

What Should I Expect From My Three-year-old?

Physical Development:

- Weight gain of 6 pounds
- Growth of 3 inches in height
- Daytime control of bladder and bowel and possibly nighttime control
- May sleep 10-12 hours nightly with need of afternoon naps decreasing
- Appetite is fairly good, but likes small servings

Language:

- Approximate vocabulary of 900-1000 words
- Asks questions using: What?, Where?, and Who?
- Can carry on a conversation and be understood by strangers
- Speaks in 3-5 word sentences
- Tries to tell stories and express his feelings
- Knows more words that he can correctly pronounce
- When asked, he can give his own name, age, and sex
- Can sing favorite songs or recite simple nursery rhymes
- Can answer questions like: What do you do when you are sleepy? When you are hungry? When you are thirsty?
- Talks almost constantly
- Tells the action occurring in pictures



Learning and Problem Solving:

- Stays with an activity for 5-10 minutes
- Understands concepts like empty and full, big and little, hot and cold, etc.
- Understands the concept of two, can accurately count 2-3 objects
- Identifies 8 or more body parts
- Listens to stories
- Understands past and present
- Understands how objects are used, like a brush, cup, socks, etc.
- Matches and sorts at least 4 colors
- Follows 3 directions at a time: Pick up the ball, throw it to me, and sit on the floor
- Begins to understand the concept of time
- Acts out real life in play



Motor:

- Draws a horizontal line, vertical line, crossed lines, and a circle
- Strings a small objects on string, like Cheerios or Fruit Loops
- Rides a tricycle
- Jumps in place without falling
- Builds a tower with 9 blocks
- Stands and balances on 1 foot for a few seconds
- Kicks and catches a ball
- Handles and manipulates small objects in his hands
- Opens a door by turning the doorknob
- Draws a person with a circle body and stick arms and legs
- Completes 5-6 piece puzzles
- Holds a pencil appropriately
- Walks forward, sideways, and backwards
- Runs easily
- Climbs stairs by placing both feet on each step or may alternate feet



Self-Help:

- Dresses and undresses self, but needs help with buttons, shoelaces, or other small fasteners
- Washes and dries hands and face
- Eats at the table using a fork, spoon, and napkin appropriately
- Aware of dangerous situations, like hot stoves, electrical outlets
- Brushes own teeth, but needs assistance to put toothpaste on toothbrush
- Can prepare simple snacks for self
- Can pour liquids from small containers, still needs help in container is large, heavy, or full
- Sleeps in own bed
- Gets self ready for bed



Social:

- Engages in make-believe play with self or other children
- Learns to share and take turns, but is still difficult at times
- Gives affection to family members
- Recognizes feelings of others, like sadness, anger, or happiness
- Responds best to choices rather than commands
- May argue with other children
- Enjoys being included in everything
- Likes to pretend and dress up in adult roles, like doctors, police, firefighters, teachers, etc.



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