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Development and Behavior from Birth to Five Years

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Development and Behavior

From Birth to Five Years



This is not a "cookbook" where you will find a recipe for rearing your child. Neither is it a yardstick to measure your child's development with the development of other children. It is a guide to help you understand children from the ages of birth through five years. If we are to increase our understanding of why adults behave as they do, we must begin with an understanding of the very young infant.

How a child develops physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually is affected by his day-to-day experiences. All of his experiences from birth affect and determine the person he will become.

Good parenthood pre-supposes the deep willingness to be a parent. Children are potentially of great value to a marriage, yet, children also create new problems. Parents should be fairly mature, both physically and psychologically. Wise parents grow and learn with their children. They learn to relax and let a child be himself--let him grow in his own way, his own time, his own fashion.

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Growing and Developing

Parents, as well as all adults working with children, will find it important to keep in mind the following general facts that pertain to children as well as all individuals as they grow and develop:

1. No two children are alike. Each differs in his rate and pattern of growth.

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2. Growth is uneven, is continuous, and follows an orderly sequence or pattern. Some growth, such as height, we can see, but growth of internal organs we cannot see.
3. Each phase or stage of development has certain characteristics common to that particular stage of growth.
4. As an infant develops some new power or capacity, he develops the impulse to use that new power. Example: Walking is practiced by 12 - 16 month old babies . . . they walk and walk.
5. Children, at all ages and stages, have some reason to behave as they do. Three causes of behavior might be:
 - a. the developmental stage of growth. Example: temper tantrums from 2 to 3 years.
 - b. trying to satisfy some physical or psychological need, want or drive. Example: being hungry or wanting to be held.
 - c. the blocking of an emotion. Example: wanting out of playpen for more freedom.

Heredity and Environment

We must also consider the factors of heredity and environment which affect both development and behavior. How tall a child will become as an adult depends on race, sex and family characteristics, as well as how he is cared for, what he eats and whether he is happy or not.

All of us--children and adults--differ and all of us must be ourselves. We have to be. We need to feel good about ourselves--confident, able. Children grow strongest, happiest and healthiest in this way.

We've talked about all children being different and they are! The following descriptive statements are useful only if you keep in mind that your child is unique and has his own pattern of development. If he more than measures or fails to measure up to the statements, this is his biological right. If he is making progress toward the next task, he is growing. Keeping this in mind will help you enjoy him.

Appearance

His head looks too big for his body. In fact, it is 1/4 of the total body length. It may be temporarily out of shape, lopsided or elongated, due to pressure before or during birth. On the skull are two fontanels (places where the skull does not completely meet)--one above the brow, the other close to the forehead.

The newborn usually has pudgy cheeks, a broad flat nose with a mere hint of a bridge, receding chin and undersized jaw. Eyes are always dark blue and have a blind, "stary" gaze. He has no control of his eye muscles and can see only light and dark.

The skin is thin and dry and one can see veins through it. He comes in many skin colors--rosy red, blotchy or a bright pink.

He has a short neck, small sloping shoulders, large rounded abdomen, umbilical stump (future navel), slender narrow pelvis and hips. The genitals of both sexes seem large. The legs are most often seen doubled up against the abdomen in pre-birth position. The legs are shorter than the arms. Most of the bones are still cartilage.

It usually takes about a month for infants to move from their pre-birth to post-birth world and to adjust to it.

Reflex Action

In the beginning, infants operate solely from reflex action. They jump and startle from a quick movement or noise. Fists are clenched and will be for many months. Pry the fist open, however, and the newborn will grip a finger or an object. Some infants can support their own weight. Other reflexive actions present at birth include sucking, swallowing, blinking, sneezing, yawning and stepping.

Physical and Motor Growth

Growth in infancy--from the age of a few weeks until the baby is walking securely--is a dramatic thing to watch. During the early months of life, striking and radical changes take place within a brief span of time. During these first two years, the baby changes from a helpless newborn lying flat on his back or stomach, to a high-powered pedestrian who investigates and masters everything within his reach in the most active way possible; tasting, chewing, probing, tugging, pushing, tearing. As the child's activity increases, his sleeping hours decrease. A child adds almost 12 inches to his stature and about 15 pounds or more of weight during his first two years.

How the infant grows physically has implications for his total growth pattern. Certain behavior patterns involving sleeping, eating and elimination arise as a result of variations in physical

development. Infants have to learn control over their bodies. This learning is a continous process covering many years of life.

Personality and Emotional Development

From the moment of birth, the infant feels the impact of personal care. He grows up in a world of things and people. At first the two are virtually blended. He must learn to distinguish between the two. The patterning of the infant's emotional life changes with experience, sensations and his personal social adjustment.

Social Development

Socially and emotionally, the infant begins with an alteration between self-contained indifference (when he is satisfied) and undirected, grief-stricken rage (if he is not satisfied). Social growth implies the interaction of an infant with the people in his environment. At first, the infant perceives his world as "wet and hungry." In a little while, he begins to study people's faces; then he actively demands company. After midyear, he learns that some people are friendly and some are strangers. The infant learns to react to others early. Some early forms of behavior include: imitation, timidity, rivalry, social cooperativeness and resistance behavior. He is not born a sociable person, he learns to become one.

Intellectual Development

Learning begins and goes on as soon as an infant is born. Children learn as naturally as they breathe--

by imitation, by trying over and over again and by sensory perception. Learning takes place by degrees and depends on maturity and readiness of the child's body, especially of the brain and nervous system.

All areas--physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth are very closely related. Because of this fact, the following items are not separated into the various areas.

Development: ONE TO THREE MONTHS

- Body muscles tighten with tension when he is picked up.
- Holds head up when pulled to a sitting position.
- Responds to smugness of being securely held.
- Can hold both eyes in a fixed position, staring vaguely at walls.
- Usually clenches hands to make a fist.
- At 8 weeks can hold a rattle though he may not reclaim it if he drops it.
- Especially notices the human face and, by 2 1/2 months, may respond with a smile.

Development: FOUR TO SIX MONTHS

- Glories in his growing capacity to hold his head upright and rotates his head freely from side to side.
- He smiles at the mere sight of a face. There is an increased demand for sociability. He likes to have people pay attention to him, talk to him.
- He coos, chuckles, gurgles and laughs out loud.
- He recognizes his mother and distinguishes familiar and unfamiliar people.
- He has "discovered" his hands and plays with them.
- He is now putting everything into his mouth.
- The 6-month-old has much more command over his body. He can roll over, rests on his elbows, and may sit up momentarily.
- The 6-month-old jabbars constantly.

Development: SEVEN TO NINE MONTHS

- This is the heyday for manipulation. He fingers a toy, puts it in his mouth, pulls it out again, rotates and twists his wrists.

- He enjoys banging on his high chair.
- Hands are not pawlike as before. He is beginning to use his thumb more adeptly and enjoys sucking it.
- He is far more self-contained as well as sociable.
- He may be sitting alone and some children can sit alone indefinitely.
- He can use both hands.
- He is beginning to respond to more than one person at a time.
- Lili rhythm, and enjoys being bounced on a knee.
- Vocalizes happily to himself by gurgling, growling and squealing.
- Some children may even crawl or stand.
- Easily becomes over-excited.
- Reaching and grasping are automatic now.
- Motor skill is progressing and he can feed himself a cracker.
- There is some play with toys--usually pushing or hitting one toy against another.
- He can imitate sounds and is beginning to respond to his name and to "no."
- Teeth may begin to appear at 6 to 8 months.

Development: TEN TO TWELVE MONTHS

- Rolls over and sits up.
- Uses hands skillfully, plucks, probes and investigates.
- Bangs cup with spoon and has a powerful urge to dip fingers into food.
- Plays patty-cake, peek-a-boo.
- May say "mama" and "dada."
- Some start to walk. Others creep actively and rapidly.
- May show signs of coyness.
- Notices difference in mother's tone of voice--when she approves or disapproves.
- Attention is easily distracted.
- Likes to carry things with him, one in each hand.
- Shows enthusiasm and interest in his play.
- Socially very cooperative.
- Words are few.

Behavior is becoming inconsistent and variable.
Many have 6 front teeth by 12 months of age.

Development: ONE YEAR TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS

- By a year, may use 2 to 3 words correctly.
- Roots of "toddler" stage begin.
- Full of curiosity.
- Enjoys his bath, and water play.
- Birth weight usually tripled.
- Often tries to feed self; holds cup.
- Enjoys pulling, lifting, pouring, pushing.
- Builds a little with blocks.
- Enjoys watching activity.
- Imitator--coughing, sneezing, etc.
- More responsive to adults than children.
- Very dependent upon mother.
- May show affection, jealousy, sympathy and anxiety.
- May respond to rhythm.
- May be shy with strangers.
- Prefers some food to others.
- Enjoys throwing things.
- "Into everything." Needs a safe environment.

Development: EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY MONTHS

- Begins to show a temper.
- Attached to a toy or blanket.
- Listens to nursery rhymes.
- Likes an audience and applause.
- Constantly on the move.
- Prefers to push stroller rather than ride.
- Likes to chase and be chased.
- Enjoys walking backward.
- Speaks about a dozen words.
- Enjoys sand play.
- Enjoys looking at books and tearing paper.
- Naming stage. Puts names on people, things, actions.
- Begins to undress self.

- Beginning fears show: noise of storm, train, vacuum cleaner, etc.
- Showing some independence: "do it myself."
- More conscious of approval and disapproval.
- Climber.
- May begin toilet training.

Development: TWENTY MONTHS TO TWO YEARS

- Beginning "negative" stage. "No-no."
- Claims everything. "Mine-mine."
- Danger of overestimating his capabilities.
- Prolonged busyness is lessening because of new awareness of people.
- More frequent play periods.
- Acts out household tasks.
- Can kick a ball.
- Manipulates more freely with one hand.
- Toilet training progressing.
- Enjoys music and books.
- Dislikes going to bed.
- Father becoming a favorite.
- May have appetite drop. Feeds self.
- Likes being with other children.
- Grows less in height and weight.

INFANCY

What Makes Him Tick?

The infant seeks a certain feeling . . . a feeling that he is safe; that the world is a dependable place in which to live. He is out to "test" this world to be sure it is safe.

He develops the feeling that the world is safe and people are fundamentally good through feeding . . . gradual weaning . . . "tender loving care" . . . letting him "do" for himself . . . knowing fear of strangers is normal . . . sleeping routine.

Feeding

The way you feed your baby adds or subtracts from the feeling everything is okay. Your first decision is to breast or bottle feed. The method used seems not as important as how mother feels about it.

There are advantages and disadvantages to breast feeding. On the plus side, there is no formula to make; it is more efficient and time-saving. The mother may feel this gives her a genuine feeling of closeness to her child.

On the minus side, for physical and psychological reasons, the idea may not appeal to the mother. She should not feel guilty about this. It's the how of feeding that counts. Holding the bottle for your baby may produce that feeling of closeness.

Self-demand, self-scheduling feeding means finding a reasonable, flexible schedule for everyone concerned with at least three hours between feedings. You wouldn't wake the child for feeding, nor would you wait an exact number of minutes before feeding. Your doctor can give individual help as he knows your baby.

Self-demand feeding takes the child's individual pattern into account. He may go longer between feedings in the afternoon than he does in the morning. At first, his feeding schedule seems irregular; later you see it fits into a pattern.

One reason given in favor of self-demand feeding is the association the infant receives from hunger, food and people. This association with humans and his needs gives him a comfortable

feeling.

To eat is to learn. There is much to learn--to manipulate the tongue and to swallow as well as to become accustomed to a variety of foods and textures of food. Some infants are good eaters; others seem to have little interest in food. Most are unpredictable.

It takes time for the child to learn about food. The clue is for the mother to relax. He'll eat when he's ready. No baby will starve himself. The word ready is your key here and all through your child's development. He will have his own time table. Watch it. This is your guidepost.

Gradual Weaning

Then comes the time for weaning. This is the process of moving from the bottle or breast to a cup and spoon. There is a great age variation when infants are ready for this step. Bottle babies usually approach this stage along with their first birthday. Breast fed babies are earlier. Weaning them comes at six or seven months or later. At this age, there is a shift of interest from people to inanimate objects. The baby is now ready to move away from the close relationship with mother. This does not mean he does not still need to suck. He does. For this reason, he may start sucking his fingers, toys and blanket as he moves to drink from a cup.

"Tender Loving Care"

Forget you've ever heard the word "spoiled." Giving an infant attention isn't going to "spoil" him. He needs an abundance of smiles, laughter and reassuring pats.

Babies cry for a reason. If needs are met, the outburst won't last long. You'll soon know if he wants food, company or is just "letting off energy."

The way attention is given is what's important. The way he is changed when wet; the tone of voice you use--all have meaning to an infant.

Let Him "Do" for Himself

To develop a trust in his body, and what it can do, an infant must learn and be encouraged to try things for himself. Reaching for toys, creeping, crawling, walking around furniture and finally taking those solo steps are all learning processes for the child.

It is important for all infants to have objects and toys to manipulate and furniture to walk around. When he is in this process of learning to do for himself, a baby needs an encouraging pat or an extended hand to help him develop independence. One child may need more assurance; another less. Give it when he seeks it.

Knowing Fear of Strangers is Normal

Around six months old, infants may begin to react differently to strangers than to family members. Some screech, some hide, others stare. This behavior, too, is normal.

Don't be concerned if your child never passes this fright stage toward strangers. It's an individual matter. There are periods of social sensitivity in relationships with others. There are certain periods in our life, from birth to death, when all of us may be friendly or withdrawn.

Sleeping Routine

Sleeping difficulty may or may not appear during infancy. Most children have less sleeping difficulty if on a consistent sleeping schedule. They know what is expected and what to expect.

It's best they fall asleep in the same room they will wake in. The best procedure to follow is to have them always sleep in the same room, in the same bed and have a regular bedtime procedure. Taking them to bed with you promotes problems.

By the end of the second year, the infant has made great strides. He has learned to respond to food, to discriminate between various objects, to know family members and developed a skill in locomotion. If his is a friendly environment, he is ready and willing to move to the next stage of his growth. Behavior can now be more easily identified, so behavior patterns have been separated into categories.

THE TODDLER: TWO TO THREE

Each child develops in his own unique way. It is hoped you will not use the following lists of developmental characteristics to judge your child. A child may develop more quickly in one area than in another. Each child follows his own timetable. The purpose of these developmental characteristics is to aid you in the understanding of your child.

THE TWO-YEAR-OLD

Generally is:

- Negative, possessive, noisy, wants own way, curious, dawdles.

Physical Growth and Development:

- Much bodily activity and vigorous outdoor play.
- Usually goes to toilet by self. May request, "Mommy, you go out."
- Needs help in dressing, better at undressing.
- Appetite fluctuates between very good and very poor (even within one day).

Emotional Development:

- Finds it hard to make choices.
- Has difficulty in relaxing to go to sleep.
- Behavior goes from one extreme to the other as:

shyness to joy, keen desire to possess object to indifference, glamor for food to rejection of it, screaming to whispering, independence to "you do it."

- Insists on routines.

Interests and Intellectual Skills:

- Repeats prayers with little or no understanding.
- Dramatic play - household tasks.
- Talks to self a great deal.
- Bath continues to be favorite time.
- Enjoys being chased.
- Gross motor play.
- Independent on walks; runs ahead, etc.

Relationships with others:

Adults --

- Usually definite preference for either mother or father, for certain activities or for a certain part of the day. Mother may become a "stranger" if she puts on a new dress, a formal or a hat.

Peers --

- Pushes, slaps, hits, pinches and does not get along well with other children.

- "Snatch and grab" age.
- Wants to be with children, but can't get along happily with them.
- Plays best when supervised with one child outdoors or with a five- or six-year-old whom he respects and gives him his way.
- Develops interest in brothers and sisters.

TODDLERHOOD -- PART BABY, PART CHILD

What Makes Him Tick?

This is the part baby, part child stage. It has been termed the "dart-dash-and-fling" age, and the "runabout baby" stage.

In infancy, he developed a trust in his environment. Now he is developing a trust in himself. "I - I - I, mine-mine, no - no - no," are familiar words to parents of toddlers. With these words, the child vocalizes what is most meaningful to him. To be big, to do things for himself, to have power, to be himself.

He wants freedom to think, to feed himself, to explore. He also wants the attention and support of his parents.

It is a hard age. The toddler is full of perpetual motion. Reasoning is not yet effective. He fluctuates from great independence to clinging dependence. He is egocentric and the center of his universe. He wants to grow up, yet still be a "baby."

Youngsters have goals during this period: (1) to be independent; (2) to have a safe environment.

Independence is developed through: toilet training . . . language . . . feeding . . . play.

A child's feeling that his environment is safe is developed through: love . . . providing sleeping routine . . . setting limits.

INDEPENDENCE

A toddler views feeding, sleeping and toileting as "do it yourself" projects in his move to become a more independent person.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a crucial adjustment to toddlerhood. There is no magical age to begin. Knowing when the

child is ready is most difficult.

Toilet training is not easy for the toddler. Before the time is "right", he will have developed these indications:

- be physically ready to be able to have muscle control to stop a natural release.

- be psychologically ready to be able to give a signal--word, sound or look--about his needs. He might show interest in the way the family uses the toilet.

- be capable of understanding and accepting the suggestion of adults.

You cannot count on maturation alone to do the job. Parents need to initiate, motivate and encourage the learning process. Starting before the first part of the second year seems to be unwise. Before this time the child cannot really understand what is expected of him.

Bowel control usually comes first. This is often established after the first year. Many children begin bladder control between 18 months and 2 years. Girls may be ready before boys.

Training is not accomplished in a week. A few youngsters seem to learn overnight, but for most it takes several months of gradual control. The goal you are aiming toward is for the child to become self-sufficient. This usually isn't before his third birthday. There will still be occasional accidents. And, staying dry all night may lag a year behind daytime control.

Language

The first milestone toward independence is moving under one's own power. The second is communicating feelings.

Language development follows a pattern. It is developed through en-

couragement and attention given a child when he just happened to make a sound which had meaning for his parents.

The basis for speech begins during the first eight months. The babbling phase is really a jumbled collection of sounds. Infants love cooing and jabbering to themselves, particularly when alone.

Between 9 and 12 months, the child selects sounds that parents use. Imitating words that have meaning like "mama" and "dada" appear; other sounds start to disappear. Discovering the real meaning of the words they are using comes later.

Toddlers begin to be aware of word meanings even if they cannot speak the word. Most recognize their names by eight months and understand that "no" means "stop what you are doing" by a year. Often parents underestimate how much a child understands even though he isn't talking. Word meaning is inferred by tone of voice, gesture, facial expression and through objects.

Saying words lags behind understanding. After he masters walking, language usually takes a spurt. First are words that name people and things. Then come action words. Commands and requests begin to appear. He learns "bye-bye," "cracker," and "trike" because he wants to go bye-bye, to eat a cracker or ride his trike. He learns words that hold meaning for him. By the time the child is two to two and one-half years old, his language foundation has been laid and he often uses simple, short sentences.

Language serves as a substitute for action as a child grows. He uses it for self-control, to explain feelings, thoughts and concerns. A three-year-old girl was worried when her dad was on a business trip to Philadelphia. "But mommy, he's way out in the jungle. I hope the tigers don't eat him." Language offers an opportunity to clarify mistaken information that young children absorb due to their lack of experience with life.

The age a child begins to talk is an individual matter. Older children sometimes interpret for younger ones making talking unnecessary. Girls usually talk sooner and more clearly than boys. Temperament also influences talking. Some children talk all the time and others observe.

Parents can aid language development. Children who hear good speech copy it. Youngsters often outgrow baby talk when the parents do. Speaking slowly, clearly and simply helps the child. Reading and singing with him can broaden his development and providing experiences for him to talk about helps secure good speech.

Feeding

The need to be independent is easily seen in feeding. This appears in infancy when he tries to hold his own cup and spoon, even though you are holding it too. Soon your hand is pushed away. Here are some things you can do to make this a less trying time.

Provide the right implements. The best kind of spoon and fork are short and straight with a broad handle the

child can grasp easily. If the mouth of the spoon is wide and shallow, he can easily "shovel" food into his mouth. Plastic dishes and cups give mother peace of mind. A divided plate keeps food from running together and gives the child something to push against.

For the child's comfort, make sure his feet touch the floor or the support on the high chair. A washable floor is a necessity at this age. If you use a carpet in the dining area, get a plastic tablecloth for under the chair for easy cleaning.

The easiest way to feed a child is to have suitable food, friendly surroundings and not worry about what, how much or how he eats. Give him time to dawdle. Let him use his hands for the jello. He'll soon find a spoon more convenient. Keep these goals in mind for your youngster's eating:

- . let him enjoy eating.
- . let him learn to do for himself.

Children often "eat through their eyes." How the food looks, tastes and feels is important. Bright colors, bland flavors, soupy consistencies and moist meats and vegetables, finger foods and a lukewarm temperature help make food attractive to the toddler. Most children do not like foods mixed together.

Heaping up a plate is discouraging for the child. New foods should be tried at the meal's beginning. Offer only one new food at a time. One teaspoon is plenty for a starter.

Usually when parents stop worrying,

the child will start eating. The attitude of parents is most important. Don't worry if the child goes on a food jag. It won't last long. Work at making eating fun. The over-all pattern, week to week and month to month, is what counts--not a clean plate every meal. As a child enters the preschool years, food may become less important to him due to his plateau stage of physical growth and his increasing variety of interests.

Play Materials

A young child's play is not aimless, although it often appears to be. There

are many things learned through play. First, how to manage his body; to shove, climb, push, lift, jump, poke and squeeze. He discovers how things work, what fits into what, where things go. He tries everything he sees every-one else doing. He's a wonderful imitator of sweeping, rolling a pie crust or barking like a dog.

Through his imaginative play, the toddler learns how it feels to be something or someone else. Play may be a release for angry feelings or a chance to relive something of particular importance.

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Love

There are many ways to strengthen a child's feeling of security. The most basic is through constant love. Another is by "taking it slow and easy" when teaching new routines. Weaning and toilet training should not be abrupt. Realize that messy meals and fighting against naps will occasionally occur. Try to find the reason for the child's behavior.

Wanting a safe environment is just as real as his drive for independence. During this stage he wants to grow up and at the same time remain a protected baby. Before he feels free to try his wings, he must feel secure.

A child takes parents' praise and scoldings pretty much to heart. But, because his experiences are so limited, he may misinterpret discipline at times. It can be easy for him to think of words

like "naughty" and "bad" as a sign that he's losing your love. He needs reassurance that you do not turn your love on and off depending on his behavior. It's important that you make it clear that you disapprove of what he did, but never of him.

Sleeping Routine

Sleeping difficulties and toddlers often go together. The toddler is becoming more aware of the world around him. Sleep interrupts the things he enjoys--the nearness of people and play. Tomorrow is non-existent for him.

You may be expecting too much sleep for him. A rearranged nap schedule may be necessary if he's having difficulty sleeping at night.

This age doesn't recognize fatigue. It cannot be left to "self-demand" like food and hunger. Actually when toddlers

become over-excited and irritable, they feel they don't need sleep. However, they must be helped to accept it.

Allow the toddler time to get to bed. Be consistent about routines around bedtime. Roughhousing with dad is not conducive to sleep. Listening to a story or record is. Taking a favorite toy or animal to bed helps during pre-sleep play and again when waking. This also helps divert attention when parents are no longer around. Never make bed a place of punishment. No spanking, no tying the door shut with a rope, no threats or yelling.

The toddler needs to know he has to go to bed and, once there, he has to stay. He may need time to settle down. Singing, calling for water, and just one more kiss are common. Be reasonable and get the drink, talk a bit longer, then draw the line. And be firm.

There may be many reasons for night waking. It might be a physical reason as start of illness, the temperature of the room, or wet pajamas. When your child does wake, he needs to be comforted and reassured. It's best to leave him in his own bed rather than to take him into bed with you.

Setting Limits

Certain boundaries must be set.

Toddlers are so active. They constantly explore and experiment. However, this activity is often accompanied by poor judgement.

A reasonable number of limits are good for a child. He knows where he stands. At this age he can't always control his own impulses. Limits should not be thought of as restraints. They are guide lines toward normal behavior. Toddlers cannot be allowed to tear up library books, but they can be given old newspapers. Substitution works well at this age.

Limits must be geared to the child's powers of discrimination. For example: the kitchen range is forbidden at all times, not just when it is turned "on." Without limits, the child misses the feeling he has a safe environment and parental protection.

In setting limits, a youngster needs balance. A few limits, but only the necessary ones. Things and places he cannot go, but freedom also in the other direction. Protection from real harm, but not so much protection he becomes upset by minor hurts. When you set limits and stop undesirable behavior, don't tear the child down. Give love always and praise generously.

THE THREE-YEAR-OLD

Each child follows his own timetable. The purpose of this general list of developmental characteristics is to help you understand your child's growth and development.

Generally:

- Tries to please.
- Conforms.
- Attentive to spoken words.
- More able to accept suggestion.
- Can choose between alternatives.

Physical growth and development:

- Has full set of temporary teeth.
- Most children dry all night and take responsibility for own daytime needs.
- Helps with dressing and undressing.
- Hangs up own coat.
- Can now eat without spilling.
- Walk erect.
- Unbuttons large buttons and works zippers.

Emotional development:

- Peaceful.
- Can help put toys away.
- May prefer a "play nap."
- Dreams begin to be reported.
- When fatigued, asks to be carried and says, "I'm a baby." Wants to hear stories of babyhood.
- May have imaginary companion; very apparent around age 3 1/2.
- Begins to develop sympathy.

Interests and intellectual skills:

- Talks in complete sentences.
- Can identify common colors (red, blue, yellow,

green).

- Scribbles mean "something" -- to self only.
- Often can carry a tune.
- Can distinguish between 1, 2, "lots of" and today and tomorrow. Doesn't know what yesterday means.
- Rides trike.
- Enjoys playing "house"; playing family roles.
- Enjoys hearing stories repeated.
- Great desire to talk.
- Imaginative world opening up.
- Sex role difference starting to be noticed.

Relationship with others:

Adults --

- Seeks attention and approval.
- Adjusts quite easily to new situations and new adults.
- Susceptible to suggestions and reasoning.

Peers --

- Begins willingly sharing and taking turns.
- Sometimes selects "special" friend.
- Capable of extreme jealousy of new baby.
- Plays well with one or two children, yet still enjoys much time in solitary play.
- Boasts of what he can do.
- Imitates other children.
- Tells others what to do.
- Needs less adult help in solving conflicts.

THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD

Generally is:

- Full of questions.
- Wants friends.
- Assertive.
- Boastful and bossy.

- Talkative.
- Egocentric.

Physical growth and development:

- Can coordinate blunt scissors, uses hand saw, laces shoes.

- Throws ball.
- Dresses and undresses self if clothes are easily managed.
- Toilets without help.
- Grows approximately 4 pounds and 3 inches a year.
- Needs (most children) 12 hours sleep out of 24 hours each day.
- High level of physical activity: runs, jumps, hops, skips, climbs.

Emotional Development:

- May boast, name call, tattles freely.
- Conscience starting to become factor in behavior.
- More fears. Can understand many dangers.
- Shows temper. Starting to be more verbal than physical such as kicking.
- Producer of alibies to protect self and friends, but doesn't understand the concept of "lying."
- Refuses. "No," "I won't," and "You're stupid."

Interests and intellectual skills:

- Persistent questions. Why? How? What? When? Starts sentences with "Guess what?"
- Growing vocabulary.
- Tells tales that involve wild flights of fancy.

- Ideas move beyond home. Plays "store," "train."
- Time concepts clearer. Monday after Sunday, remembers last Christmas and other holidays.
- If taught, can learn name, address, phone number.
- Conscious of sex difference.
- Likes dressing up and pretending to be adult.
- Ready for rhythm band and simple singing games.
- Inquisitive about death.
- Enjoys different words--"ooshy, wooshy" and uses them to exaggerate.
- Interested in becoming 5. Enjoys birthdays.

Relationships with others:

Adults --

- Enjoys going on neighborhood errands.
- Not as sensitive to praise as at 3 or will be at 5.
- Uses mommy and daddy as final authority. "Mommy told me to do that."

Peers --

- Strong need for companionship.
- Enjoys being silly with friends. Says silly rhymes.
- Name calling. "You're a rat; I'll kill you."
- Follower and tag-a-long with older children.

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD

Generally is:

- Friendly.
- Businesslike.
- Likes to dress up.
- Interested in adult activities.
- Project minded.
- Likes praise.
- Dependable.
- Likes to feel independent.
- Serious.

Physical Growth and development:

- Handles sled and tricycle well.
- Hops and skips.
- Cuts, pastes and draws pictures.
- Handles tools geared to size.
- Can handle most dressing.
- Permanent teeth starting to come in.
- Needs rest periods. Posture must be watched.
- Needs activity--ladders, jungle gym, balls, roller skates, toys, jump rope, bicycle.

Interests and intellectual skills:

- . Proud of possessions, clothes.
- . Can learn full name, address and telephone number.
- . Starts to be a collector of school papers, etc.
- . Conscious of ignorance.
- . Can do simple household tasks such as feed the dog.

Relationships with others:

Adults --

- . Likes to help either parent.
- . Is companionable.

- . Likes to run simple errands.
- . Enjoys conversations with adults.
- . Sensitive to praise.
- . Wants mother home after school.
- . Conforms, "May I go."

Peers --

- . Is a poor group member.
- . Is a tattletale.
- . Needs adult supervision.
- . Is demanding.
- . Hits and pushes.

THE PRESCHOOL YEARS—THREE TO FIVE

These years are a trial run for adult life. The preschooler is full of great initiative. He needs the time and materials to try out his plans and ideas.

Your job changes now. During infancy you provided for all his needs. Even during toddlerhood, you were his main protector. Now, during this period, your child will:

- . Develop a real concept of himself.
- . Develop new relationships with brothers and sisters.
- . Possibly develop new fears. Now you must be willing to "let go" and help him grow by:
- . Meeting people.
- . Providing time, space, play materials.

Self-Awareness

During infancy you judged the

baby's self-awareness from his vocal behavior. The toddler could use simple words to transmit his wants. A preschooler can directly tell about his feelings. If he doesn't, behavior is a good clue.

This is the period a youngster wants to try everything. This is how it should be. If he hangs back, he may need more encouragement. A three-year-old tries to please and needs praise. Don't be afraid to give it to him. He may need more experiences to get ideas. All preschoolers need materials to work with--not those to wind and then sit back and watch--but materials to manipulate and be creative with. Give him wood, nails, a hammer, the opportunity to dress up and parade around, the fun of splashing in water.

It doesn't really matter at this age if his crayon "house" doesn't look like a house at all to you. What really counts is how he feels about it and the fun he had doing it. Each experience he has and each new discovery he makes about peo-

ple and his environment makes a mark on his concept of himself.

During this period of awareness he is learning about the type of person he is; the kind of child you expect him to be. For these reasons a great deal of "testing" is common during this period.

And, remember, he arrives at who he is by your tone of voice, what he hears and reactions toward him.

Brother-sister relationships

Children are not born with a love for brothers and sisters. Respecting and enjoying each other and doing things as a family comes gradually. It takes time and parental help for each child in the family to accept and learn to like the other family members. Small children are very self-centered.

Jealousy is a feeling common to all. It comes from situations when we actually are, or appear to be, left out. There are many causes of a child's jealousy. Examples: the arrival of a new baby; when another youngster takes a possession he considers strictly his own property.

With the arrival of a new baby, he often feels the infant will take his place with his parents. Since he knows he is not allowed outwardly to take his angry feelings out on his parents, he takes them out on the baby. "Take him back to the hospital." "I'm going to flush him away." "I'm going to be a baby again." These are common statements of the older child betraying his jealous and normal feelings of the new baby.

He may show his feelings through regressing in behavior. He may demand a bottle, begin to wet again, crawl or babble. Or the preschooler may have bursts of temper, not want to eat, bite or pinch younger children, or withdraw from his neighborhood friends. Jealousy takes many paths.

Prevention is the best cure. Tell him in advance about the baby. Let him share in the preparations. Shift him from the baby bed, or to a new room, several months in advance of the baby's birth. Begin any change in his routine, such as starting nursery school, if possible ahead of the baby's arrival.

Jealousy may be more pronounced when the new baby is old enough to get his own way or be interested in his toys. Rivalry and some quarreling between children is common. And jealousy can be turned around. The younger child can be envious of the older one with his greater skills and abilities, size, strength and privileges.

Fears

New, strange and violent fears often crop up when a child becomes four or five. They seem to coincide with his developing self-awareness and all the power he imagines is his. Children at this age are learning about real and imagined dangers. Fears loom up of imagined kidnapers, giants, burglars, spoons, of being orphaned, of death, bodily mutilation, the boogymen and the dark.

Being able to trust things as he did at two may be gone. He may fuss when getting shots at the doctor's office. He may overhear adult conversations and

misunderstand meanings. Occurrences such as the whirl of the fire siren may be frightening to the three, four or five-year-old.

Actually, there are two types of fears. We all have natural ones about the strange, the unfamiliar, unusual noises. The other type of fear is caused by anxiety. For example, a preschooler may be afraid of death, that you will leave and never return. When fears seem to stem from anxiety, try to uncover the reason behind his fear and then offer reassurance.

Trying to avoid frightening situations is the best course of action. No threats about people or terrible animals. See that older children do not shut him in a dark closet as a joke.

All fears cannot be prevented. When frightened, soothe him and give the reassurance he needs. Take him in your arms. Talk to him, but leave the reasoning until later. Try to help him help himself by living out his fear during play and through stories.

If he seems overly frightened, take a look at his life. Do you expect him to be too good? Could he be feeling that he is inferior and really can't do things to please you. Accept his fears. They are very real to him. Help him get them into the open. Trying to cover them up may provoke smarty and belligerent actions. If you can't uncover a cause for his fear, it may be a phase and that will vanish as he grows in experience and sureness of himself.

Meeting people

Children need contact with a variety

of people outside the family now--the milkman, mailman, workman, repairman, salesman, policeman and grocer. A child learns from them. "Why do you need a wrench?" "How does milk get cold?" He wants to know what adults do and how they act. Through play a preschooler relives his "grown up" ideas.

Especially important to the preschooler is being with boys and girls his own age. Give him such experiences through Sunday school, nursery school, neighborhood play. Occasionally arrange to have him visit in other children's homes with you.

Children learn from each other and with each other. They play out adult roles together. How often is heard, "I want to go out and play," and then, "You be the baby, I'm the mommy;" or "I'm the fireman." They learn to stretch their imagination. They learn about people.

They also begin to develop signs of sympathy, aggression and leadership through play. At this age one can see that his social relationships revolve around play.

Providing time, space, play materials

Adults may be inclined to dismiss a preschooler's play as tolerable since it keeps him occupied, but really not of much worth. On the contrary, it is serious business to him. It is his "work;" his way of finding out what he is like and what materials are like.

Time is important. This is where a parent's attitude about play begins to show. If spontaneous expression is met with "Hurry up," "Clean up that mess,"

or "You're just being silly," a child may hesitate before stretching his imagination again. Of course, a child needs to learn that he lives in a family. Therefore, he must adapt to other's schedules and feelings, too. But a preschooler also needs uninterrupted blocks of time to use for his business of play. And some adult attention and guidance along with it.

Space to run, to be noisy, to be messy and to explore materials is a "must" for a child this age. And this is not always easy to provide. If you do not have a spot designated for such play, it might mean allowing finger-paint in the kitchen or even the bathroom. It might mean allowing the living room floor to become an airport or race track for cars. It doesn't matter where a child plays as long as he feels free and you do not mind his being there.

There are many things in your own home to use in enriching a child's imagination and knowledge of the world--adult dress-up clothes, daddy's worn out shoes, your old purse and rumpled hat, discarded boxes to climb over and hide inside, tarnished muffin tins and old pots and pans to whip up a pretend cake. There are old receiving blankets to wrap a "baby" in; pieces of string and hunks of rubber hose; a magnet and magnifying glass, a piece of pie dough to squeeze and roll, and a most delightful play material--water.

SUMMARY

The pattern of growth in each child is unique--differences caused mainly

by inherent or environmental factors. Growth of individuals is often unstable. This, however, is a normal and healthy pattern.

In general, the rate of growth and development from infancy to maturity is much slower than the prenatal period of development. Development is relatively rapid from birth during infancy and early childhood. It is slower but constant in middle childhood, becomes accelerated during puberty and tapers off during adolescence. Growth is a profound psychological experience with all areas of development--physical, social, emotional and intellectual--closely related and dependent on each other.

Parents cannot hurry or prevent growth. Neither can they "do the growing" for their children. Adults can only provide a healthy and happy environment in which children can grow and develop. They can provide the right equipment, abundant space, encouragement, and tender, loving care. Every child must grow according to his own growth pattern. Every child has a right to be wanted, loved, and provided with the basic physical and spiritual necessities of life.

Learning to be a parent does not demand unusual skills, but sometimes trying to be a "perfect" parent can make the job more difficult. One cannot take the storybook or perfectionist approach rather than the realistic approach to child rearing. We must prepare for parenthood, learn to trust ourselves, and use professional help along with common sense.

