

Developmental Milestones

THE THIRD YEAR

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Have you ever wondered how your child is growing and developing compared to other children of the same age? How do you know if your child is “on the right track”?

Your child is going through many physical and mental changes. Although no two children grow at the same rate, experts agree there are “typical” signs of development. This fact sheet provides a checklist of important milestones in your child’s development during the third year of life.

It is a simple tool you can use to become aware of and appreciate the dramatic changes that are occurring in your child.

Watch for these signs in your child over a one-month period. (Even children have “bad days.”) Remember, each child is different and may learn and grow at a different rate. However, if your child cannot do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you should consult your pediatrician. Several additional sources of information are listed in the next column.

You are the most important observer of your child’s development. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

If you have questions about your child’s development or want to have your child tested,

- » call your pediatrician
- » call the local health department
- » contact the Make-A-Difference Information Network (They can help you find a testing locations near your community.) 1-800-332-6262, or visit <http://kskits.org/resources/MakeADifference.shtml>
- » contact the Parent Helpline (through Kansas Children’s Service League, <https://www.kcsl.org/ParentHelpLine.aspx>) (They can help you with questions about childrearing.) 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-245-3736)

Contact your county or district extension office to obtain other publications in this series. Additional resources on parenting are also available.



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The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been synthesized from a variety of professional resources to help you appreciate your child’s progress. It is not a formal, standardized measurement tool.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

3 YEARS OF AGE, DOES YOUR CHILD:

MOTOR SKILLS

- feed himself (with some spilling)
- open doors
- hold a glass in one hand
- hold a crayon well
- wash and dry hands by himself
- fold paper, if shown how
- build a tower of five to six blocks
- throw a ball overhead
- try to catch a large ball
- put on shoes (but not tie laces)
- dress herself with help
- use the toilet with some help
- walk up steps, alternating feet
- walk in a straight line
- kick a ball forward
- jump with both feet
- pedal tricycle

SENSORY AND THINKING SKILLS

- recognize sounds in the environment
- pay attention for about 3 minutes
- remember what happened yesterday
- know what is food and what is not food
- know some numbers (but not always in the right order)
- know where things usually belong
- understand what "1" is
- understand "now," "soon," and "later"
- substitute one object for another in pretend play (as in pretending a block is a "car")
- laugh at silly ideas (like "milking" a dog)
- look through a book alone
- match circles and squares
- match an object to a picture of that object
- match objects that have same function (as in putting a cup and plate together)
- count two to three objects
- avoid some dangers, like a hot stove or a moving car
- follow simple one-step commands

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SKILLS

- use three- to five-word sentences
- ask short questions
- use plurals ("dogs," "cares," "hats")
- name at least 10 familiar objects
- repeat simple rhymes
- name at least one color correctly
- imitate housework or help with simple tasks
- ask to use the toilet almost every time
- enjoy being read to
- talk about feeling and mental states (e.g., remembering)
- demonstrate some shame when caught in a wrongdoing
- try to make others laugh
- play spontaneously with two or three children in a group
- assign roles in pretend social play ("You be mommy," "I be daddy")
- know her first and last name
- understand "I," "you," "he," and "she"
- believe everything centers around him ("If I hide my eyes, no one will see me")
- answer whether she is a boy or girl

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