

5-Year-Olds



AGES & STAGES

The 5-year-old is cheerful, energetic, and enthusiastic. Fives enjoy planning and discussing who will do what. A “best friend” is very important, but hard to keep as social skills are not well developed yet.

Physical development

- weight: 31-57 pounds
- height: 39-48 inches
- 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
- uses a fork and knife well
- cuts on a line with scissors
- hand dominance is established
- jumps over low objects

Mental development

- 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
- enjoys telling his or her own 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

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Encourage physical development by playing follow the leader with skipping, galloping, and hopping.
- Help your child learn to use a pair of scissors by asking him or her to help you cut out coupons.
- Stop before the end of a familiar story and ask your child to add his or her own ending.
- Ask your child to tell you a story. Write it down and post it on the wall or refrigerator.
- Ask “what if” questions? What if there were five little pigs instead of three? What if Goldilocks stayed home?
- Involve children in writing “thank you” notes, holiday greeting cards, and letters. If your child likes to copy letters, let him or her dictate a short message and copy it from your writing.
- Give your child opportunities to sort, group, match, count, and sequence with real-life situations such as setting the table, counting the number of turns, and sorting out socks.
- 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 your child plays with other children. Teach him or her to request, bargain, negotiate, and apologize.
- Specific praise helps your child understand the true value of his or her actions. Say “I like the way you stacked the toys neatly on the shelf” rather than “You did a good job!”
- Provide a comfortable place to be alone. A large cardboard box makes a wonderful hideaway.



- enjoys tracing or copying letters
- sorts objects by size
- identifies some letters of the alphabet and a few numbers
- understands more, less, and same
- counts up to 10 objects
- understands before and after, above and below
- is project minded—plans buildings, play scenarios, and drawings
- interested in cause and effect

Social and emotional development

- invents games with simple rules
- organizes other children and toys for pretend play
- still confuses fantasy with reality sometimes
- can take turns and share but doesn't always want to
- often excludes other children in play — best friends only
- uses swear words or “bathroom words” to get attention
- can be very bossy sometimes
- 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
- likes to feel grown up; boasts about self to younger less capable children
- has a very basic understanding of right and wrong
- 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

File: Family life 8

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BOOKS

Books for parents

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, Birth to Age 5, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed.

Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach

Books for children

Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber

Little Bear, Else Holmelund Minarik

Whistle for Willie, Ezra Jack Keats

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

Are You My Mother?, Philip D. Eastman

Harry and the Terrible Whatzit, Dick Gackenbach



Toys

- board games, card games, dominoes, puzzles (12 -15 pieces)
- blocks (plastic or wooden); play dough
- glue, scissors, paper, washable markers, crayons, water colors
- puppets; doll, clothes, dollhouse; dress-up clothes
- trucks, cars, large cardboard boxes (large appliance size)
- child-size tools; camping equipment

A word on development

Your child is unique. His or her learning and growth rates differ from other children the same age. If, however, your child is unable to do many of the skills listed for this age group, you may wish to talk to an early childhood specialist. You are the best person to notice developmental problems, if any, because of the time you spend with your child. 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 assessed, contact:

- Your pediatrician or health care professional
- Area Education Agency—Early Childhood Special Education Department
- Iowa Compass 1-800-779-2001

Contact your county Extension office to obtain other publications about children, parenting, and family life. Also visit the ISU Extension Web site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/>.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been compiled from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

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