

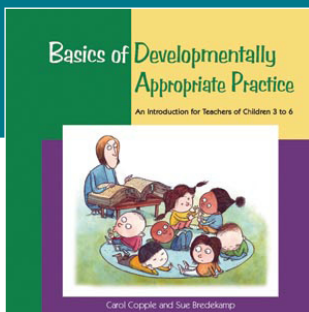
Developmentally
Appropriate
Practice



A reading from the CD accompanying
*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in
Early Childhood Programs Serving Children
from Birth through Age 8, Third Edition.*

READING # 1

A Changing Picture: Children at 3, 4, and 5



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CATEGORIES:

Sequences/Continuums

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The following charts give a general picture of what children are like in the preschool and kindergarten years—from age 3 through 5—and how adults can promote their learning and development.

For each age group we have divided the common characteristics and behaviors into four categories of development (physical, intellectual, social, emotional). But in doing so, we do not mean to imply that the different areas don't overlap, because certainly they do. Likewise, there is considerable overlap between the age groups. Some children will exhibit certain characteristics and behaviors at earlier ages than their peers; others will take longer to acquire a given set of skills and concepts.

In other words, generalizations are only that. It is through close observation and interaction with the individual children in their classrooms that skilled teachers assess where children are and so know how to best guide them.

Children at 3

What children are like	How adults can help
<i>Physical development</i>	
<p>Children love to use their large muscles. They become stronger and their balance and movement control improve greatly during the year. They are able to alternate feet when climbing stairs, jump, do a forward somersault, and kick a ball.</p>	<p>Provide climbers, tricycles, balls, and lots of space and time to run, jump, and gallop. Demonstrate new skills or provide assistance and feedback as children take on new challenges.</p>
<p>Children are able to manipulate a paintbrush and implements such as crayons, markers, and thick pencils. Their scribbles become more controlled and deliberate. They can stack blocks to create a short-to-medium tower. Children this age may also spill food or art supplies sometimes, but their control and coordination are improving. They become more able to unbutton and unzip as their small-muscle skills improve.</p>	<p>Materials such as pegboards, beads to string, and construction sets are beneficial. Blocks are engaging and useful for developing eye-hand coordination, as are finger plays. Offer materials with which children can practice pouring, rolling, squeezing—these will build strength in their hand muscles.</p>
<p>Children are increasingly able to engage in self-care activities such as hand washing, dressing, and toileting, but accidents may happen occasionally. Boys may not be as advanced as girls in toilet learning.</p>	<p>Children can help with dressing and undressing, but still need assistance. Be patient, and treat accidents matter-of-factly. Have extra clothes on hand. Ask children to help clean up and to change their own clothes.</p>

3-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<i>Intellectual development</i>	
<p>Children often spend relatively long times at tasks they choose—e.g., playing in sand, building with blocks, painting, following an obstacle course, engaging in dramatic play. They may ride a tricycle for long periods, or do the same puzzle three times in a row. Children will test their skills, and may repeat activities over and over again.</p>	<p>Plan the schedule to allow large blocks of time for independent activity. Offer a wide range of learning experiences and materials.</p>
<p>Children this age are curious. They want to experiment with cause and effect. They take things apart with glee.</p>	<p>Provide them with materials for their investigations—e.g., blocks, sand, and water (with cups to pour and other tools), puzzles, and things that come apart.</p>
<p>They can identify common colors such as yellow, red, blue, and green. They can often recognize and identify a few basic shapes, most particularly circles and squares.</p>	<p>Encourage them to match and sort colors, shapes, and textures. Play games such as “What’s furry?” “Can you point to the circle in this picture?” and “I see something red. Can you find it?” Use relevant vocabulary in everyday conversation (“I see you’re wearing your new red jacket again today”).</p>
<p>Counting becomes more precise, although children this age might not yet have learned correct number labels. Three-year-olds can recognize the number in very small groups of objects, and by age 4 children can recognize</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(cont.)</i></p>	<p>Provide ample opportunities for counting, including counting games. If possible, move items one at a time while counting. Incorporate counting words naturally into conversation—talking about “three crayons”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(cont.)</i></p>

3-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>that the last number in a sequence represents the total quantity of items in a group. At age 3, they are interested in quantity and readily understand <i>more</i>.</p>	<p>instead of “the crayons” is an easy and effective way to increase children’s interest and knowledge of number.</p>
<p>Vocabularies grow rapidly, ranging at this age between 2,000 and 4,000 words. Children can talk so that 75–80 percent of their speech is intelligible, and they understand much more than they speak. They use complete sentences of three to five words and employ words to describe and explain.</p> <p>If they are regularly exposed to two languages, children are likely to acquire facility in both.</p>	<p>Provide lots of conversation opportunities for children to hear and use language in its many uses and forms—e.g., poems, nursery rhymes, recordings, games, stories. Allow plenty of time for children to speak. Talk with each child every day. Give clear but not too lengthy explanations to children’s questions.</p> <p>Use both English and, if you are able, the child’s home language. Encourage bilingualism, and talk to children in English at a little higher level than they talk to you. Help children with comprehension by using props, non-verbal cues, simplified speech, and repetition.</p>
<p>Children begin to understand that words can be spoken and then written down to be read again. Children will try to make marks on paper that resemble writing (“This is my name, Bill”)—some of which may approximate real letters—and they enjoy scribbling.</p>	<p>Have children tell you a story that you write down for them. They then might want to illustrate it. Sometimes children will draw first, then ask you to write their story. Provide crayons and markers for children to experiment making marks with.</p>

3-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children can listen to longer stories and will pretend to read themselves. They can predict what might happen in the story and connect it to their own life experiences.</p>	<p>Read aloud to small groups (four to six children) every day; talk with children before, during, and after the story. Gradually increase the length and complexity of the stories you read and tell.</p>
<p>They enjoy repeating words, sounds, and tunes. They begin to recognize musical melodies, match a few tones, and move in reasonably good time to music.</p>	<p>Provide musical experiences in which children participate by singing, playing, and dancing. Select music from many cultures.</p>
<p><i>Social development</i></p>	
<p>Young 3-year-olds prefer to play alongside another child or with one or two others.</p>	<p>Have many individual activities and materials that children can do side by side. Also offer some things that require cooperation. Offer materials such as dramatic play props that encourage interactive play. Some children may need help learning how to play with others.</p>
<p>Friendships are beginning but are often short-lived, especially among younger 3-year-olds.</p>	<p>Support children's friendships. One good way is to help children treat each other as friends. Talk about things good friends do for each other, and read books with children that feature friendships.</p>

3-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children may share when given the opportunity. Sometimes they can wait for a short while for a turn. Children can use their newfound language skills to voice their feelings during conflicts with others, and may be able to voice solutions to problems. However, they may still resort to physical aggression.</p>	<p>Allow sharing to develop spontaneously; forcing it will not work. Children share when others are generous with them and when they do not feel the need to protect their possessions. Equip children with skills for dealing with classroom problems by themselves (“Use words to tell Daryl that you are playing with the truck now. He can have a turn later”). Model language when necessary.</p>
<i>Emotional development</i>	
<p>Children develop a firm sense of their sex, age, race, language, and culture. They are beginning to develop a sense of self-concept—an understanding of their own unique characteristics. By age 3½ they will be able to describe key attributes about themselves.</p>	<p>Share children’s pride in who they are. Respect each child. Incorporate their home languages, cultural objects, and familiar activities as a natural part of every day.</p> <p>Be aware that a child’s growing sense of self can lead to increased possessiveness over objects. You can acknowledge this possessiveness while encouraging social interaction through compromise (“Yes, Henry, you are playing with the truck right now. Mara also would like a turn. In a little while, can she have a turn?”).</p>
<p>Older 3-year-olds tend to be affectionate with younger children. They often begin to have special friends they are fond of.</p>	<p>Encourage children to talk about their feelings and to describe them to others. They may have some awareness that other people experience things differently, but this understanding is still difficult. Model compassionate and caring behavior.</p>

3-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children are learning to trust the important adults in their lives. They are now more independent and take pride in new skills. When upset, however, they may revert to toddler behaviors.</p>	<p>Separation from parents can still be painful for children this age and they may cry when parents leave. Respect their feelings and comfort them with reassuring words and hugs. Tell the child about when the parent will return (“Mommy will pick you up after nap time today”).</p>
<p>Three-year-olds like to be treated as older children at times, but they still have difficulty regulating their own behavior. They may still put objects in their mouths that can be dangerous, or wander off if not carefully supervised. The delightful, silly sense of humor they possess can sometimes get out of control. Children may occasionally still have tantrums.</p>	<p>Children this age need close supervision and positive reinforcement. If they say something that is offensive or hurtful to others, try to explain how their friends’ feelings have been hurt. Tantrums should largely be ignored; acknowledge the child’s feelings verbally, but do not let children use tantrums to manipulate.</p>
<p>Children express intense feelings, such as fear and affection. New fears often develop at this age—e.g., children may be afraid of things they’ve imagined, such as monsters under the bed, or of unfamiliar people or characters they encounter. Loud noises can also be frightening.</p> <p><small>Source: The information in this chart was primarily adapted from Day 2004, 65–78; additional sources include Bredekamp & Copple 1997; Schickedanz 1999; Miller 2001; Essa 2002; and Berk 2004.</small></p>	<p>Take children’s fears seriously—e.g., for a small child, a clown may be seen as an enormous threat. Provide physical reassurance by allowing the child to cling to you. Offer reassuring words. Using a puppet with children can be helpful—the puppet can talk about something he’s afraid of, and children can offer advice, prompted by your questions.</p>

Children at 4

What children are like	How adults can help
<i>Physical development</i>	
<p>The child’s repertoire of large-muscle skills is expanding, and skills are becoming more refined. Skipping and hopping may appear. Children are good at riding tricycles. Children can bounce and catch a ball, jump over a low obstacle, and balance on one foot.</p>	<p>Allow plenty of opportunities for children to use their large-muscle skills—e.g., obstacle courses, climbing structures, large hollow blocks. Demonstrate new physical skills and provide just the right amount of assistance as children try out new challenges on their own.</p>
<p>Small muscles gain coordination. Children can use scissors, glue, small beads, and paintbrushes with more skill. Cutting and pasting become favorite activities. Their creations begin to resemble real objects.</p>	<p>Continue to offer a variety of art materials and blank paper. Let children cut and draw what they choose rather than following lines printed in a coloring book or worksheet. Provide materials that call for more eye-hand coordination, such as sewing cards and smaller beads to string. Use more difficult finger plays.</p>
<p>Children can use a fork effectively to feed themselves, and with adult supervision can use a knife to cut soft foods. They can usually dress and undress independently. Some children may be able to tie their own shoes as they approach age 5.</p>	<p>Be patient with children who are mastering self-care skills. Offer assistance as needed, but give children room to manage for themselves.</p>
<i>Intellectual development</i>	
<p>Children are increasingly able to carry over projects and topics of study from one day to the next. They enjoy writing for real purposes such as messages to friends. Artwork takes on (cont.)</p>	<p>Plan projects that engage children’s thinking. Have children make meaningful signs—e.g., a special block construction could be labeled with a child’s name and a request to (cont.)</p>

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
new meaning, and they may want to save their finished products.	leave the structure standing for a day or two. Children can sign their work, and it can be kept in a safe place or displayed.
Children are increasingly able to figure out how things work and fit together. They are curious; they want to try different ways to do things and to use different types of hand tools. They can sort objects using more than two categories.	Offer all kinds of objects for children to explore—e.g., an old toaster with any dangerous parts removed or clock or anything else safe for eager learners. Introduce more complicated projects and new types of tools, such as a computer or new carpentry tools. Ask children to think of a variety of ways to solve problems (“How could you get the water from this side to that side using the things we have here?”). Involve children in making repairs. Stock up on paste and glue!
Children are naturally interested in shapes, colors, and textures. Most children can name six to eight colors and a few typical shapes, such as circles, squares, and triangles, by age 4.	Use the names of shapes (in both two- and three-dimensions) and colors in natural ways (“This triangle block might make a good roof for your house,” “Your red shoes match the red balloon in this picture”). Provide many textures through cooking, woodworking, clay, finger paint, and dress-up clothes.
Children learn to count to 20 and beyond, and may be interested in printing numbers. They compare sizes and weights of objects.	Encourage the use of number and quantity in real experiences such as measuring, distributing or dividing items, and matching. Lead children in counting and comparing in each of the languages spoken by the group.

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Given sufficient language exposure in their home and school environments, children have 4,000 to 6,000 words in their vocabularies. They are capable of speaking in five- to six-word sentences. Children are persistent in asking “Why?”</p>	<p>Invite children to tell their own stories, and allow ample time for them to talk among themselves and with you about what they are doing. Encourage children to use varied ways to find answers to questions: asking people, reading books, experimenting.</p>
<p>Extended conversations are now possible, sentences become more complex, and children understand more words than they speak.</p> <p>Children who speak multiple languages use both with ease and switch between them.</p>	<p>Engage children in extended conversation, i.e., with five or more turn-taking exchanges. Provide many materials and experiences such as field trips for children to gain new knowledge and vocabulary.</p> <p>For English-language learners and their classmates, offer positive models of people speaking the children’s home languages and of their cultures. Communicate with parents about the need to support the home language.</p>
<p>Interest in written and spoken language increases. Experimentation with written marks continues; letter-like forms and a few actual letters may appear. Children learn the names of letters, recognize some words, and are interested in print. They begin to match letters with those in their names and other words they want to write, becoming aware of the discrete sounds that make up spoken language and that can be manipulated.</p>	<p>Provide a print-rich environment with books and other materials in several languages for children to use. Respond to children’s questions about letters and words. Write down the stories children tell you. Encourage children to write their own names and other words, giving help as they ask for it but not “correcting” their spelling. Draw their attention to letters and letter sounds (“That red sign starts with S— does anyone know what it says?”). Help children sound out words they are trying to write. Keep paper and pencils or markers in all learning centers for children to use.</p>

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children enjoy making up their own stories, which are usually a mixture of make-believe and real. When retelling long stories they are increasingly able to get the main points of the narrative right.</p>	<p>Give children a chance to use the flannel board, puppets, or other dramatic play methods to recreate stories. Invite children to retell stories to the group. Encourage children to talk about past, future, or imaginary events. Take care not to use stories that contain stereotypes.</p>
<p>Children like singing games, want to dramatize songs, and make up their own songs. They are increasingly able to sing melodies on pitch and move in time to the beat.</p>	<p>Offer a range of musical and rhythmic experiences including games and songs with rhymes and other phonological features. Include selections with words in other languages, more complicated actions, and more real instruments from other cultures.</p>
<p><i>Social development</i></p>	
<p>Children show interest in others, and spend time watching. They love to play together with two or three others. They also still need time alone.</p>	<p>Provide lots of small-group, child-directed activities. Have a quiet, private space where children can go to be by themselves. Keep whole-group activities within children's span of interest, usually 20 minutes or less.</p>
<p>Children develop strong friendships and strongly desire playmates. Friendships with one other child are flexible but longer lasting; these friendships are often with those of the same sex. Children's ideas of friendship evolve from moment to moment, and they may use promises to manipulate one another (e.g., "I'll (cont.)</p>	<p>Encourage children's special relationships, but intervene in a sensitive manner when children exclude others or exhibit jealous behaviors. Incorporating additional children into a triad of squabbling children may defuse power struggles. Because children's friendships are becoming more obvious, it is also easier (cont.)</p>

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>be your friend if you give me that ball”). They can be jealous of their friends’ attention toward others, and may also exclude other children from play in order to guard their special friendships.</p>	<p>for teachers to identify which children are neglected or rejected by peers. Teachers should assist these children by pairing them with others for activities and coaching them to enter play. Read picture books with children about friendships, and talk to them about being a good friend.</p>
<p>Children are increasingly able to follow a leader or act as a leader.</p> <p>Sharing and taking turns are becoming more common. At times children are able to resolve differences and negotiate conflicts between themselves with words. Younger 4-year-olds still find cooperating and sharing a challenge. At times children use their growing language ability in an aggressive way (“You can’t come to my birthday party!”). Children gradually have fewer disagreements and are often quick to apologize for their behavior.</p>	<p>Children can be leaders and followers naturally throughout the day—e.g., during dramatic play, outdoors, on field trips, and during music.</p> <p>By the end of this age period, children will cooperate in taking turns and sharing much of the time <i>if</i> adults model cooperative, generous behavior and do not push sharing before children are ready. Encourage children to use words to work out problems that arise during play. Acknowledge and encourage spontaneous sharing, and create opportunities for cooperation as well.</p>
<i>Emotional development</i>	
<p>Children are curious about differences and similarities in people and how they live.</p>	<p>Help children understand how people are alike and different—in physical characteristics, family styles, and culture—and that each of us is special and valuable. Treat children with respect so they will do the same (cont.)</p>

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Prejudices may arise unless children are helped to appreciate one another and to recognize what is fair for everyone.</p>	<p>with others, and talk about differences and differently abled people in an honest, nonfrightening way. Displays and materials throughout the room should include art, music, and authentic everyday objects from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>Discuss what is fair and accurate (e.g., sharing songs drawn from a specific culture) and what isn't (e.g., playing "Cowboys and Indians," stereotyped drawings in books).</p>
<p>Children are developing real empathy with each other, and friendships are longer lasting.</p>	<p>Show empathy and consideration with children and acknowledge them when they demonstrate their understanding of how others feel. Support friendships, and model the behavior you expect from children.</p>
<p>Children this age are increasingly capable of caring for themselves. They are usually able to say goodbye to their parents with little difficulty if they have had previous group experience. They want to take more responsibility and like to use and do adult things. Children have definite preferences. While they are easily encouraged, they are easily discouraged as well and need positive reinforcement.</p>	<p>Allow children to handle responsibilities they are capable of (e.g., pour their own juice, wash their hands, hang up their coats by themselves). Watch and talk to each child individually every day to gain information about what he or she can do. Offer real objects for children to use and play with. Respect children's preferences, and support their internal motivation to do well—rewards are not needed beyond children's own sense that they are trying and making progress.</p>

4-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children are gaining greater ability to regulate their own behavior. They can wait for short periods of time and have more respect for one another's belongings. They may also be silly and boisterous.</p> <p>Sometimes they will use inappropriate language.</p>	<p>Continue to help children control their own behavior. Plan the day so waiting is not excessive. Use children's humor (e.g., riddles and nonsense words can be fun).</p> <p>Don't reward bathroom language by giving children who use it lots of attention. Explain that those words are not used in your program.</p>
<p>Children may still need an adult to help them manage their strong feelings of fear, anger, and frustration. Children are still trying to understand what is real and what is make-believe, and their imaginations may create new fears.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Source:</i> The information in this chart was primarily adapted from Day 2004, 65–78; additional sources include Bredekamp & Copple 1997; Schickedanz 1999; Miller 2001; Essa 2002; and Berk 2004.</p>	<p>Accept children's feelings and help them find a safe way to express them ("You are angry that your tower was knocked over. Let's sit here for a while until you feel calm enough to talk with the children who wrecked it"). Children's books may help them see how others have faced and resolved problems such as divorce, moving, death, disabilities, learning a new language, or accepting a new baby in the family. Talk with children about what can really happen and what is just pretend.</p>

Children at 5

What children are like	How adults can help
<i>Physical development</i>	
<p>Children can skip, walk backwards quickly, balance securely on a two-inch beam, jump down several steps, hop confidently, and usually have developed mature throwing and catching skills. They love to show off their physical prowess.</p>	<p>Children enjoy catching games, which can be adapted for varying ability levels by using bigger or smaller balls and varying throwing styles. They still need close supervision, especially when attempting daring tricks with their newfound abilities.</p>
<p>Interest in activities involving fine motor skills increases with children’s refined abilities. Children become increasingly skilled in activities such as drawing and cutting and pasting. Manipulation of writing instruments improves with increased hand-eye coordination.</p> <p>By this age it is usually obvious whether children are right- or left-handed.</p>	<p>Art activities are popular with 5-year-olds. Allow children to experiment with art forms and materials; do not make critical comments on the “right” way to represent something. Continue to offer many kinds of art materials; introduce a variety of art processes, such as collage, watercolors, and printing.</p> <p>Offer both right- and left-handed scissors.</p>
<p>Children can help with food preparation and setup, and can largely dress themselves. Many children will master shoe tying by age 6. Children enjoy being able to do such things on their own.</p>	<p>Allow children to serve themselves at the table. Continue to offer assistance as needed with dressing if children need occasional help, such as with shoe tying. Offer children some privacy with toileting, but remind them to wash their hands.</p>

5-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<i>Intellectual development</i>	
<p>Children often engage in activities with a result or end product in mind. They are gaining in ability to plan ahead.</p>	<p>Involve children in brainstorming class projects and activities. Allow them to revisit earlier work and to judge for themselves when something is finished. Ask children about the activities they are involved with. Challenge them to experiment and to solve problems, to think about what will happen next, and to review their work.</p>
<p>Children continue to enjoy hands-on exploration and learning. Their observational skills are increasing, and they are more likely to connect related information.</p>	<p>Provide a stimulating environment with many hands-on activities. Give children time and space for exploration. Foster children’s initiative and sustained engagement. Support age-appropriate risk taking, within safe boundaries.</p>
<p>Children’s understanding of shapes is still rather global. They can learn about the different parts of shapes and how they fit together, and some older 5-year-olds may be able to grasp isolated geometric attributes (e.g., “a square has four equal sides”). Children have a good understanding of basic colors.</p>	<p>Provide varied examples of shapes, colors in different contexts, and textures. Offer art experiences such as collage so children can experiment with different textures, colors, and shapes. Model how shapes can be slid, flipped, and rotated yet remain the same shape. Have children make shapes using toothpicks or straws for sides. Provide shape puzzles, such as tangrams, for children to experiment with. Encourage children to make patterns with shapes and colors.</p>

5-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children can count flexibly to solve a variety of problems, including those that involve number (counting), addition, and subtraction.</p>	<p>Continue to incorporate number into everyday activities, such as setting the table with the correct number of place settings or counting the number of spaces to move in a game. Play games that compare small groups of objects or symbols.</p>
<p>Vocabularies continue to increase; children can use between 5,000 and 8,000 words. Children use fuller, more complex sentences and take turns in conversation. Children's questions become more relevant to topics at hand. They have mastered most of the grammatical structures to which they are regularly exposed.</p>	<p>Answer children's questions when possible; encourage them to find out more through other means. Ask them questions in turn to expand their thinking.</p>
<p>Children are gaining ability to match letters to sounds. Some will begin to read during this year. Writing skill varies with experience; most children will be able to string a few actual letters together, creating a few short words such as <i>mom</i>, <i>dad</i>, or their own first names. Children often continue to use letter-like forms and scribble writing as well.</p>	<p>Take advantage of opportunities to highlight letters and sounds in the environment. Plenty of paper and marking tools throughout the classroom will encourage spontaneous exploration. Children may ask for help in creating individual letters; your writing out each line segment of a letter in a different color may help children understand how letters are formed.</p>
<p>With practice, children can tell and retell stories. They enjoy repeating stories, poems, and songs, as well as acting out plays or stories.</p>	<p>Encourage children to record and enact their stories in different ways. Children's stories can be written down by an adult, children can act out stories in the dramatic play area, and favorite stories can be illustrated.</p>

5-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children know the words to many poems and songs and enjoy singing. They love to play with words.</p>	<p>Enjoy singing silly songs and exploring funny poetry that plays with language, such as selections from Shel Silverstein and Dr. Seuss. Provide a wide range of music activities, including exposure to an array of rhythm instruments. Children will enjoy playing “orchestra.”</p>
<i>Social development</i>	
<p>Children this age like cooperative play, often enjoying the company of one or two special friends at a time. Children love dramatic play with others; they also like to act out others’ roles and show off in front of new people. They may also joke and tease to get attention. But, they may become shy at times.</p>	<p>Plan the day and the classroom environment to encourage cooperative play opportunities—i.e., provide ample time for creative and dramatic play as well as a variety of play props and cooperative activities. Plan many opportunities for flexible small-group work.</p>
<p>They can maintain friendships. They yearn for friendship and respect from their peers, made all the more precious by their newfound social powers of exclusion and snubbing.</p> <p>Pairs and small groups of children enjoy playing together for extended periods of time. They may, however, exclude peers. Children understand the power of rejecting others and may verbally threaten to end friendships or select others.</p>	<p>Developing the social skills needed to maintain relationships is not automatic; children do need coaching, supervision, and modeling of prosocial behaviors.</p> <p>Check in with children from time to time, guiding them to use positive ways of dealing with others. Model inclusive and friendly language. If particular children are continually picked on, it may be because they lack play skills—perhaps a child is bossy, or not very observant as to the play themes others are engaged in. In these cases you may be able to coach children in social skills.</p>

5-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children can cooperate well, take turns, and share, although there may be times they do not wish to. They also recognize the rights of others to a turn and may stand up for them. On occasion, children will take others' things and then lie about it. They are so eager to be good that they don't like to admit when they've done wrong.</p>	<p>Use verbal encouragement to foster and recognize prosocial behavior. When children have difficulty resolving conflicts on their own, wait until they have calmed down and, at an appropriate time, coach them on specific language and strategies to use.</p>
<p><i>Emotional development</i></p>	
<p>Children continue to explore differences and similarities between themselves and others. They are still primarily egocentric, however, understanding the world through their own point of view. Same-sex friendships become stronger (especially for boys), and children may choose gender-stereotypical activities.</p>	<p>Model acceptance of others' differences, and expose children to information about different kinds of people. Provide a variety of activities, and challenge children's thinking. Encourage the play styles of both girls and boys, and accept individual differences.</p>
<p>Children enjoy others and can behave in a warm and empathetic manner.</p>	<p>Continue to model kindness and empathy. When children exclude or snub others, work with the group to foster understanding of how it feels to be hurt. In one-to-one situations, or with a few children, invite the snubbed child to describe her feelings.</p>

5-Year-Olds, cont.

What children are like	How adults can help
<p>Children this age take responsibility seriously. Within limits they are independent, competent, and reliable and can usually assess their own capabilities with accuracy.</p>	<p>They enjoy being helpers and are proud to have special roles and tasks in the classroom. Allow children to choose activities, when possible. Having significant blocks of time for child-initiated activities will allow children to complete projects to their satisfaction and thus foster a sense of accomplishment and competence.</p>
<p>Children are capable of being quite well-behaved and polite. They are more self-contained and show more control. They generally are good judges of what they can and cannot do.</p>	<p>Your attentive listening and responsiveness will reinforce their good behavior. When children do lose control, a short period away from other children may help them regain composure, but time-out as a punishment is not an effective approach.</p>
<p>Children also have strong feelings, and fears may increase with increased imaginative skills. They still confuse fantasy with reality on occasion. Increasing awareness of the world may introduce scary realities.</p> <p><small>Source: The information in this chart was adapted from Bredekamp & Copple 1997; Schickedanz 1999; Miller 2001; Essa 2002; Berk 2004; and Day 2004.</small></p>	<p>Reassure children when they are afraid, and take their concerns seriously. Adults need to limit children's exposure to media that may be overwhelming or inappropriate. When traumatic events occur—whether in a child's family or in the world at large—children need to be reassured that it is in no way the child's fault.</p>

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