

Developmental Milestones

A Guide for Parents



The
5th
Year

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child tested,

- call your pediatrician
- the local health department
- the Make-A-Difference Information Network (They can help you find a testing location near your community.)
1-800-332-6262
- the Parent Helpline (They can help you with questions about childrearing.)
1-800-332-6378

Contact your county extension office to obtain other publications in this series. Additional resources on parenting are also available.

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The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been synthesized from a variety of professional resources to help you appreciate your child's progress. It is not a formal, standardized measurement tool.

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Have you ever wondered how your child is growing and developing compared to other children of the same age? How do you know if your child is “on the right track”?

Your child is going through many physical and mental changes. Although no two children grow at the same rate, experts agree there are “normal” signs of development. This brochure will provide you with a checklist of important milestones in your child’s development during the fifth year of life.

It is a simple tool you can use to become aware of and appreciate the dramatic changes that are occurring in your child. Watch for these signs in your child over a one month period. (Even children have “bad days.”) Remember, each child is different and may learn and grow at a different rate. However, if your child cannot do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you should consult your pediatrician. Several additional sources of information are listed on the back of this brochure.

You are the most important observer of your child’s development. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

By 5 years of age does your child:

Motor Skills

- use a knife and fork well
- use scissors to cut paper on a line
- color pictures more carefully
- draw simple figures of things she has imagined
- fold paper diagonally if shown how
- place clips on paper
- wash and dry his face by himself
- dress and undress by himself (although you may need to supervise)
- hang up clothes when expected to
- brush teeth by himself
- catch a tossed ball
- open a small padlock with key
- hammer nails
- walk downstairs, alternating feet without using a handrail
- balance on one foot for 5 seconds
- jump over a very low and narrow object
- climb a ladder

Sensory and Thinking Skills

- know red, yellow, blue, green
- want to know what words mean
- recite her address and phone number
- understand stories and perhaps create stories of his own
- know the sequence of reading a book, from left to right and top to bottom
- arrange three pictures to tell a story
- define ball or car, telling you how it is used
- draw pictures that represent animals, people, and objects
- add a trunk and arms to drawing of a person
- draw a cross
- copy a square and triangle
- copy her own name in large irregular letters

- place objects in order from shortest to tallest
- sort objects by size
- identify common coins
- identify some letters of the alphabet (if she has been in daycare or preschool, or if you have taught this at home)
- recognize categories (“these are all toys, these are all food”)
- understand “more,” “less” and “same”
- understand “first”
- know front and back of clothes
- count up to 10 objects
- identify and name numbers
- think you had more if you ate both halves of one broken cookie than if you ate a whole cookie

Language and Social Skills

- use 6 words in a sentence
- sing jingles and rhymes
- enjoy riddles and jokes
- use “and,” “but” and “then” to make longer sentences
- use past tense (“I ran”) and future tense (“I will run”)
- understand “before” and “after”
- understand “above,” “below” and “at the bottom”
- change the volume of her voice by whispering or shouting
- modify language when talking to a younger child
- protect younger children
- show concern and sympathy for others in a group
- invent make-believe games with simple rules
- organize other children and props for pretend play
- explore his immediate neighborhood unattended
- talk about emotions and preferences