

Child Development 8

B

FOUR TO SIX YEARS



4-6
years

Online Version Watch Video



Department of Health

By age four, your child has probably started preschool for some time. He may appear full of energy and drive. Sometimes he may be acting in a way that is bossy, aggressive and out-of-bounds. Though he seems chasing off in all directions, he is actually learning from all these experiences. Given time, he will grow into a more confident and co-operative child by the age of five or so.

When approaching his sixth birthday, your child will be able to:

Movement

- Manage stairs and playground activities skillfully
- Kick a moving ball
- Stand on either leg and maintain balance for five seconds or longer
- Hop forward on one foot for 2-3 metres
- Move in rhythm to music



Hand and finger skills



- Build more elaborate models with building blocks
- Colour picture neatly, staying within the lines
- Draw simple pictures, recognisable person with more features (commonly with head, eyes, nose, mouth, trunk, limbs with hands and feet)

- Write numerals and alphabets with good control
- Do simple art work involving cutting with scissors, applying glue, and sticking objects into position



Language development

- Speak clearly and fluently with adult sentence structure and grammar
- Respond appropriately and talk in turn while maintaining the topic of conversation
- Give full name, age, and home address when asked
- Re-tell a few events from a story just heard
- Give a logical account of what has happened recently
- Enjoy jokes and riddles



Cognitive Development

During this time, your child will **ask a lot of questions** and begin to **use reasoning** to figure out how things work and why things happen. However, his reasoning ability is still limited and his judgment is essentially from his own viewpoint.

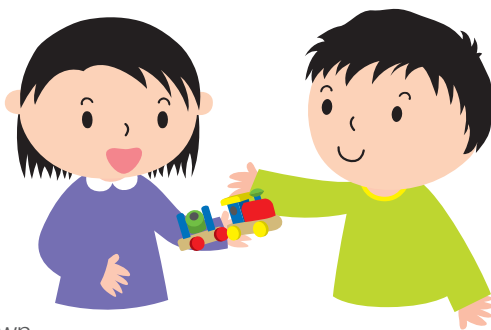
Another obvious feature during this period is his wide range of **imaginative ideas** generated during play with peers and adults.

- Focus with increasing attention and complete tasks
- Ask meaning of new words heard
- Do simple one-digit addition and subtraction within 10
- Name 10 or more colours
- Understand basic concept of time e.g. morning and afternoon, today and tomorrow, weekdays and holidays, etc.
- Begin to reason but usually unable to consider several possible factors at the same time



Social and emotional development

- Control his feelings generally and behave according to social rules, e.g. communicate needs verbally, share toys, ask for permission, return something borrowed, etc
- Begin to think and ask about other people's thoughts and feelings, and may try to hide his own
- Engage in group games that require taking turns and following rules and to play cooperatively with companions most of the time



- Enjoy pretend play with his friends like pretending to be another person, e.g. parents, policemen, superheroes
- Tell the names of most of his classmates, and choose companions that he likes
- Want to be like his friends
- Be aware of role characteristics and physical differences between males and females.
- Distinguish fantasy from reality



Self-care skills

- Can use knife and fork
- Wash face and brush teeth independently

Stimulating your child's development

Optimal social and emotional development is important for your child's success in life, whether at home, in school, on the playground, or later, in the community. To this end, she will need to try out what she can do for herself and test her ideas to **enhance her self confidence** and **problem solving abilities**. Try to understand and support her needs and wants in her strivings for independence. Provide her with different settings to learn from. Show her love and give her encouragement. Maintain your sense of humour even when you feel that she is challenging your authority and violating rules you have taught her well before. Keep **firm limits** and **clear guidelines**.

What you can do



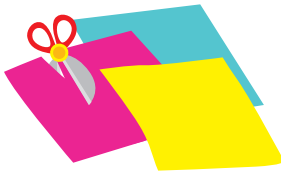
- ✓ Continue to spend special time with your child everyday. Listen to her to share events that excite or worry her
- ✓ Continue to read with your child everyday, and talk about the story
- ✓ Make use of everyday opportunities or reading time to talk about following rules, consequences, problem solving by using peaceful means and caring for others
- ✓ Help her use words to describe her feelings, needs and thoughts
- ✓ Provide opportunities and guidance on making choices
- ✓ Encourage her to be independent in self care activities
- ✓ Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children and adults.
- ✓ Encourage her to participate in make-believe play with other children and join in if you feel like it
- ✓ Limit your child's screen time with various electronic media to no more than 1 hour daily. Choose appropriate programmes for him to watch and play with and guide him along
- ✓ Encourage your child to have various types of physical activities and sports for at least 3 hours daily, this should include at least 1 hour of moderate to vigorous intensity such as playing slides and swings, running and playing football to help her build up her physical strength and to provide an outlet for her energy and frustrations when necessary



- ✓ Bring your child to a variety of settings for her to explore and learn, e.g. park, playground, zoo, library, museum

Toys that you can choose

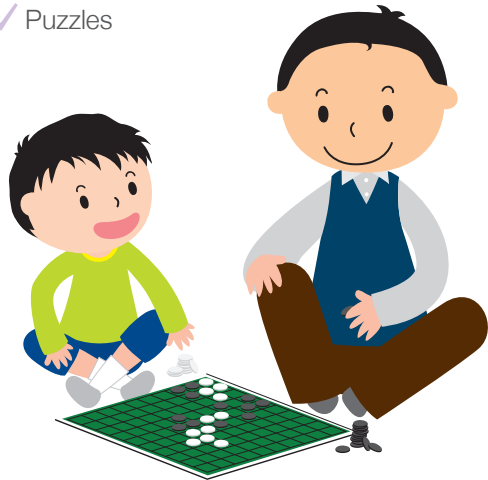
- ✓ Make-believe toys like tea set, doll-house, car and garage, animals, robots, puppets, etc.
- ✓ Creative toys like building blocks, play-doh etc.



- ✓ Art and craft materials
- ✓ Balls
- ✓ Puzzles
















- ✓ Board games for reinforcing turn taking and rules following
- ✓ Educational and interactive computer software
- ✓ Story VCDs, videos and books with colourful pictures



The above information only gives you a general idea of the changes expected as your child grows. Each child is unique and wide variations in the pace of development are often normal. Don't be over alarmed if your child takes a slightly different timing or fails to attain certain ability at some stage. It may only signal a need for more attention.

Discuss with doctors or nurses if, your five-years-old child

-  Shows excessively aggressive behaviour
-  Is excessively timid, fearful, or emotionally labile
-  Is easily distracted and inattentive when compared to others in class
-  Shows little interest in other children and not joining in games
-  Cannot follow instructions at home or in school
-  Cannot relate simple events
-  Cannot speak in adult-like sentences
-  Has unclear speech such as misarticulation, stuttering
-  Shows definite problem in learning concepts
-  Appears clumsy in physical activities
-  Appears clumsy in pencil skill or in using simple tools
-  Does not see or hear well
-  Has any other learning or behaviour problem at school

If you have any concerns or queries, discuss with nurses and doctors in any MCHC or your family doctor/paediatrician.



Family Health Service
Website: www.fhs.gov.hk
24-hour Information Hotline: 2112 9900