

PHYSICAL CHANGES

The first years of life are filled with change! Never fail to wonder at all the many ways a child grows in this season of life. And remember. The best way to support their growing body is good nutrition, plenty of rest, and regularly scheduled well checks with a pediatrician.

NEW BABY

- Lifts their head and chest (3-4 months)
- Reaches for objects & rolls over (4-6 months)
- Sits up & grabs with two fingers (6-8 months)
- Crawls (6-10 months)
- Stands unsupported & maybe even walks (11-12 months)

ONE-YEAR-OLD

- Starts to walk (12-15 months)
- Walks backwards and sideways (15-18 months)
- Scribbles with crayons (15-18 months)
- Climbs up and down stairs; jumps in place (18-24 months)

TWO-YEAR-OLD

- Jumps in place
- Throws a ball overhead
- Briefly stands on one foot
- May demonstrate hand preference

THREE-YEAR-OLD

- Balances on one foot for 5-10 seconds
- Strings beads and cuts with scissors (the plastic kind)
- Walks upstairs with alternating feet
- Puts on shoes (Just don't try to correct them if they put the left on their right foot.)

FOUR-YEAR-OLD

- Hops on one foot
- Strings beads and cuts with scissors (the plastic kind)
- Throws a ball overhand and catches a bounced ball (sometimes)
- Draws circles, squares, and a person with 2-4 body parts

FIVE-YEAR-OLD

- Loses incisor teeth (6-8 years)
- Grows two to three inches and gains an average of five pounds
- Able to ride a bicycle, roller skate, and jump rope
- Draws a person with a body
- Needs 10-12 hours of sleep each night

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MENTAL CHANGES

Preschool-Aged children don't think like adults. Their rapidly growing brains learn very quickly, but they mostly remember what they experience through their five senses. Like little artists, preschoolers learn best when they experience the world around them through touch, sight, smell, taste, and sound.

NEW BABY

- Is mildly aware of everything
- Learns through their five senses

ONE-YEAR-OLD

- Follows simple instructions
- Benefits from repetition

TWO-YEAR-OLD

- Follows simple instructions
- Benefits from repetition
- Is unable to take the point of view of other people

THREE-YEAR-OLD

- May struggle to understand "real" from "not real"
- Unable to take the point of view of others
- Lives in the present; has a limited memory of past events
- Learns by putting things into simple categories

FOUR-YEAR-OLD

- Sorts things and ideas into categories
- Recognizes less and more (especially if it's candy)
- Can argue, explain, and rationalize (you may have noticed)
- Lives in present, but enjoys retelling the story of past events

FIVE-YEAR-OLD

- Can focus on one activity for 5-15 minutes
- Recognizes and names, numbers, shapes, and colors
- Known the difference between need vs. want and real vs. pretend
- Doesn't logically interpret cause and effect

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VERBAL CHANGES

One of the most significant gifts you can give a child is the gift of language. Nothing will lay a more solid foundation for a child's future than the ability to receive, interpret, and communicate with words. Preschoolers are hard-wired to learn language more efficiently than at any other time of life. You can increase a preschool-age child's verbal skills by reading to them regularly, singing songs together, and having conversations.

NEW BABY

- Has distinctive cries for different needs (0-6 weeks)
- Turns toward your voice (3 months)
- Mimics your tones and "babbling" (6 months)
- Understands a few simple words (9 months)
- Understands around 70 words & may say first "words" (12 months)

ONE-YEAR-OLD

- Points to objects when you name them (18 months)
- Says 10-20 words, mostly nouns and pronouns (18 months)
- Says 40-50 words and forms two word sentences (24 months)
- Understands more than they can communicate

TWO-YEAR-OLD

- Says 40-50 words including some action words like, "Go" (2 years)
- Says approximately 300 words and simple sentences like, "I do it." (2 ½ years)
- Learns how to whisper (2 ½ years)
- Understands more than they can communicate

THREE-YEAR-OLD

- Increasingly easier to understand
- May struggle with some sounds: r, l, s, z, j, sh, ch, th
- Says over 1,000 words (but who's really counting anymore?)
- Answers "what," "where," and "when" questions

FOUR-YEAR-OLD

- Tells a short story
- Keeps a conversation going
- May struggle with some sounds: r, l, s, z, j, sh, ch, th
- Adjusts speech based on the listener and location

FIVE-YEAR-OLD

- Wants to please and help adults
- Has a hard time asking for help
- Needs guidance taking turns and losing well
- May show some (not much) gender preference for playmates

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EMOTIONAL CHANGES

You may be surprised by all the feelings that reside inside the little person in front of you! Preschool aged children have the same emotions as an adult person, they simply lack some of the skills to name and process some of those feelings. You coach a preschooler's emotional abilities when you consistently respond to their physical needs, take their feelings seriously, and calmly help them to refocus and manage their tumultuous internal world.

NEW BABY

- Mirrors your expressions (2 months)
- Distinguishes happy faces from sad faces (4 months)
- Turns away from strangers to show fear (6 months)
- Shows surprise at loud noises (7 months)

ONE-YEAR-OLD

- Recognizes basic emotions in others
- Has trouble sharing
- May begin role-play activities
- Displays separation anxiety
- Plays next to, rather than with, playmates

TWO-YEAR-OLD

- May begin to bite, scream, and throw tantrums
- Plays next to, rather than with, playmates
- Recognizes basic emotions in others
- May begin to name their own emotions like, "I'm happy."

THREE-YEAR-OLD

- May scream, throw tantrums, and show aggression
- Enjoys both physical humor and simple jokes
- Can express basic emotions when asked
- Can tell you what makes them happy or sad

FOUR-YEAR-OLD

- Tends to be optimistic in spite of failure
- Enjoys both physical humor and simple jokes
- Can learn relaxation techniques (take a deep breath)
- Often deals with fear and anxiety by distracting themselves

FIVE-YEAR-OLD

- Tends to be optimistic in spite of failure
- Can be fanatical about the truth
- Benefits from relaxation techniques (take a deep breath)
- Expresses feelings better through play and art (rather than words)

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