

# Growing & Learning at...36 Months/3 Years



## What Most Children do at 36 Months:

### Social-Emotional Milestones

- Calms down within 10 minutes after you leave her, like at a childcare drop off
- Notices other children and joins them at play

### Language & Communication Milestones

- Talks with you in conversations with at least two back-and-forth exchanges
- Asks “who,” “what,” “where,” or “why” questions, like “Where is mommy/daddy?”
- When asked, describes the action in a picture or book, with words like “running,” “eating.”
- Says first name, when asked
- Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time

### Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Draws a circle, when you show him how
- Avoids touching hot objects, like a stove, when you warn her

### Movement & Physical Development Milestones

- Strings items together, like large beads or macaroni
- Puts on some clothes by himself, like loose pants or a jacket
- Uses a fork

### Source

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; American Academy of Pediatrics.

More information can be found in the Ages & Stages section at [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

## Helping 3-year-olds Learn & Grow:

- ▶ Encourage children to try solving their own problems, with your support. Ask questions to help her understand the problem and think of solutions.
- ▶ Introduce words to describe emotions. Help him manage stressful feelings by teaching him to take deep breaths, hug a favorite toy, or go to a quiet place.
- ▶ Play number games by counting body parts, stairs, and other things you use or see every day.
- ▶ 3-year-olds begin to speak in sentences. To support sentence skills, repeat what he says using real words. If he says “need nana”, you can say “need nana” and then follow that with the sentence, “I want a banana.”
- ▶ Teach them simple songs and rhymes, such as “Itsy Bitsy Spider” or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”
- ▶ Encourage cooperative play to help them learn about friendship.
- ▶ Give her playdough to squish, press, and roll into balls. This is a fun way to help build hand and finger muscles for writing, buttoning, and cutting.
- ▶ Try giving instructions with 2 or 3 steps, like “Go to the closet and get your shoes and coat.”
- ▶ Play games to demonstrate opposites. Get down low and say, “I am small,” and then stand up and say, “I am big.” Do the same thing for fast/slow, and quiet/loud.

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## Topics to Discuss at 36-month-old Well-Child Doctor Visits:

- ▶ What are some things you and your child do together?
- ▶ What are some things your child likes to do?
- ▶ Which milestones has your child reached?
- ▶ Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- ▶ Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- ▶ Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?
- ▶ Does your pediatrician's office offer regular developmental screenings?



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