

## Leaflet for parents

### Child development: emotional and physical

This section is based on the work of the psychologist, Vera Fahlberg.

Before looking more closely at the developmental stages, it is important to bear in mind these three points:

1. Children develop at different rates to each other but go through different stages, usually in the same order.
2. Each child develops in his or her own unique way depending on personality, how he or she is managed and family background.
3. Children develop in their minds, their bodies and their feelings. A delay in one area can result in a delay in another.

Parents who understand the different stages of development that children go through are:

- less likely to be upset by behaviour that is normal for each stage of a child's development
- more likely to support the child in his or her struggle with the challenges of each stage
- better able to understand what a child needs in order to grow
- better able to create an atmosphere that will help the child grow and be confident
- more likely to be able to meet the child's needs so that unwanted, but normal, behaviours will not carry on into later stages of development.

Parents who understand the different stages of development see their children's behaviour as progress from one stage to the next, rather than seeing it as 'naughty' or 'wrong' behaviour.

Families provide safety, security, stimulation, encouragement, reasonable expectations and limits. Children need both emotional support and boundaries as they meet the challenge of each stage of their development and have to cope with the inevitable frustration of each one. Children who do not receive support become confused, bewildered, insecure and lacking in confidence.

Normal fears and worries go with each stage of development. The parents' job is to help children cope with, and overcome, these fears. Making children feel bad because of their fears makes them worse. It cannot possibly help them learn to feel brave and capable.

It is the quality of the relationship between parents and their babies that helps the babies develop mentally, physically and emotionally and go on to develop equally securely through transitions in their life, making them into confident, well-adjusted adults.

## 0–12 months general development

During the first year of life the main developmental task is to build feelings of safety, security and trust in other human beings. When parents meet the child's dependency needs, they are helping this process.

During the child's first year when a parent wonders 'What should I do when...', he or she could be encouraged to wonder instead 'What will help my child learn to trust me?'

It is the quality of the relationship between the parent and the baby that helps the baby develop mentally, physically and emotionally.

Babies who experience regular feeding, changing, playing and talking to, learn that adults are available and that they are worthy of the adults' attention and care.

When babies are born they cannot tell the difference between different types of discomfort and upset. They experience and react in a similar way when afraid, hungry, or in pain. Gradually they start to distinguish between these different states. This is the basis for learning cause and effect. When a parent can regularly tell when a baby is hungry and feeds him, the parent is teaching the baby to recognise that the cause of his discomfort and upset is an empty stomach.

During the first year of life, babies' bodies develop very rapidly. They develop so fast that parents see changes nearly every day.

At no other time in life will there be such rapid growth and change. The baby's nervous system becomes organised during the first year of life. The rate and level of this organisation seems to be at least partly related to the quality of the relationship that the baby has with his carer.

### The first three months

In general, babies gain control downwards through the middle of their bodies then from the middle outwards to their arms and hands, legs and feet. By the age of six weeks, babies are able to focus on objects at an average distance of 15-25 cms (6-10 inches). This is the average distance between the baby and parent's eye contact when the infant is being held, bottle fed in this position or attached to the breast. From birth babies are genetically programmed to search out a human face. Babies have been shown to prefer curves to straight lines, strong light/dark contrasts, acute angles and are

fascinated by symmetry on the vertical plane. Interestingly these are all key features of the human face. From birth, babies are interested in looking at the face of their carer. Eye contact has been recognised as being important for babies and parents when they are getting to know each other and has an important role in bonding.

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## Further reading:

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If you want to learn more about babies' development, there are many good books, but you might try:

Boswell, S (2004) Understanding your baby. London: Jessica Kingsley

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Within the first month, most babies learn to follow objects to the midline, and within two months, many can follow beyond the midline. Again this assists the baby to locate the eye contact of the parent or carer. The muscles of the lower part of the face are the next to come under their control. Babies usually respond by smiling before they are three months old. Many babies are able to smile around six weeks or before. Smiling occurs predominantly in response to the faces of those caring for them, although a smile can also occur as a result of other pleasant stimuli associated with a parent or carer, such as hearing a familiar voice or being touched in a soothing way. Next comes control over the neck muscles, allowing the baby to lift his head and neck when lying on his stomach and gain control over the head when held upright. Large muscle control of the arms comes after this.

## Three to nine months

Between three and four months, most babies can put their hands together and use their arms for support to raise their chests up when lying on their stomachs. Near this age babies learn to roll over, first from stomach to back and later from back to stomach. Between three and four months, children develop enough control over their hand muscles to be able to grasp a rattle for a short while.

By five months, most babies will reach for an object, and by six months most will move objects from one hand to the other, often putting the object in their mouth. Near this age they learn to pick up small objects by using a raking movement.

Most children can use a thumb and finger grasp by the age of nine months and this action replaces the more immature grasping action. By nine months babies can sit unsupported and begin to crawl. By this time babies are gaining control over the muscles in their legs. They can pull themselves up and stand if there is something to hold onto. Within the next month and a half, most babies will learn to walk holding onto furniture and stand for a few seconds

by themselves. Babies learn to bend at about the same time as they learn to walk alone, usually at about one year of age. During this period babies begin to play an increasingly active part in their relationships.

## Nine to twelve months

Between the age of nine to twelve months babies are able to let go of objects and may be able to feed themselves finger foods. Also by one year of age, most babies have learned to pick up small objects with a neat pincer-type grasp. This stage can be frustrating for parents, for children see and pick up every tiny thing on the floor and put everything they have picked up in their mouth.

## Speech and language development in the first year

Babies begin to develop language during the first year. Even in the womb, babies can hear. New babies become upset when they hear sharp noises and they prefer soft sounds. By three or four weeks, babies will turn toward noises and respond, especially to the voice of their carer.

By the age of four months, babies make various sounds: babbling, cooing, gurgling and laughing. The more babies are talked to or played with, the more sounds they make.

Between six and nine months, babies copy parents' speech sounds. By this time they are able to control the muscles in their lips, tongue and mouth and an increase in the sounds they can make occurs at this age. By the age of 12 months babies often respond to their own name, babble and form words such as 'mamma' and 'dadda'.

## Development of the baby's emotions in the first year

During the first year of life, babies' feelings are varied. During the first month of life, babies are getting used to life outside the womb and are often quite disorganised. The first challenge for the baby and his carer is for the baby to feel calm, safe and have a routine so that he can use all of his senses to begin to understand his world.

Between four and six weeks, a baby becomes more stable and tends to settle into a more regular pattern, although periods of restlessness and fussiness happen at about two months and five months. Between six and nine months, babies can tell the difference between family members and strangers. They begin to show fear or anxiety when approached by a stranger and this increases as they get nearer to one year of age.

During the first year of life, babies gradually become more aware, take a more active part in their relationship with others and become less dependent. As they begin to imitate and expect responses to sounds, their memory begins to develop. Their awareness of cause and effect gradually develops. By

eight to nine months, fear and sadness have joined expressions of pleasure, distress, joy and anger that were evident even earlier.

During the first year, babies usually startle in response to loud or unexpected noises which may be frightening to the baby, and also to sudden movements, threats of falling, or being dropped.

## The parents' role in the first year

The main job for the parents during the baby's first year of life is to meet the child's basic needs on demand, and to provide stimulation that will encourage the child to use all of his senses and to begin to move. Parents need to be available consistently and respond in a way that helps the baby to learn to trust them. When children feel safe they are better able to attend to their world and begin to learn the meaning of different sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches.

By providing care in a regular, calm manner, the parent helps the child organise his nervous system. The foundation for cause and effect is laid down. Providing stimulation through sight, touch and hearing stimulates a baby's development.

## One to three years

The main tasks to be accomplished between one and three years are for toddlers to:

- separate emotionally from the main carer
- begin to develop a sense of themselves.

When parents are faced with a 'What should I do when...' question about toddlers, the answer is 'do what will make my child feel more capable'.

Although language starts before the toddler years and certainly continues long after, it is during this stage that it first becomes linked with the child getting his needs met.

Finally, the social or connecting feelings begin to develop during the toddler years, setting the stage for relationships and developing a conscience.

At about the age of 12 months, when babies stand and walk, their view of the world changes because they see it differently and because their muscles are able to do different things. They begin to be able to pick up very small objects. As they begin to use their two new skills they begin to 'get into everything'.

During the early part of the second year, the child begins to figure out ways to get what they want. For example, they may climb up on a chair to reach



something. They find new uses for familiar objects. The toy that they had passed from hand to hand before or banged against another is now stacked one against another. They see something inside a container and now will dump it out. They start to learn to follow simple instructions.

By the age of one, most children are using 'mamma' and 'dadda' and have two or three other words they use. They jabber a lot. They respond to their own names, to 'no, no' and to 'give it to me'. By 18 months, most children can say about 10 words. They can say 'NO' and may use the words 'me' and 'mine'. They are using words to replace or accompany pointing. Children at 12 months are often very outgoing and will smile and talk with everyone, so long as their carer is close by.

## One-year-olds

Between 12 and 18 months, babies become anxious about being separated from their carer. Normal toddlers are frequently underfoot. Since the developmental task for toddlers is to separate emotionally from their carer and develop their own identity when the carer is not there, toddlers feel out of control of the situation and become more anxious and nervous.

## Developing identity

As toddlers lose sight of their carer and then find her again, they are learning about themselves as separate from their mothers. They use their carer as a safe haven from which to explore the world. It isn't until sometime between 18 and 24 months that the toddler learns to carry an image of his loved ones within his mind's eye. From that time on, parents no longer have to be in the room for the child to know that they exist.

The key words of an 18-month-old are 'me', 'mine' and 'no'. These words support their developing identity. Children begin to distinguish between 'you' and 'me'. They begin to separate their own identity from their carer's, learning that they are two separate people. Games such as 'point to your nose' and 'point to my nose' help them make this distinction.

The 18- to 24-month-old is going through a normal, stubborn, self-centred stage that is necessary for the development of his identity. His defiance and resistance during this period is not so much aggressive as self-protective. The toddler is trying to establish himself in the world. Although the child's behaviour may be frustrating for adults, if he doesn't gain this sense of himself as worthwhile and capable, there will be serious long-term effects. Those children who do not go through this normal stage of defiance are more likely to be dependent later on in life.

A child's identity is made up of several parts. From babyhood on, adults talk to and handle boys and girls differently. The child's position in the family is another factor. Birth order (combined with the sex of the child in some

families) has a particularly powerful impact on identity formation. Expectations for the oldest daughter may be very different from those for the oldest son.

Other things can make a difference as well. A child may have been identified as 'my active child' even before birth. Timing of a child's birth in relation to other family events may be important. For example, a male child born soon after the death of a grandfather, and named after him, may have different expectations placed on him than he would have had if born at a different time.

A child's name is an important part of identity. As a toddler, the child learns that a 'no' or praise is directed to him when accompanied by his name.

As toddlers reach their second birthday, their ability to recognise and understand things and copy behaviour has become more developed. By now they have learned that things have a purpose. They love to copy parents and to 'help' with household tasks. They remember past events and imitate them later.

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Further reading:

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To learn more about one-year-olds, you might like to read:

Gustavus Jones, S. (2004) Understanding your 1-year-old. London: Jessica Kingsley

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## Two-year-olds

During the second year the toddler begins to show feelings of pride, pity, sympathy, modesty and shame. These feelings connect the child to himself and to others. Sympathy and understanding are frequently seen when a toddler tries to comfort an upset parent. The pure joy that lights up the face of the toddler who has just learned to 'do it myself' is an indication of pride. Usually two-year-olds are aware of praise and smile when they hear it. They show signs of being embarrassed. This seems to be a forerunner for the feelings later of shame and guilt.

During the second half of the second year, as the child learns to recognise himself in a mirror and in pictures, he also develops an understanding of when something is different about him.

Toddlers begin to take in the attitudes of others during this period. As they approach an object they are not to touch, the parent says 'no' in a firm voice. Later, as the child approaches this object he himself is likely to say 'No, no.' Not yet quite able to stop himself from touching, he continues to need a parent telling him again 'that's right' or, that is a 'no-no'. This is the beginning step in recognising right from wrong and is a necessary stage before developing a conscience.

## Dependence and independence

Two-year-olds still do not fully accept their main carers as separate from themselves. They swing from being dependent to being self-contained. The fear of strangers that occurred at 18 months grows less. However, between 18 months and three years, children learn to form pictures of objects in their minds so that they can hold them in memory even though they are not within sight. This will help the child cope with separation from his main carer. He can create the carer in his mind's eye so that he need not feel abandoned when that person disappears from view.

Children of this age will play alone or play alongside other children. However, they are still self-centred and not yet ready to share. Between 24 and 36 months, they go through a period where extremes are normal. They are either very dependent or very independent. Moods change from hour to hour. They are extremely aggressive or extremely passive, very helpful or very stubborn.

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### Further reading:

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To learn more about two-year-olds, you might like to read:

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Miller, L. (2004) *Understanding your 2-year-old*. London: Jessica Kingsley

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## Gaining control: toilet-training

Toilet-training becomes possible, and for most children daytime training is achievable. First of all the carer learns to identify the signals that a child wants to 'poo' and may place the toddler on the toilet even though the child has not himself yet become aware of the discomfort of needing a 'poo'.

Commonly toddlers first become aware of wet or full pants right after the fact, rather than before, or they 'go' right after they get off the potty rather than while they are on it. Although this is frustrating to parents, it indicates that the child is beginning to relate the potty to pooing. However, the child has not mastered the proper order yet. For most, these are necessary steps in toilet training; for until children become aware of the discomfort after it happens, they cannot become aware of the full feeling before 'peeing' or 'pooing'. Children with a low sensitivity to skin sensations may be delayed in terms of toilet-training.

Since children at this age tend to be stubborn and messy, parents often think that difficulties in toilet-training is their stubbornness. With most children this is not true to start with. However, if parents make a control issue out of toilet-training or use harsh discipline, then the stubbornness of this age may extend to toilet-training as well. This is not likely to happen if parents are relaxed but helpful about teaching toileting skills. Parents may find that toilet-training their child re-activates their own worries about being messy or out of control.



## **Gaining control: walking**

Toddlers have difficulty moving towards a moving object. Until about age three they have problems following the parent who is walking. Usually until age three, parents must transport their toddlers in a pram or pushchair or in their arms. When parent and toddler are out for a walk, it is common to see the adult walk a short distance, remain still until her child catches up with her, and then repeat this pattern.

## **Developing language and dealing with anger**

From the age of two to three and a half years, children develop a higher level of understanding of themselves and others. Organised pretending begins. The stage is set for the child to learn to think ahead. The toddler's vocabulary grows by leaps and bounds.

Between the ages of two and three, children begin to add 's' to words to make plurals. They begin to talk in sentences and their vocabulary increases to over one thousand words. They use words to resist and to ask questions.

By the age of two, most children can join words into short sentences. They use naming words most of all. Most two-year-olds can say around three hundred words and can name some animals, objects and parts of the body. They will usually try to copy single words that are said to them. The word 'mine' is learnt before 'me', then 'you', and finally 'I'.

As toddlers get more independent they get angry, especially when they are stopped from moving somewhere. When 18-month-olds are angry they are likely to have a tantrum, cry desperately and throw themselves on the floor. They may also hit, kick and struggle if an adult tries to control them. They may be rough with animals and younger children. They may pull hair and hug too tightly. By 21 months of age, they become frustrated at not being able to explain what they want or need. When they do start to talk, using language can lead to more experiences of not being understood.

Two-year-olds are not usually as aggressive as 18-month-olds. However, they may hit, poke or bite other children. Owning toys is important to them and they may get in a tug-of-war over toys. They may be messy, but don't usually break things deliberately.

By two-and-a-half years of age (30 months) toddlers are more aggressive with other children and adults and may break things. They may attack other children intending to hurt them, often when fighting over toys. They may even walk up to a stranger and hit her. They may also have kicking, hitting and head banging tantrums.

## **Children's fears and worries: one to three years**

During this period children can pick up fears from their carers, e.g. fears of stairs. During the first half of the second year, children become afraid of

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being apart from their carers and may cry a great deal when they see a carer leave. The sounds of machines such as vacuum cleaners, and some mechanical toys can frighten them at this age.

Two-year-olds are afraid of noises such as trains, thunder, animal sounds, or the flushing of toilets. Seeing poo go down the toilet (something that the child can see is important to the carer) may lead to fear that they will go down the drain as well. Separation from their carer, particularly at bedtime, is still frightening.

During the second half of the third year, some children get scared of moving things. They may be frightened of being moved quickly themselves and may not like it if objects around them are moved from their usual places. They notice an object being taken to a familiar place by a different route. They are especially frightened of big objects coming towards them.

## Parents' roles

The parents of one- to three-year-olds need to encourage them without putting pressure on them to develop new skills. Parents need to help them feel 'big' and capable. Things like a small chair placed at the sink so the child can get a drink or wash his hands increases self-confidence.

It is the parents' responsibility to make sure the child is safe and well and that accidents can be prevented. The child is now moving freely, so that cleaning materials and medicines need to be put out of the child's reach. It is dangerous to leave the child unattended even for a moment in a bath or paddling pool. Even toilet water may be dangerous, so keeping the toilet lid down or bathroom door closed is wise. It is at this stage that children learn to open doors and cupboards, and so keeping some areas blocked off may be advisable.

Toddlers' short attention span and the ease with which they can be distracted helps parents at this stage. Giving a child a safe toy in exchange for a forbidden one usually works well. Reasoning does not work with a child in the first year. However, during the second year there may be more success in making eye contact and saying 'no' in a firm voice. The child may smile back and again try to reach for the forbidden object, but if the parent moves the child's hand away and again says 'no' they can distract the child into a different activity. Although some parents use a quick tap on the hand or a single tap on the bottom to tell the child they are doing wrong, this is not a good idea with a child at this age, or indeed, at any age.

Harsh parenting and smacking gets in the way of a child's emotional and all-round development.

Children of this age like routine and any change in routine upsets them. Most parents who have had to stop their child from having their usual rest at a

particular time of day know that they may pay the price for it for the rest of the day.

Start and stop games help the baby's sense of self to develop. Toddlers like being in charge of games such as being lifted up high; they will squeal and say 'stop', but as soon as you lower them they will say 'do it again'. There are, of course, other times when they do mean 'stop'.

## Three-year-olds

During the years from age three to five-and-a-half or six, when there is again a big change in the way the child sees the world, the focus is on the child becoming confident and efficient. They have learnt to help dress and undress themselves and although they have the occasional accident, they tend not to need nappies in the daytime.

### Play

Play is the important work of the child at this age. Play helps children develop their sense of identity as separate from their carer, and their independence. Children of this age are very self-centred and 'magical' in their thinking. Magical thinking leads to them believing that wishes make things come true.

Their self-centred thinking leads them to think that they are responsible for everything that happens to them and to others who are important in their lives. Play is used to work out conflicts in their minds. Children often create imaginary friends who can be blamed for anything the child does wrong. Sometimes the imaginary friend becomes the scared dependent part of the child. A child may say 'I'm not afraid of the dark, but Jo-Jo is...'

They enjoy walking, climbing and running, as well as drawing, threading, playing with dough, and simple jigsaws. Three-year-olds begin to take turns, as a start to true sharing.

### Language and emotions

Usually three-year-olds are less rebellious than they were at two years. They have more self-control and are less aggressive than before. When they want their own way they usually use words rather than biting, scratching or kicking. Children of this age will threaten, using words, and can express their anger. Having more words at their disposal they can say what they want and so they don't get so frustrated. They now get less angry when stopped from physical activity and more when their belongings or plans are interfered with. Three-year-olds are capable of being very anxious and jealous for long periods of time.

Three-year-olds are generally balanced. They are able to make sense of most of what they understand. They are usually happy and contented. They enjoy playing by themselves. They seem to have reached some level of self-control. Usually they are friendly and helpful.

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Three-year-olds are ready to follow instructions. It is possible to bargain with a three-year-old; 'You do this and I'll do that for you'. They realise that they are separate persons from others. While bargaining works, reasoning with them does not work. Reasoning requires more brainpower than a three-year-old has. Distracting a three-year-old is a good form of discipline.

Three-year-olds often ask questions to which they know the answers. This behaviour is, in part, an effort to find out whether answers change or stay the same.

## Fears

Since the child's imagination begins to develop between the ages of three-and-a-half and four, they may well have frightening thoughts and dreams. The greatest normal fear of a three-year-old is that carer(s) will abandon them; that parents will not be available for them when needed. For this reason, the fear of being left alone at night may continue to cause upsets about being separated from parents at bedtimes, although they are happy to be separated in the daytime.

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Further reading:

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To learn more about three-year-olds, you might like to read:

Emanuel, L. (2004) Understanding your 3-year-old. London: Jessica Kingsley

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## Four-year-olds

As children turn four, some stubbornness that was seen at two years of age comes back again. However, it is usually less strong and has a more playful quality to it. Four-year-olds still enjoy silly talk, silly names, silly rhyming and silly showing off. They love acting and imaginative play.

Although they can dress and undress themselves with little help, they often like help and assistance to get looked after. They begin to have a sense of past and a sense of future. When told 'in a little while' or 'in half an hour' they want to know how long that will be.

## Playing

Three-, four- and five-year-olds use their powers of reasoning and imagination as they play. Two things are frequent in their play: big and little, and good and bad. Through play they continue to work on the balance between being dependent and independent. On the one hand, children of this age love to play at being baby. When taking on this helpless, baby role they may want to rock, suck from a bottle or get into a cot. They are likely to want to play under tables to make a cosy corner or tent for this type of play.

The dependent role may be the sick person while playing doctor, or the pupil while playing school.

In contrast to this, the child sometimes wants to be big, strong, and in charge. When the child of this age takes this role s/he will want to play at being the mother or father, the doctor, nurse or teacher. In acting out these roles, they are likely to be very bossy.

The play of children of this age is also aimed at making sense of the 'good' and 'bad' parts of themselves, understanding by now from their carers that some things they do are seen as 'good' and others as 'bad'. Because this play usually has an aggressive aspect to it, adults sometimes discourage it. However, it is necessary for healthy emotional development.

## Using language

Four-year-olds are talkative and give long explanations to answer questions. When they are naughty they may blame others or say it wasn't them. They behave badly on purpose in order to get a reaction. They are able to focus on things that are similar and different. At four years of age, children use questions to make sense of their experiences. They also begin to put things into groups.

Their questions often start with 'why?' and 'how?'. They can say numbers by heart. They can learn their colours. They learn to use words such as, 'in', 'under', 'on'. When they start to use words ending in -ly, happily, calmly, etc., they begin to master a whole range of grammar.

Four-year-olds are likely to become aggressive again, sometimes biting and kicking and throwing things, as well as being aggressive with words, name-calling, showing off. Four-year-olds are sometimes rough and careless with toys and may stop other children from playing with them.

## Sexual identity

Between the ages of four and six years, children begin to compete with the parent of the same sex for the attention of the parent of the opposite sex. According to Freud, as expounded in his theory of the Oedipus complex, this is an important part of the development of later sexual identity.

## Fears

The most common fear amongst four-year-olds is fear of the dark. They may want a night light or ask their carers to go with them into the dark room. If the carer agrees to do this, it will help the child learn to trust his own ideas about overcoming fears. With a grown-up close by, the child may want to look under the bed or in a cupboard to make sure that there is no one hiding. However, if the grown up joins in the search for hidden persons it gives the message that they may be frightened as well.



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Children of this age use words 'afraid' and 'scared' and may even enjoy being a bit frightened by an adult in play, if, on the whole, the adult has been trustworthy. However, as with the 'start-stop' games of toddler years, four-year-olds need to have a measure of control over their activity and play. Threats of the 'bogeyman' or 'monster' going to get them are not helpful to a four-year-old.

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## Further reading:

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To learn more about four to five year olds, you might like to read:

Maroni, L. (2004) Understanding your 4 to 5-year-old. London: Jessica Kingsley

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## Five-year-olds

Children aged five become more balanced again. Their thinking and capabilities seem to come together. They are quite independent and often more serious and realistic than they were earlier or will become later. The 'here' and 'now' is important to them. When they paint or draw they have an idea and then paint or draw it.

This is different to a four-year-old, who draws first and makes sense of it afterwards. Drawing and drama play both become more realistic.

Five-year-olds enjoy brief separations from their homes and parents. Most are friendly and talkative with strangers. They are beginning to be polite and develop tact. They become more aware of the differences between the two sexes and of how people are different from each other. They compare themselves with others. They begin to feel shame and a sense of status.

## Language and emotions

Five-year-olds sound more grown up and their speech patterns are more or less complete. The most common pronunciation mistakes at this stage are a 'f' or a 'd' instead of 'the'; and softening 'r' until it sounds like 'w' instead of 'l'.

Five-year-olds have an ear for detail. They may ask the meaning of words, rather than asking what a whole sentence means. They ask fewer questions and the ones they do ask are more linked to what is going on than before. They ask for information rather than having conversations. They have difficulty listening to other people for a long time and would rather talk themselves.

Because at five years they are more stable, they are also less frustrated and less aggressive. When angry, they may stomp their feet or slam doors. 'I hate you' or 'I wish you were dead' are common statements of both four- and five-year-olds.

Bargaining continues to work as a way of controlling five-year-olds; calm-down or time-out chairs help them to get some self-control back. Distraction does not work as well as it did at an earlier age.

## Fears

Five-year-olds are mainly frightened of things they can see, such as strange costumes, the dark, animals. On the whole, the age of five years is not a particularly fearful age until the child reaches five-and-a-half years to six years, when they become less balanced. Most fears of early fives are concrete, down-to-earth fears, such as fear of being hurt, fear of falling, or fear of being bitten by a dog. Thunder or sirens at night might make them frightened. The fear that parents will not be available when needed is still present and shows itself most in terms of fears that something will happen to the parent while the child is at school.