

Normal Development: 3 Years Old

Physical Development

- jumps, gallops, tiptoes, runs smoothly
- can walk backwards a long distance
- may stumble and fall frequently
- rides a tricycle
- pours from a pitcher or milk carton using both hands
- undresses self, but needs help with dressing
- buttons and unbuttons large buttons
- uses crayons with somewhat more control
- most primary teeth have erupted

Emotional Development

- becoming more relaxed and flexible
- still cries and hits at times
- quickly alternates between shyness and exuberance
- may show fear of unfamiliar objects or activities
- may want to be a baby at times
- begins to talk about dreams

Social Development

- is keenly interested in family activities
- idolizes parents
- 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 more stable concept of self
- speaks about 1,000 words
- begins to use pronouns in speech
- grasps some grammatical principles
- delights in hearing stories over and over again
- loves learning short rhymes and songs
- may match or identify primary colors
- enjoys imaginative and imitative play
- can assume some very simple responsibilities
- puts toys away with adult help
- has attention span of no more than a few minutes
- can choose between alternatives

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

If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, check with your pediatrician or family physician.

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Published by [McKesson Health Solutions LLC](#).

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