



Comfort Play & Teach



Ages and Stages - 36-48 Months

The Busy World of Your Preschooler: An Overview of Your Preschooler's Development

Your preschooler is a pretty capable person by now. In her third year, your child shows more self-esteem, confidence, optimism and enjoyment of daily activities. She is becoming her own person and standing up for what she wants. She is quite an accomplished negotiator and tries to make things go her way. Your child will have endless questions about how things work and why things happen. Language development is still on the fast track and most three-year olds will have a vocabulary of over 700 words. Three-year olds are better at understanding and following simple rules and controlling their impulses. Toilet training is usually completed (with the exception of night time for some). She is quite adept on the playground, climbing up and sliding down equipment, and has good control over her fine motor skills. At the end of the third year she may have started using safe scissors, copying letters and even printing some letters of her name.

Four-year olds are more even-tempered and cooperative with parents though they still stand up for what they want. A four-year old is full of energy and loves testing her body with climbing, jumping, skipping and even pedalling a tricycle. She can now focus for longer periods on activities like cutting and pasting, drawing and creating interesting projects. Her imagination is developing with make-believe play and she enjoys playing out situations that are familiar in her life.

Your Preschooler between 36 to 48 Months

Your child has a very active time ahead of her. At this stage your preschooler will:

- Climb, slide and swing on playground equipment.
- Handle child's scissors and cut out simple designs.
- Enjoy playing with other children and socialize well.
- Become less self-centred and more able to understand feelings and point of view of others.
- Start to count objects.



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Knowing your child's **typical skills** and her **emerging skills** can help you provide appropriate experiences to enhance her development. And **Comfort, Play & Teach™** is just the place to start. Remember, the developmental milestones we have outlined are only guidelines. Each child develops at their own pace, with some skills emerging early, and others appearing later. So delight in who your child is, and discover how you can have fun as you go through each stage of this amazing growth together.

If you have any concerns about your child's development, consult your child's physician.

Six Areas of Child Development

1. Social Development means being able to make friends and get along with others, work as part of a team and be a good leader. These skills are all built on self-confidence, cooperation and trust.
2. Emotional Development means the development of a full range of emotions from sad to happy to angry, and learning to deal with them appropriately. This helps build self-esteem and leads to such deeper qualities as sympathy, caring, resiliency, assertiveness and empathy and the ability to rise to life's challenges.
3. Language Development is the ability to understand and express verbal and non-verbal communication. This is followed by the capacity to use words and sentences in correct grammatical structure in order to communicate wishes, ideas, information and needs.
4. Intellectual Development means being able to think creatively and abstractly, to pay attention, solve problems and develop keen judgement along with a lifelong readiness to learn.
5. Gross Motor Development allows a child to gain balance and bring large muscles under control in order to master physical activities such as sitting, crawling, walking, running, climbing, jumping and generally enjoy all that his body allows him to do.
6. Fine Motor Development means mastering precise and accurate small muscle movements of the fingers and hands in order to reach, grasp and manipulate small objects.



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SOCIAL SKILLS –36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Enjoys playing with other children and socializes well
- More able to take turns, share, co-operate
- Greets familiar adults and says 'please' and 'thank you'
- Imitates mom or dad in play
- Likes to talk and carry on conversations

Emerging Skills

- Participates in interactive games like 'London Bridge' and 'Farmer in the Dell'
- Enjoys games with rules
- Complies with requests from parents more often
- Seeks adult approval
- Enjoys dramatic play with others



Comfort

If you...

- Give your preschooler a special responsibility, like watering the garden
- Be available to your preschooler and ready to talk to her when needed
- Tell your child what she does well

Your child will...

- Feel that she has a special and important role in the family
- Know that you are interested in her activities and feel secure
- Be encouraged to take on more activities independently



Play

If you...

- Provide opportunities for your child to play with other preschoolers
- Spend time playing simple games that require turn-taking, e.g., simple card games like Go Fish
- Praise turn-taking during everyday routines, e.g., waiting for his turn to take a bath

Your child will...

- Develop his ability to share and take turns
- Enjoy playing with you and begin to understand games with rules
- Begin to practice turn-taking, even in everyday events



Teach

If you...

- Ask your preschooler about her day, e.g., "What was one special thing you did?"
- Explain to your preschooler reasons behind your requests
- Model using words like 'please' and 'thank you'

Your child will...

- Want to talk to you more often about her experiences
- Have a better understanding of routines, rules and limits
- Learn positive ways to interact with others and use these appropriately



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EMOTIONAL SKILLS – 36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Experiences a broad range of feelings, e.g., jealousy, excitement, fear, happiness, anger
- Expresses needs with words, e.g., “I’m tired”
- Is more able to express anger verbally rather than physically
- Is becoming less egocentric and more able to understand feelings and point of view of others
- Is less upset by limits and discipline

Emerging Skills

- Continually grows in independence and self-esteem
- Expands pretend play into rich, connected themes
- Is more even tempered and co-operative with parents
- Shows empathy, e.g., for a friend who is upset
- May show attachment to one playmate



Comfort

If you...

- Model coping with emotions
- Help your preschooler deal with tantrums by talking to her about what makes her feel better when she is angry or sad
- Explore books that talk about emotions

Your child will...

- Learn acceptable ways to cope
- Feel supported when experiencing negative emotions
- Begin to develop the ability to empathize with others



Play

If you...

- Arrange special play dates with his friends
- Provide opportunities for him to make choices about play activities
- Help him set small goals he can achieve during play or other activities

Your child will...

- Feel supported in his social needs
- Develop a sense of mastery and positive self-esteem in areas he likes
- Develop the ability to complete a task or activity



Teach

If you...

- Engage in activities that make your preschooler happy, e.g., reading books, doing puzzles
- Provide her with some tasks that require some concentration
- Give her some responsibility during daily routines, e.g., choosing her clothes and getting dressed

Your child will...

- Feel respected when you engage in her favourite activity
- Learn to persevere on a task for a period of time
- Develop confidence in her ability to be responsible



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LANGUAGE SKILLS – 36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Enjoys books, simple songs, nursery rhymes, nonsense words and stories
- Uses a vocabulary of about 900 words
- Uses sentences with five words
- Uses plurals and pronouns, e.g., 'I, you and me'
- Understands position words, such as 'in', 'out', 'behind', 'in front of'

Emerging Skills

- Asks and answers 'who, what, where, why, when, how' questions
- Can follow a three-part command
- Recognizes some letters and words
- Uses regular past tense forms, but may add 'ed' to some words (e.g., eat-ed)
- Understands "It's time to"



Comfort

If you...

- Read your preschooler his favourite books before bed
- Talk to your preschooler about events or people that make him feel happy, sad, or angry

Your child will...

- Use words and sentences he has memorized to participate actively in the experience
- Start to categorize and sort the emotions and responses of others



Play

If you...

- Have your preschooler "show and tell" their favourite people, places and things
- Sing the alphabet song
- "I SPY" alphabets (e.g. "I spy the letter A")

Your child will...

- Enhance the descriptive vocabulary to describe their surroundings
- Learn the letters and order of the alphabet
- Learn to recognize letters of the alphabet



Teach

If you...

- Ask your preschooler to tell you about the stories that go with the pictures she has drawn

Your child will...

- Begin to understand how writing can represent her thoughts and ideas



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INTELLECTUAL SKILLS – 36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Enjoys dramatic play and role playing; play is becoming more realistic, e.g., school, fire station, shop
- Classifies objects by purpose, e.g., 'to play with', 'to wear'
- Understands the order of daily routines
- Sorts objects by colour and size
- Counts objects

Emerging Skills

- Sorts and classifies objects by characteristics
- Understands ideas like opposites
- Understands different forms of measurement, such as weight, height and length
- Attaches words to numbers, for example, when you say the word 'three', it means three things
- Understands time intervals better, e.g., today, tomorrow, yesterday



Comfort

If you...

- Introduce the concepts of sorting and classifying in daily routines, e.g., "Your socks go in this drawer and your shirts in the other"

Your child will...

- Begin to understand that similar items can be sorted into groups



Play

If you...

- Play guessing games that encourage her to think about functional relationships, e.g., "What do you draw with?"
- Put measuring cups and spoons in the bath tub so your preschooler can practice measuring
- Provide hard and soft craft materials such as feathers, cotton balls, strings, popsicle sticks and beads; have your preschooler create a picture and talk about the different textures and why some are soft or hard

Your child will...

- Use her memory instead of relying on concrete objects
- Begin to understand that measurement can take different forms, e.g., "We can measure how tall you are and how much a cup of water is"
- Begin to understand the concept of opposites



Teach

If you...

- Use coloured beads or buttons in play as an opportunity to explore different patterns, shapes and sequences
- Include your preschooler in cooking activities and use these to explore measurement

Your child will...

- Begin to recognize patterns and shapes, understand how sequences are made up of patterns
- Understand how quantity, numbers and measurement all relate



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FINE MOTOR – 36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Builds a tower of using blocks
- Handles scissors and cuts out simple designs
- Holds pencil with thumb and forefinger in adult-like grasp
- Draws a house, and people with two to four body parts
- Can button large buttons

Emerging Skills

- Carries liquid in a cup, with some spillage
- Puts on shoes, but not yet able to tie laces
- Prints some capital letters
- Dresses and undresses without assistance
- Cuts out and pastes simple shapes



Comfort

If you...

- Encourage your child to draw pictures of his home and all the people who live in it
- Praise your child's increasing ability to dress and undress independently
- Give your child the opportunity to help with bringing cups and dishes to the table

Your child will...

- Feel secure and understand his special role in the family
- Feel capable and motivated to practice these skills with less and less help
- Gain pride in his growing ability to carry things and to be responsible for a task



Play

If you...

- Provide your preschooler with a box of mixed beads or buttons that she can sort by colour or shape in an egg carton
- Give her a broad selection of arts and crafts materials for drawing, cutting and pasting
- Provide dolls with clothing that have buttons, zippers, snaps, laces

Your child will...

- Engage her small motor skills in sorting different materials according to their characteristics
- Strengthen her pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) while creating drawings and collages
- Practice skills necessary for dressing herself through dramatic play



Teach

If you...

- Use peg boards, connecting blocks and other building materials to explore different patterns, shapes and sequences
- Give your child different magazines and small scissors to cut out his favourite pictures for making a collage
- Provide your child with small building blocks or drawing materials that use small motor skills

Your child will...

- Physically create patterns and shapes and learn to label and identify them
- Enhance decision-making and categorize pictures as people, animals, food, vehicles while improving her cutting skills
- Understand that his hands can represent thoughts and ideas through constructing and drawing



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GROSS MOTOR – 36-48 Months

Typical Skills

- Runs several steps with alternating arm movements
- Catches, bounces and throws a ball easily
- Climbs, slides and swings on playground equipment
- Gets up from squatting position without any help
- Gallops, runs, walks, wiggles, and tip-toes with other classmates

Emerging Skills

- Catches a large ball with arms extended
- Gallops, runs, walks and tip toes as part of a group activity
- Jumps off the ground with a two-footed jump
- Turns somersaults
- Stands on one foot with momentary balance



Comfort

If you...

- Praise your child's developing skills e.g., "You are so good at catching the ball"
- Put on your child's favourite music and explore different movements together
- Be available to help your child try more challenging skills, e.g., using the slide independently

Your child will...

- Become more confident in her abilities and want to repeat the activity
- Love spending time with you and enjoy being able to show you how many ways she can move
- Feel secure and develop the confidence to try more challenging activities on her own



Play

If you...

- Encourage your child to move like different animals, e.g., jump like a frog, swim like a fish, wiggle like a worm, gallop like a horse
- Turn nursery rhymes into movement activities, prompting him to do the actions, e.g., jumping over a candlestick or over the moon!
- Invite your child's peers over and teach them a simple game like 'London Bridge'

Your child will...

- Practice a variety of physical actions while using his imagination
- Develop literacy skills as he creates movements for role playing
- Practice social skills like turn-taking while he plays a fun, movement game



Teach

If you...

- Explore yoga stretches with your child, e.g., cat, dog, rabbit, snake, candle and rag doll
- Set up a simple obstacle course using hoops, a table, cones, balance board, etc.
- Play simple games like 'Simon Says,' and suggest different actions for your child to try, e.g., "Simon says jump three times! Simon says do one somersault!"

Your child will...

- Learn to move her body in ways that are both relaxing and imaginative as she pretends to be different animals and things
- Develop an understanding of concepts like over, under, around, up and down as she navigates the obstacles
- Develop listening and counting skills while she demonstrates her growing physical capabilities