

Ages and Stages: 5 Years

Five-year-olds have developed so many skills. It's amazing to think about all they have learned since they were born! They are expert users of language. They can tell detailed stories about real and make-believe events. Five-year-olds are creative, fun, and eager to learn and please. They need adults to encourage and support their interests and activities.

Look at your child grow!

When your child is around 5 years old, he or she may:

- be really good at running, skipping, galloping, and other physical activities.
- be learning how to tie his or her shoes.
- comb his or her hair and wash him or herself.
- copy letters, numbers and write his or her own name.
- draw a picture that tells a simple story.
- enjoy counting and sorting objects.
- enjoy being read to and then retelling the story in their own way.

Your child wants you to know several things. He or she may:

- still be learning about the kind of person he or she is by the way they you treat him or her.
- like it when you play simple games with him or her.
- enjoy listening to stories. Encourage your child to tell stories, too. Listen and enjoy.
- like to be helpful. Give your child a chance to be helpful at home in tasks that he or she can do well.
- like opportunities to sort, group, match and count.
- need you to notice the positive things about his or her efforts.
- learn about what is right and wrong from watching what you say and do.
- want to be good and please you. If you ask your child to do things in a positive way, it's easier for him or her to obey.
- still need your affection and encouragement, even though he or she is quite independent.
- consider you his or her favorite teacher. Your child counts on you to teach him or her the important things in life, things like caring, loving, enjoying, and learning.
- still needs your caring attention. Every child is different. If you watch your child closely, you will get clues about how to help him or her grow.

Your child is an active learner who:

- is starting to understand the idea of past, present, and future.
- has a much longer attention span than a younger child.
- can identify letters and sounds.
- can tell a story in the correct order.
- can remember his or her full name, address, phone number and birthday.

Your child is learning to connect with other people and may:

- like to feel part of a group.
- enjoy pretend play.
- feel pride in accomplishments.
- express a wide range of feelings.
- start to be able to interpret the feelings of others.

Play helps your child learn. He or she may:

- be curious, interested, and enthusiastic about learning new things. Children are natural learners. The best ways to teach young children is to provide many opportunities for physical play, new experiences, hands-on activities, games, and pretend play.
- learn by doing, through movement, by being noticed and encouraged, by making things, through language and stories, by playing with other children, through imitation, and through pretend play.

Your child may enjoy toys and activities such as:

- Board games
- Puzzles
- Blocks
- Sand and water play
- Scissors
- Paper, glue, washable markers, crayons and water colors
- Puppets
- Dolls
- Dress-up clothes

* The information is considered typical for this age. If you have questions about your child's development, contact your pediatrician or health care professional. If we do all we can do to help children develop and grow now, they will have the best chance to succeed in life.

Adapted from Alabama Cooperative Extension System by Traci Johnston. Originally developed by Ellen Abell and H. Wallace Goddard.

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