CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(THREE - FIVE YEARS OLD)

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3-5 YEARS OLD: DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW

The Play Years → Play = Learning

Foundation for learning created in first three years of life

Key developmental tasks:
- Advanced gross and fine motor development
- Executive Function of Brain
- Skill Development
- Social Friendships
- Theory of Mind
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (3-5 YRS)
3-5 YEARS OLD: DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW

Physical Development

Fine motor and gross motor development
Running games
Writing/art
Brain development - Executive function
Nutrition
HIERARCHY OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

FOREBRAIN
Cortex
Executive Center

- Logic
- Reasoning
- Abstract Thought
- Planning
- Working memory

MIDBRAIN
Limbic
Emotional Center

- Attachment
- Emotion Reactivity
- Social connection

HINDBRAIN
Cerebellum & Brainstem

- Balance
- Heart Rate
- Breathing

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MOTOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Gross Motor Skills
- Walking, running smoother
- Catching, throwing, swinging, riding

Fine Motor Skills
- Self-help: dressing, eating
- Drawing
NUTRITION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Appetite becomes unpredictable
Like familiar foods
Need high-quality diet (body and brain growth)

Social environment influences food choices
- Imitate admired people
- Repeated exposure to foods
- Emotional climate, parental pressure
- Poverty
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (3-5 YRS)
3-5 YEARS OLD: DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW

Social Development

Self concept; Self-esteem
Problem solving – begin to take on another’s perspective
Initiative (moving from trust and autonomy)

Active Play
Friendships

Moral development

Gender Development
3-5 YEARS OLD: DEVELOPMENTAL OVERVIEW

Emotional Development

Understanding of others’ emotions increasingly accurate

Emotional self-regulation improves

More self-conscious emotions (shame, guilt) as self-concept develops

Empathy, sympathy, and prosocial behavior increase
ERIKSON’S THEORY: INITIATIVE VERSUS GUILT

**Initiative**
- Eagerness to try new tasks, join activities with peers
- Play permits trying out new skills
- Act out highly visible occupations

**Guilt**
- Overly strict superego, or conscience, causing too much guilt
- Related to excessive threats, criticism, punishment from adults

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SELF-ESTEEM

Judgments we make about our own worth

Includes judgments/ feedback from social world
# PLAY CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Play</strong></td>
<td>Simple, repetitive motor movements, with or without objects</td>
<td>0-2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Constructive Play</strong></td>
<td>Creating or constructing something</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Make-believe Play</strong></td>
<td>Acting out everyday and imaginative roles</td>
<td>2-6 years</td>
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</tbody>
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### Theories of Gender Identity in Early Childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning Theory</td>
<td>Gender typing behavior leads to gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive-Developmental Theory</td>
<td>Self-perceptions (gender constancy) come before behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Schema Theory</td>
<td>Combines social learning and cognitive developmental theories</td>
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SOCIAL EXPERIENCE AND EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Caregivers:
- Label and explain emotions
- Scaffold emotional thought

Siblings and Friends:
- Negotiate
- Act out emotions in play
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD (3-5 YRS)
THE PLAY YEARS: 3-5 YEARS OLD

Cognitive Development

Symbolic thinking
Categorical thinking
Hypothesis testing - planning executive function of brain
Social learning
Theory of Mind
Language learning & Literacy Development
Vocabulary Explosion

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PIAGET’S PREOPERATIONAL STAGE

Ages 2 to 7

Gains in Mental Representation
- Make-believe Play
- Dual Representation

Limitations in Thought — Cannot Perform Mental Operations
- Egocentrism and Animistic Thinking
- Conservation
- Hierarchical Classification
LIMITS ON CONSERVATION

Centration
Focus on one aspect and neglect others

Irreversibility
Cannot mentally reverse a set of steps
CHILDREN’S PRIVATE SPEECH

Piaget called “egocentric speech”

Vygotsky believed foundation for all higher cognitive processes

Helps guide behavior
- Used more when tasks are difficult, after errors, or when confused

Gradually becomes more silent
- Children with learning and behavior problems use longer
DEVELOPMENT OF THEORY OF MIND

Understanding of social world expands

A person’s theory of what other people might be thinking.

Others have thoughts and emotions unconnected to you

Drop in egocentrism
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language Explosion
500 words age 2; 10,000 age 6 (Herschensohn, 2007)

Questions Asked:
2 years – What’s that?
3 years – Why?
4 years – How? When?
5 years – questions about social differences / comparisons
HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Children learn best when learning is:

- student centered
- active and hands-on
- collaborative with other students (social)
- connected to real-life situations and prior knowledge
- tied to meaningful tasks and uses authentic materials
- focused on understanding and thinking rather than on memorization, drill and practice
- practiced in repeated opportunities

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SUPPORTING SCHOOL READINESS

- Optimal development supports school readiness skills
- When children’s developmental needs are met early in life critical thinking emerges naturally
- Responsive supportive relationships allow children to develop self-interest in learning
- Ability to achieve and ask questions
- Developmentally healthy children have:
  - self-regulation, empathy, cognitive focus and self-discipline.

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REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

California Preschool Learning Foundations
http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp

Preschool Developmental Milestones
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/preschoolers.html