

AGES & STAGES

5-YEAR-OLDS

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Five-year-olds are cheerful, energetic, and enthusiastic. They enjoy planning, and spend a great deal of time discussing who will do what. They especially enjoy dramatic play, usually with other children. Five-year-olds are more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others around them. It is less difficult for them to wait for a turn or to share toys and material. "Best friends" become very important.

Many 5-year-olds will be going to kindergarten. Be sensitive to the needs of a 5-year-old returning from school. She may want to rest, play by herself, be free for a while from adult-directed activity, or catch up with the group happenings. Pace afternoon kindergarten children during the day with a balance of rest and activity. All-day kindergarten children need to be given every consideration when they return to your home as they may be tired, talkative, hungry, or wanting to share the day's happenings.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- invents games with simple rules
- organizes other children and toys for pretend play
- still confuses fantasy with reality sometimes
- often fears loud noises, the dark, animals, and some people
- can take turns and share, but doesn't always want to
- expresses anger and jealousy physically
- likes to test muscular strength and motor skills, but is not emotionally ready for competition
- carries on conversations with other children and adults
- often excludes other children in play - best friends only
- uses swear words or "bathroom words" to get attention
- sometimes can be very bossy
- likes to try new things and take risks
- likes to make own decisions
- notices when another child is angry or sad - more sensitive to feelings of others
- prefers company of 1-2 children at a time; may become bossy or sulky when others join in
- likes to feel grown up; boasts about self to younger, less capable children
- begins to have a very basic understanding of right and wrong
- plays contentedly and independently without constant supervision
- takes turns and shares (sometimes)
- understands and respects rules - often asks permission
- understands and enjoys both giving and receiving
- enjoys collecting things
- sometimes needs to get away and be alone
- can understand relationships among people and similarities and differences in other families

- seeks adult approval
- sometimes critical of other children and embarrassed by own mistakes
- less fearful of the world than toddlers because understands the world better
- has a good sense of humor, and enjoys sharing jokes and laughter with adults

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- weight: 31-57 pounds
- height: 39-48 inches
- requires approximately 1,700 calories daily
- sleeps 10-11 hours at night
- may begin to lose baby teeth
- able to dress self with little assistance
- learns to skip
- throws ball overhead
- catches bounced balls
- rides a tricycle skillfully; may show interest in riding a bicycle with training wheels
- balances on either foot for 5-10 seconds
- uses a fork and knife well
- cuts on a line with scissors
- left or right hand dominance is established
- walks down stairs, alternating feet without using a handrail
- jumps over low objects
- can run, gallop, and tumble
- can skip and run on tiptoe
- can jump rope
- interested in performing tricks like standing on head, performing dance steps
- capable of learning complex body coordination skills like swimming, ice or roller skating, and riding bicycles
- may be able to tie shoelaces
- may be able to copy simple designs and shapes

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

- understands about 13,000 words
- uses 5-8 words in a sentence
- likes to argue and reason; use words like "because"
- knows basic colors like red, yellow, blue, green, orange
- able to memorize address and phone number
- understands that stories have a beginning, middle, and end
- able to remember stories and repeat them
- enjoys creating and telling stories
- understands that books are read from left to right, top to bottom
- enjoys riddles and jokes
- draws pictures that represent animals, people, and objects
- enjoys tracing or copying letters
- can place objects in order from shortest to tallest
- can understand and use comparative terms like big, bigger, or biggest
- sorts objects by size
- identifies some letters of the alphabet and a few numbers (if taught)

- understands "more," "less," and "same"
- counts up to 10 objects
- recognizes categories ("These are all animals; these are all toys.")
- understands before and after, above, and below
- block and dramatic play is much more elaborate and complex
- has good attention span and can concentrate well
- is project minded - plans buildings, play scenarios, and drawings
- interested in cause and effect
- can understand time concepts like yesterday, today, and tomorrow

IDEAS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Encourage body coordination and sense of balance by playing "Follow the Leader" with skipping, galloping, and hopping. Skip or jump rope to music, teach folk dances and games, provide a balance beam, a tree for climbing, and a knotted rope suspended from a sturdy frame.
- Teach sack-walking and "twist-em," "statue," or "freeze" games to provide an outlet for their drive for physical activity.
- Play games that can teach right and left directions, like "Hokey-Pokey," "Looby-Loo," and "Simon Says."
- Help children learn to use a pair of scissors by letting them cut out coupons.
- Provide a plastic needle, thread, and beads to encourage small muscle development.
- Provide carpentry, take-apart, and put-together experiences with junk clocks and old small appliances.
- Show children how to repair toys and books.
- Add drama to your reading sessions each day by using different voices for different characters. While reading a familiar story, stop before the end and ask children to add their own end to the story.
- Ask 5-year-olds to tell you a story. Write it down and post it on the wall or refrigerator.
- Ask "what if" questions. What if there were 5 little pigs instead of 3? What if Little Red Riding Hood saw a rabbit instead of a wolf?
- Involve children in writing "thank-you" notes, holiday greeting cards, and letters. If a 5-year-old enjoys copying letters, let him dictate a short message to you and copy it from your writing. Old typewriters are favorite writing tools.
- Give 5-year-olds opportunities to sort, group, match, count, and sequence with real life situations such as setting the table, counting the number of turns, sorting out socks, and matching fabric swatches. Lotto games and card games such as "fish" involve matching pairs.

- Help children learn to make rules and play simple games by providing opportunities for them to play in small groups.
- Help children understand and cope with strong feelings by giving them words to use when they are angry. "I can see you are SAD about going home, ANGRY at your friend"
- Observe how a child plays with other children. Teach him to request, bargain, negotiate, and apologize.
- Take questions seriously. Talk to children about what happens and why. Give answers they can understand.
- Specific praise helps children understand the true value of their actions. Say "Stacking those toys on the shelf that way really helped - thanks!" rather than "You did a good job!"
- Provide a comfortable place to be alone. A large cardboard box makes a wonderful hideaway.
- Take fears seriously. Reassure children that you will make sure that nothing bad will happen to them.
- Allow 5-year-olds some privacy in the toilet. Remind them to wash their hands until it becomes a habit.
- Be patient with the untidiness and clutter. Allow plenty of time to clean up. It helps to store and organize materials on low, open shelves so that they can be found and put away easily.
- Five-year-olds will show an increasing interest in numbers. Encourage them to count anything of interest - cups, leaves, drums, bells, number of children absent, meters, etc.
- Encourage interest in jokes, nonsense, and riddles by reading humorous stories, riddles, and nonsense rhymes. Join them in jokes from school, books, and TV.
- Give opportunities to express dramatic and creative interest. Teach children how to move their bodies to dramatize the opening of a flower, falling snow, leaves, or rain; wiggly worms and snakes; and laundry blowing in the wind.

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