



## A Rough Guide to Development: From 3 to 5 Years

Children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when yours will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect as your child gets older, but don't be alarmed if your child takes a slightly different course.

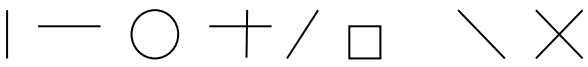
Children continue to learn through their senses, so it is important that they get the opportunity to experience a wide range of sensations, using all of their senses. This includes touch, taste, vision, smell and hearing, as well as the two 'hidden' senses of proprioception (body awareness) and vestibular (balance and movement)

### GROSS MOTOR (Big muscles and movement skills)

Age	Developmental Overview	What You Can Do
By the end of 4 Years	Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds Goes upstairs and downstairs without support Kicks ball forward Throws ball overhand Catches bounced ball most of the time Moves forward and backward with agility	Provide plenty of play space both indoors and out. Allow opportunities to experience a wide range of movements; up and down, swinging, spinning, hanging upside down etc, in a safe environment. Provide for rest, as children tire easily. Make lines and shapes with big muscle movements, such as drawing in the air with sticks or attaching ribbons to sticks, 'painting' outdoor walls and floor with water.
By the End of 5 Years	Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer Hops, somersaults Swings, climbs May be able to skip	As above. Allow children to take greater movement risks, while still ensuring their safety. Some children at this age are ready to take part in more organised activities and lessons, such as swimming, dance/ballet, martial arts, football, tennis etc

### FINE MOTOR (Hand and finger skills)

Age	Developmental Overview	What You Can Do
By the end of 4 Years	Draws a person with two to four body parts Uses scissors Draws circles and squares Begins to copy some capital letters Can feed self with a spoon or fork.	Allow children to use scissors to cut, include a range of items to snip and cut (such as paper, card, wool, aluminium foil, fabric etc). Allow lots of opportunities for mark making, drawing and 'writing'. Use a variety of writing implements: pencil, crayons, wax crayons, chunky chinks, ordinary chinks, whiteboard markers, felt-tip pens, paintbrush, soap crayons, etc Try different textures to draw/paint on: sugar paper, chalkboard, pavement, bubblewrap, side of the bath, sandpaper, on long strips of lining wallpaper. Draw circles and lines on different textures and in different planes (vertical and horizontal)
By the End of 5 Years	Copies lines, circle, cross, square and triangle. Prints some letters Cuts along a line and around a square	Continue with activities as above Pre-writing strokes can be taught in developmental order once

	Draws person with body Dresses and undresses without help Uses fork, spoon, and (sometimes) a table knife	children start to use proper writing implements. Strokes are usually learned in the following order: 
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## VISUAL PERCEPTION (Making sense of what you're looking at)

Age	Developmental Overview	What You Can Do
By the end of 4 Years	Correctly names some colours Understands the concept of counting and may know a few numbers Understands the concepts of "same" and "different"	Hide small toys in a sand box or tray. Ask your child to identify the objects by feeling for them in the sand. Pick out named objects from of box of assorted objects. Begin with a small number of objects in the box and increase number of items to add difficulty. Insert boards or Jigsaw puzzles Games and activities involving counting, sorting, colours, and matching concepts. Simple 'Spot the Difference' games and those involving finding things the same and different. Picture card games such as pairs, snap, lotto
By the End of 5 Years	Can count 10 or more objects Correctly names at least four colours	As above – as your child gets more skilful, increase the difficulty or complexity of games and activities.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

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Between three and four years of age, children are usually less rebellious than they were at two years. Children have reached some level of self control, and are usually friendly and helpful. They are less aggressive than before and can use words when they want their own way, rather than biting, scratching or kicking.

The child's separation anxiety has usually faded away, but it is still quite possible that they will dissolve into tears when first setting off to preschool or nursery. Three year olds are capable of being anxious or jealous for long periods of time. From about 3 years, children can deliberately manipulate emotions to achieve a certain effect on others.

A child's imagination begins to develop between the ages of three and a half to four years, and they may have frightening dreams. Their biggest fear is that their parent/carer will abandon them, especially at night. Other fears can also set in, for example fear of the dark or spiders.

At this stage, children are more able to play on their own and they enjoy this. They also become more interested in other children and begin to interact more directly with them. Children constantly move between real life and fantasy play. They are now more likely to share toys and take turns, initiate or join in play with other children and begin dramatic play. Children become more independent and can follow a series of simple instructions.

Between four and five years of age, children show more awareness of themselves as individuals. They have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and are sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others.

Children's sense of self-confidence grows. They learn to challenge authority and test the limits of their independence. As children turn four, some of the stubbornness that was seen at two years of age comes back. However, it is usually less strong and has a more playful quality to it.

Children are very interested in relationships with other children. They develop friendships, enjoy imaginative play with others and show interest in exploring gender differences. Children's friends

begin to have a real influence on their behaviour and preferences. When playing in a group situation, one child often emerges as the leader, and will assign roles to the rest of the children.

Through play, children continue to work on the balance between dependent and independent. Two themes frequent in their play are big and little, and good and bad. Play becomes more organized, and role play is common.

Children show some understanding of moral reasoning. They understand what is right, what is wrong and why. The most common fear amongst four year olds is fear of the dark. Children of this age use the words 'afraid' and 'scared'.

At five, children tend to be more stable, they are less frustrated and less aggressive. When angry, they may stomp their feet or slam doors. 'I hate you' or 'I wish you were dead' are common statements for both four and five year olds.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

When managing children's behaviour bargaining may work. A calm-down or time-out chair may be introduced to help to get some self-control back. As a general guide, if you use 'time out' or a 'naughty chair/spot', it should be 1 minute for each year of the child's age. That is 3 minutes for a 3 year old, 5 minutes for a 5 year old.

Distraction does not work as well as it did at an earlier age (and may not work at all). It is unlikely that reasoning will work, generally children need to be older before they are capable of doing this.

## **OTHER HANDOUTS**

Further information for children in this age group can also be found in the handouts: Dressing, pre-writing and scissor skills.