

Ages & Stages

3-Year-Olds



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Alabama Cooperative Extension System
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Three-year-olds continue to become more independent. They are able to do many everyday tasks—such as dressing and eating—with much less help than before. Three-year-olds are busy trying to use all the new skills they have learned and are often eager to help adults do chores like setting the table or yard work. At this age, they enjoy pleasing those around them more, and they like to laugh and interact with others.

What's It Like To Be 3 Years Old?

- I can run pretty well, although sometimes I fall.
- I can jump safely from a low step and hop on one foot for a short time.
- I can draw simple shapes.
- I am getting better at pedaling small riding toys.
- I enjoy climbing and sliding.

- I can use words and simple phrases to say what I want.
- I imitate the behavior of the people around me.
- My memory is getting better, but I still need to be reminded about things sometimes.

What Your 3-Year-Old Wants You To Know:

I need plenty of exercise indoors and outdoors. It helps me grow strong while using my energy in a good way.

Sometimes when I talk, it might sound like I'm stuttering. Please be patient and don't make fun of me.

I learn about right and wrong by watching you.

I need you to help me use words to express feelings like anger, fear, and frustration.

I like books and stories. Please read to me every day.

Sometimes I make mistakes. I will learn from them better if you correct me in a positive way.

Remember to let me know when I'm behaving well.

I learn how I should feel about myself by the way that you treat me. Your care and respect helps me feel like I am a worthwhile person.

Every child is different. If you watch me closely, you will get clues about why I do what I do and how to help me grow.



How Do 3-Year-Olds...?

Think And Learn

- They are curious and like to figure out how things work.
- They notice and talk about how things are the same and different.
- They ask questions using the words *when*, *how*, *where*, and *why*.
- They begin to sort and match objects.
- They have trouble understanding what is real and what is not.

Grow Socially And Emotionally

- They like to please and to help others.
- They are learning to use words to talk about feelings.
- They need help and support to learn how to share and take turns.
- They enjoy playing in a group.
- They like to give and receive affection.

Play Encourages Learning

For young children, play is their work. Children learn many important things about themselves, about others, and about how things work. Important ways 3-year-olds play:

Physical play

Running, jumping, hopping, and pedaling
Climbing, swinging, and sliding
Rolling, balancing, and somersaulting
Throwing, catching, and bouncing a ball

Activities

Working puzzles
Gluing and cutting
Matching and sorting
Drawing and painting
Stacking and building
Pouring, filling, and emptying
Stringing large beads or small blocks

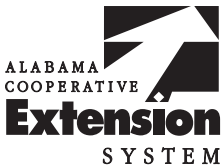


Pretend play is another important way 3-year-olds play. Children use toys and objects to stand for other things. They also like to pretend to be other people or imaginary characters. They can use things like boxes, paper bags, dolls, old clothes, and stuffed animals to play make-believe.



All children grow, learn, and develop at different rates. The information in this brochure is considered typical for this age. If we do all we can to help children develop now, they will have the best chance to do well in school and in life.

This brochure was developed by the Child Care Resource Center and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.



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