

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark, curly hair and large, expressive eyes. The child is wearing a grey and white striped turtleneck sweater. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a brightly lit indoor setting, possibly a classroom or play area.

THREES

Child Development Checklist & Tips



Starting Out

You are your child's first and most important teacher. During your daily routines, your child is learning as she **talks, plays, cuddles, and interacts with you.**

For optimal growth, your child's basic needs must be met. She needs your love and attention, consistent responses to her needs, a safe environment, and many supervised opportunities to play and explore her world. She will develop at her own rate, depending on her abilities, interests, and experiences; however, **your involvement is critical** in helping her reach her full potential.

This booklet contains information that is important to your child's brain growth and learning potential. The checklists describe skills your three year old child should have and be able to do by her fourth birthday and should not be applied to children younger than three years of age. Following each checklist are tips and suggestions you can use to support your child's development.

If you have concerns about your child's development, call FDLRS Child Find at (727)793-2723 for additional assistance. FDLRS Child Find is Florida's early intervention system that offers programs and services to eligible children from birth to 21 years. Getting help early puts your child on the right track to learn and develop the skills she needs.

This is one in a series of five resource booklets on child development. The series also includes booklets on infant, one year old, two year old, and four year old development.

Each booklet begins with sections on **Brain Development** and **Safety** followed by **Domains of Development** that align with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards. The Resources page provides community and Internet resources to help meet the needs of families and young children.

BOOKLET SECTIONS	DOMAINS OF DEVELOPMENT
Brain Development	
Safety	
Physical Development	Physical Development
Learning Styles	Approaches to Learning
Social & Emotional	Social and Emotional Development
Listening & Talking	Language and Communication
Reading & Writing	Language and Communication
Thinking & Reasoning	Cognitive Development and General Knowledge
Resources	

Introduction

Brain Development

Your child was born with 100 billion brain cells.

Your child's brain cells must be stimulated before the learning pathways that will be used throughout her life can develop. You can help stimulate your child's brain and contribute to her positive brain growth by providing developmentally appropriate experiences, proper nutrition, a safe environment, and routine doctor visits.

Your child's brain will react to positive and negative experiences.

Simple activities like cuddling, laughing, talking, and singing will stimulate your child's brain to release the hormones necessary for brain growth. Brain research has confirmed that prolonged exposure to stress can negatively affect the way your child learns and relates to others. Whether positive or negative, the effects of early life experiences will last a lifetime.

Learning pathways are strengthened through playful repetition, not drilling.

Learning pathways in your child's brain are formed by new experiences and strengthened through frequent repetition of those experiences. Avoid repetition for the purpose of drilling facts. Instead, take advantage of your child's natural curiosity by repeating fun activities and experiences frequently. This will strengthen learning pathways and help her become the best she can be. It is important to remember that a learning pathway can disappear if not used regularly.

Loving interactions with parents and other caregivers will promote brain development.

Your child requires consistent, responsive, and sensitive care to form the secure attachments that are the foundation for behavior and learning. When you respond to your child's cries and cues with patience and compassion, you are meeting her emotional needs.

The importance of your role as a parent cannot be underestimated!

Brain Development Tips

Your child's brain will develop best when you:

- talk to her often, ask questions, and show an interest in what she is doing and experiencing.
- offer a variety of healthy foods and water throughout the day.
- name, count, and describe objects.
- read to her every day.
- sing songs, play rhyming games, and listen to different kinds of music every day.
- respond to her feelings and provide words she can use to express her emotions.
- provide opportunities for her to play with problem solving toys and puzzles.
- stay calm and happy, avoiding stress and traumatic experiences.
- limit the amount of time she spends watching television and using computer games. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advises no more than two hours of educational, nonviolent programs daily.

"It's not if your child is learning; it's what your child is learning that's important."

"The bottom line on brain research? Love your children. Talk to them. Read to them."

~ Rob Reiner

Safety

Your child's safety is best supported when you:

- watch her closely and never leave her home alone or unattended in a car.
- use a car seat or booster seat that is properly installed in the back seat facing forward. Buckle your seat belt, too. Your local fire department can check for proper car seat installation.
- choose toys that are unbreakable, washable, and non-toxic.
- remove hazards to childproof the inside and outside of your home (keep safety caps on medicines, cover electrical outlets, turn pan handles toward the inside of the stove, and keep cleaning products, medicines, toxic plants, adult tools, sharp objects, and hot liquids out of sight and out of reach).
- store 911, Poison Control, and other emergency numbers in your mobile phone contacts and in an easily accessible place at home (such as posted on the refrigerator).
- install a working smoke alarm inside bedrooms, outside sleeping areas, and on every level of your home. Test the alarms monthly and replace batteries at least once a year.
- check your ABC rated fire extinguisher monthly to make sure it is charged and readily accessible.
- dress her in flame retardant sleepwear and comfortable clothing.
- ensure the air in your home is safe to breathe. Ban tobacco smoke. Properly vent appliances, engines, fireplaces, and charcoal grills to the outdoors to prevent a buildup of carbon monoxide.
- lock doors leading to the outdoors and other dangerous areas.
- fence pools using self-closing gates and keep the gates locked.
- adjust the water heater temperature to 115°F or less to prevent burns.
- never leave her unattended near water (bathtub, swimming pool, or wading pool). Supervise her closely and remember that children can drown in less than 3 inches of water.
- enroll her in formal swim lessons when she is emotionally and physically ready.
- teach her simple safety rules and help her understand the importance of avoiding common dangers, such as hot appliances and moving cars.
- make sure she holds your hand while crossing the street or walking through parking areas.
- keep all guns out of your house or store locked, unloaded, and uncocked guns in an out of reach, locked container. Store ammunition separately.
- attend a first aid and Pediatric CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training. (See Resources.)

*Safety is as simple
as ABC – Always Be
Careful.*



Safety

Physical Development

Does your child....

- ...run, climb, jump, and gallop?
- ...walk up and down stairs placing one foot on each stair, without help from an adult?
- ...use pedals to ride a tricycle or riding toy?
- ...throw a ball overhand to you, with some accuracy?
- ...use two hands to catch a ball?
- ...hop one or two times without losing her balance?
- ...eat independently using a spoon or fork?
- ...open and close scissors to cut paper?
- ...fit small objects together, place pegs in a pegboard, or string beads?
- ...draw with crayons or markers and sometimes make recognizable shapes?
- ...put on her jacket or sweater and button large buttons?
- ...choose to eat a variety of healthy foods in adequate amounts?
- ...wash her hands before eating and after toileting?
- ...use a tissue to wipe her nose and then throw the used tissue in the trash?
- ...have a set routine for eating, sleeping, bathing, and brushing her teeth?
- ...consistently express her need to use the toilet?

YES

NOT YET

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Physical Development Tips

Your child's physical development skills are best supported when you:

- provide a safe outdoor environment and daily opportunities to run, jump, climb, pedal, and explore.
- provide puzzles, peg boards, blocks, and stringing beads to help her develop eye-hand coordination.
- provide opportunities for her to use crayons, markers, fingerpaint, scissors, and play dough.
- make sure she has regular medical and dental checkups, up-to-date immunizations, and prompt medical attention when needed.
- make sure she brushes her teeth regularly.
- encourage independence by providing a step stool and low toy shelves.
- choose clothing that is easy for her to put on and take off and encourage her to button and zip.
- allow her to serve herself at meal time.
- encourage and model healthy eating habits and limit unhealthy, processed food items.
- establish a quiet/nap time during the day and a set bedtime at night.
- provide an appropriately sized potty seat or step stool to assist with independent toileting.
- limit television/computer use and encourage physical play. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advises no more than two hours of educational, nonviolent programs daily.

Your child needs time to play and time to learn. Both are vital to her development.

Physical Development

Learning Styles

Does your child....

	YES	NOT YET
...notice new items and ask, "What is that?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...ask Why, What, and Where questions to get more information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...ask for help when necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...focus on tasks that interest her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...work at some activities until she is successful, such as restacking blocks after they fall down or repeatedly turning a toy until it fits into a slot?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...create new ways to use familiar items, such as using a spoon as a microphone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...pretend to be a familiar pet or person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...make pretend food items and pretend to eat them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...talk about something that happened yesterday or earlier in the day?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...plan what she will wear before she gets to the closet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Learning Styles Tips

Your child's unique learning style is best supported when you:

- provide a variety of materials, objects, and experiences.
- encourage her to ask for help when she becomes frustrated.
- encourage her creativity, experimentation, and inventive methods as she completes tasks.
- provide a variety of art materials to encourage creativity.
- encourage her to draw her own pictures rather than providing coloring books or work books for her to copy.
- ask her what she is doing, what she is going to do, or what she has done.
- remember that asking questions and being curious is typical behavior for your three-year-old. Avoid interpreting her curiosity and persistence as hyperactivity or misbehavior.

Your child will learn best when you encourage her to try new experiences and experiment with a variety of materials.



Learning Styles

Social & Emotional Development

Does your child....

YES NOT YET

...offer to help you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...show an eagerness to play with other children? (She may need your help developing friendships.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...demonstrate an ability to wait and take turns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...care and show concern for other children and adults?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...follow simple rules and accept limits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...follow routines and predict what will happen next, such as knowing rest time comes after lunch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...put toys and materials where they belong when she is finished using them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...ask for help when necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use words to solve problems instead of hitting when she's angry or frustrated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...try to take care of her personal needs (dressing, feeding, and toileting)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...try new tasks and take pride in her accomplishments (saying, "I did it!")?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...volunteer to help you complete household chores?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Social & Emotional Development Tips

Your child's social and emotional development is best supported when you:

- show you love her and enjoy spending time with her by smiling, talking, laughing and giving hugs.
- provide time for her to be with other children, such as at a playgroup, library story time, or park.
- provide loving guidance ("I love you, but I don't like hitting!").
- provide positive guidance to let her know what is acceptable. (Say, "Use your walking feet" instead of "Don't run.")
- enforce rules consistently, even when it's easier to look the other way. (A child who is not allowed to walk around with a cup of juice one day should not be allowed to do it the next day).
- reinforce appropriate behavior by praising and encouraging her when she does something right ("I like the way you waited for your turn!").
- encourage her to try new tasks and solve problems independently.
- teach her to use words to solve problems. (Example: "I don't like it when you take my toys. Next time ask me if you can have a turn.")
- give her two choices of what to eat or wear, when appropriate.
- support her as she learns to use the toilet independently.
- set a good example by treating her and others with respect and modeling good manners.
- let her know all feelings are okay, such as by saying, "I can see that really scares you."
- avoid exposing her to violence and inappropriate expressions of anger at home and on television.

Your three year old child is learning appropriate ways to handle emotions, but tantrums may still occur.



Social & Emotional Development

Listening & Talking

Does your child....

YES NOT YET

...repeat details of a favorite story?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...answer questions and respond to what you say?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...engage in conversations with other children and adults?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use complete sentences to express her needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...follow through when you give two step directions, such as when you ask her to "Put the doll on the shelf and sit in your chair"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...sing simple songs and recite nursery rhymes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...speak clearly enough to be understood by most adults?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use personal pronouns correctly, such as I, you, me, she, he, him, or her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...demonstrate an awareness of grammar rules by adding -ing, -ed, or -s when appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...use comparative words, such as bigger/smaller, faster/slower, or colder/warmer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...describe a picture or recent event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...have conversations with a doll or toy during pretend play?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Listening & Talking Tips

Your child's talking and listening skills are best supported when you:

- have lots of conversations, allowing enough time for her to make comments and respond to you.
- come down to her eye level to let her know what she says is interesting and important.
- talk with her about her interests and daily experiences.
- ask questions that require more than a simple "yes" or "no" answer.
- patiently answer her questions.
- provide interesting experiences and activities and give her the words to describe what is happening.
- sing simple songs, such as "The Wheels On The Bus" or "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star".
- recite nursery rhymes and do fingerplays, such as "Where is Thumbkin?" or "The Itsy Bitsy Spider".

Your child's ability to communicate and use words for self-expression grows significantly between the ages of two and four.



Listening & Talking

Reading & Writing

Does your child....

YES NOT YET

...select books to "read" by herself?

...ask you to read a book?

...hold books gently and carefully while turning the pages one at a time from right to left?

...fill in the missing word if you pause while reading a familiar story?

...play with sounds to make up nonsense words?

...recognize one or more letters in her name?

...recognize some words on street signs, store signs, restaurant signs, or food packages?

...use pretend writing to write notes, recipes, lists, or letters during play?

...describe or "read" her drawings and scribbles to you?

Reading & Writing Tips

Your child's reading and writing skills are best supported when you:

- provide a variety of picture books, including nursery rhymes and fairy tales.
- store books where she can safely and easily reach them.
- provide a comfortable and quiet place to read.
- allow her to select books to take along when she travels in the car, goes to the doctor, or visits a restaurant.
- read her favorite stories over and over again.
- give her books as presents.
- point out familiar words she sees often, such as on restaurant signs, street signs, or food packages.
- talk about what you are reading and writing.
- accept her pretend reading and writing and remember that scribbles are okay.
- provide crayons, washable markers, pencils, chalk, paper, and a space for writing.
- display her drawing and writing efforts in a special place.
- make books with her using family photos or pictures from magazines and newspapers.
- encourage her to describe her drawings; then write her words and read them back to her.
- provide opportunities for her to wring washcloths, squeeze sponges, or squish and mold wet sand or play dough. These activities will strengthen her fingers for writing.

*So please, oh PLEASE,
we beg, we pray,
Go throw your
TV set away,
And in its place you
can install,
A lovely bookshelf
on the wall.*

~ Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory



Reading & Writing

Thinking & Reasoning

Does your child....

YES

NOT YET

...match or sort items by color, size, or shape?

...count to ten in order (one, two, three, four...)?

...notice and point out shapes in the environment (circles, squares, triangles)?

...understand position words, such as in, out, under, on, next to, in front of, or behind?

...use words, such as more/less, big/small, tall/short, or fast/slow to compare objects?

...make observations using simple tools, such as a magnifier, magnet, scale, or ramp?

...act out familiar roles during pretend play, such as mommy, daddy, baby, or doctor?

...follow simple rules, with your help?

...help pick up toys and trash to keep her environment organized and clean?

Thinking & Reasoning Tips

Your child's thinking and reasoning skills are best supported when you:

- provide simple puzzles, blocks, counting toys, and sorting items to encourage thinking and problem solving skills.
- count steps with her as she marches or climbs steps.
- encourage her to help with daily household activities, such as setting the table, matching socks, simple cooking activities, or cleaning up.
- encourage her to act out familiar stories, nursery rhymes, or songs.
- show her how to measure cooking ingredients with measuring spoons, cups, and other tools.
- provide simple investigative tools, such as magnifiers, magnets, and eye droppers.
- encourage her to use descriptive words, such as fast/slow, big/little, short/tall.
- schedule supervised outdoor time for her to interact with nature daily.
- talk about what she sees and experiences outdoors.
- support pretend play by providing dolls, stuffed animals, dress-up clothes, and props.
- provide books and materials that portray diverse people and careers.
- explain important rules and help her follow them consistently.
- encourage creativity by offering a variety of art materials, such as plain paper, drawing tools, empty boxes and cardboard tubes.
- provide opportunities for her to sing, dance, and move to music.

Young children gain an understanding of concepts as they interact and work with real materials, people, events, and ideas in a creative and playful way.



Thinking & Reasoning

Resources

Community Resources

Medical Emergencies	911
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
SafeKids (childproof home, car seats, water safety, injury prevention)	1-800-756-7233
Pinellas County Health Department (low cost physicals, immunizations)	(727)824-6900
Community Health Centers of Pinellas (referrals, prescriptions)	(727)821-6701
Florida Kid Care (health insurance)	1-888-540-5431
American Red Cross (infant/child first aid & CPR classes)	(727)446-2358
US Consumer Product Safety Hotline (unsafe or recalled products)	1-800-638-2772
Car Seat Education and Safety	Call local fire department
Community Resources (clothing, emergency shelter, counseling, parent support)	2-1-1
WIC Florida (food for women, infants, and children)	1-800-342-3556
Public Library Information	(727)441-8408
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect	1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

Child Care Resources

Child Care Resource & Referral (locate child care centers and homes)	2-1-1 or (727)210-4211
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)	(727)400-4411
School Readiness Child Care Wait List / Eligibility Requirements	(727)400-4411
Pinellas County Child Care Licensing (history of compliance/complaints)	(727)507-4857

Child Development Resources

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) Warm Line	(727)545-7536
Early Steps (birth to 36 months)	(727)767-4403
Early Steps Parent Support	(727)767-6705
FDLRS Child Find (birth to 21 years)	(727)793-2723

VPK Resources

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program is FREE for all children who live in Florida. Your child must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the year she starts VPK.



VPK Information	www.vpkpinellas.net or call (727) 400-4411
Kindergarten Enrollment	www.pcsb.org or call: (727) 588-6210

Internet Parenting Resources

www.elcpinellas.net	www.familyeducation.com	www.rif.org
www.jwbpinellas.org	www.parenthood.com	www.allkids.org
www.childcarepinellas.org	www.zerotothree.org	www.healthystartpinellas.org
www.kidsgrowth.com	www.parenting.com	www.211tampabay.org
www.pclb.org	www.pcsb.org	www.pbs.org/parents



The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. is pleased to present you with
A Child Development Checklist and Tips Booklet

This booklet was originally funded by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County and developed by the Pinellas Early Childhood Collaborative. It was written by early childhood professionals in your community.

The series includes booklets for:

Infants

Ones

Twos

Threes

Fours

Email info@elcpinellas.net to obtain other booklets in the series
or see your local child care provider.

Early
Learning
Coalition 

of Pinellas County, Inc.

