

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS OVERVIEW



0 MONTHS—5 YEARS

0 MONTHS—18 MONTHS

- Infants require affection, and responsive care.
- Babies cry when they are in need. This need could be due to hunger, being uncomfortable, wanting to be held, etc. As a caregiver, when you respond to the child's cry, they learn that they have a voice and that they can trust you.
- Toys should have small limbs or parts so that a baby can easily grasp the toy and pull it into their field of vision (8-12 in.).
- A variety of colors, sounds, and textures among toys or books will likely intrigue your child.
- Infants use their mouths to explore the world. This should not cause alarm, as long as their surroundings are clean and choking hazards are absent.
- Talk to your child as often as you can. You can explain your daily tasks, point out colors, or count items out loud to your child. These babies are soaking in all that you expose them to! These practices and exposure promote language development!

18 MONTHS—3 YEARS

- Children in this stage like to test limits and explore everything! Allowing your child freedom to explore in safe environments will help you both connect as you take note of their interests.
- These children explore mostly with their hands. Therefore, toys that aide in the development of their fine motor skills will be entertaining and beneficial!
- During this stage, it is especially important to work with your child on different concepts like the alphabet, counting, colors, shapes, as well as continued exposure to general language.
- As babies and toddlers in this stage become much more independent, take some time to celebrate their milestones with them! Celebrations and rituals promote connection and encourage bonding. This will also help your child feel confident in their newfound skills.

3 YEARS—5 YEARS

- Play is a very important part of this stage. During play, children use the highest part of their brain, helping them to think rationally, become more receptive, and be better able to learn.
- Imagination plays a big part in this stage as well. Children will enjoy playing pretend. They may choose to play a mom, a firefighter, a singer, etc. Toys for this age group may be props for their different characters that you can use to educate your child about different roles, jobs, people, etc.
- During this stage, children also like to create their own games with their own rules. Letting your child lead playtime will give them confidence in their own leadership, as well as show them that you value their ideas.
- This stage usually consists of lots of questions. Each question is an opportunity to educate your child. Their curiosity is wonderful and can take them far later in life! Taking the time to truthfully discuss their questions and answering to the best of your ability will help your child develop a deeper trust in you. While you want to be truthful, it is still important to speak in a way that is developmentally appropriate. Thus, simple words and phrases will be helpful when answering your child's questions. If you don't know the answer, it might be fun to research the answer with them!

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS OVERVIEW

5 YEARS– 21 YEARS



5 YEARS– 13 YEARS

- This is a great time to expose your child to various activities to see where they are naturally inclined. During this stage, your child's interests will likely start to direct themselves in more specific areas. Maybe they really enjoy science, crafts, or sports! These children can then practice mastering their newfound skills and talents!
- Engaging in discussion with your child over the topics in which they are interested or participating in activities that they enjoy are great ways to connect with your child. Taking time to discuss their interests over your own shows them that you care.
- Activities and toys for stage 4 children can be more challenging. In the later years of this stage, children will likely enjoy games over toys.
- At this age, children will be able to do more active things than before, they can walk for longer amounts of time, ride bikes or scooters, etc. Playing outside and staying active allows your child to release stress or tension in a fun, safe way!
- As your children grow, friends become more influential and more important than they were in the younger years. Allowing a friend to join your family on errands or excursions will make your child more inclined to participate.

13 YEARS–21 YEARS

- In this stage, adolescents explore various topics to establish their own set of beliefs and values. This is very important as they develop their own identity.
- Just as in the previous stage, friends become increasingly more important in adolescence. Growing friendships are very important and can act as safeguards when a crisis comes up in your child's life.
- It is typical for adolescents to pull away from their caregivers as they get older and wish to exercise their own independence. During this stage, it is healthy to allow your child more independence as the years go by, within safe, healthy boundaries.
- Occasionally playing board games, going to the movies, taking a day trip, etc. are great ways for you to spend time with your adolescent and for both of you to connect and have fun!
- In these years, your adolescent's activities will likely be related to school clubs and extracurriculars like theater, band, football, etc. Just as in the previous stage, it is helpful to learn more about the activities that your adolescent enjoys, while providing ample support and encouragement.