May want to be a baby at times.
- Starts to talk about dreams.

Social Development

- Is keenly interested in family activities.
- Sees parents as heroes.
- Seeks approval from adults.
- Tests limits constantly.
- Often prefers to play alone.
- May have an imaginary playmate.
- Shares and takes turns occasionally.
- Quarrels with other children.

Mental Development

- Develops a somewhat stable concept of self.
- Speaks about 1,000 words.
- Starts to use pronouns in speech.
- Loves to hear stories over and over again.
- Enjoys learning short rhymes and songs.

- May match or identify primary colors.
- Enjoys imaginative and imitative play.
- Can take on some very simple responsibilities.
- Puts toys away with adult help.
- Has attention span of no more than a few minutes.
- Can make choices.

Each child is unique. It is difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain behaviors and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide range of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines show general progress through the developmental stages rather than fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to reach some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend.

If you have any concerns about your child's own pattern of development, check with your healthcare provider.

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