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*Dedicated to helping children with emotional and behavioral problems,
by developing stronger more positive family relationships*

Developmental Stages and Behaviors

Since children mature socially, physically, and mentally at individual rates, they need all the support, love and encouragement they can get from the parents. Stress occurs for the child when he or she is pushed beyond his/her personal development stage. Following are some guidelines, but remember development is an individual process.

Two year olds

As you are aware, two year olds say “NO” often. This is because they are striving for independence and like learning to do things their own way. They are much more mobile and are learning to run and jump.

Two year olds are starting to use verbal language more and can generally combine two words to make a simple sentence. This is the age they start to indicate toilet needs. Some two year olds will be ready for “potty” training, but others will not. Try not to get frustrated or compare your child to others.

Children at this age can become frustrated easily. It is helpful if they have structured routines without a great deal of change. It helps them to know what to expect from their daily schedule.

A two year olds play can have lots of imaginary friends and fantasy. They are starting to enjoy playing with other children. Supervision is needed to help learn to negotiate play with their friends.



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Three year olds

Three year olds start to enjoy memorizing short songs and rhymes and begin to count. It is the beginning of recognizing numbers and letters, as well as showing an understanding of the concepts of up/down and front/back.

Three year olds enjoy making friends with other children their age. They learn to share toys, even though they are often not very cooperative with each other.

Four year olds

Four year olds usually have a strong desire to make friends. Often their play is pretend and they may have trouble determining what is real and what is pretend. They enjoy games such as playing catch, singing songs, and repeating rhymes. They like to make up words and tell nonsense jokes.

Most four year olds can draw pictures of humans with head, body, arms, and legs. Their verbal language is more mature and is easier for others to understand.

Five year olds

Five year olds have developed a strong sense of language and how to use it. They generally know their name, address, age and the date of their birthday. They can also start to tell the difference between true and false.

This is the age they start to become competitive and learn to be tattletales. They are proud of their possessions, but will be more willing to share them.

Five year olds start to recognize words and can sort by size, color and shape. This is the time they develop a sense of rhythm and learn to dance.



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You can help your child's development by giving them the courage to try new things. Let them know that you are listening, even when you cannot give them the things they are asking for. Help your child learn to make choices by giving them opportunity to make choices. Your child will gain self-confidence by being allowed to make his or her own choices when appropriate.

As your child gets older, he or she may not need a nap, but it is important to give them quiet time. During quiet time, they learn to develop their own creativity.

As state above, please remember not every child develops the same. Each child is unique and will have areas of strength and weakness. Giving your child encouragement in all endeavors will only strengthen their self-confidence and allow them to continue to grow. ■

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