

## **DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE FOR PRE-K STUDENTS AGE 3**

### **Physical Development**

- Gross motor control (movements such as running and jumping controlled by larger muscles) increases and "wild" use of the whole body is common.
- Many boys are not completely toilet trained-- not to worry.
- Bed-wetting is common and may continue through age five or six.
- Eye-hand coordination (effective use of sight to manipulate objects with hands) makes great gains during this year.
- May not like eating what is in the meal or when a meal is served.
- Thumb sucking and need to cuddle a blanket are still common needs for many.
- Walking and running with hands swinging and walking up stairs are likely to be accomplished.
- Tricycle riding may be a passionate interest.
- Postural control (balance) is more skillful and accomplished without much conscious thought.
- Attention span for things that are of high interest may capture and sustain child's attention for several minutes.

### **Emotional Development**

- This is an excellent time for providing open-ended activities (activities that have more than one acceptable response) and creative play.
- Taking risks is natural since the child has an expansive sense of self (has a personal desire to freely explore their world).
- The child's blossoming personality usually shows itself in one of two extremes. Examples:
  - high OR low energy
  - intense concentration OR high distractibility
  - organization is internal OR external environment sets the stage for the child
  - adapts easily to change OR is frightened and anxious
  - moves quickly and with agility OR is sluggish
  - morning OR afternoon person
  - perfectionist OR adventurer
  - looks forward to future OR is timid about the future
- Argumentative, difficult, or confrontational nature is common at about 3 ½ years.
- Sense of self and ability to see self as an individual apart from others begins to emerge.

### **Philosophical/Moral Development**

- The child does not actively understand right or wrong, but does recognize what may create friction or anger in caretakers.
- There is still no real ability to intentionally hurt others.
- The child, while expansive (has a desire to explore world freely), still needs and responds well to routines, structure and consistency.
- The child does not have a ready or logical response to, "Why did you do that?"
- There is still very little true sense of self, so lying and cheating are rare and not premeditated (calculated or intentional), or for that matter understood as wrong.
- Adults may perceive excessive behavior by the child as being done purposefully and thoughtfully and therefore respond with annoyance...but the real three-year-old is more compulsive (doing without thinking) than purposive.

### **Social Development**

- This is the time when socialized play (playing with others) begins.
- Child begins to receive and attend to messages from age mates, not just adults.
- Friend becomes a word with meaning for the child.

- A social sense of humor emerges...giggles, etc.
- Dad or mom may become a "best" friend and child may feel envy if parents kiss or show intimacy.
- Ability to play well with others is beginning to improve, although the ability to see another person's perspective or needs is limited.
- Verbal refusal (saying "no" more calmly using several words) usually replaces aggressive "no's".
- Boy play tends to be more aggressive than girl play.
- Introversions (bashful, quiet) or extroversions (outgoing, social) may already dictate the number of children a child wishes to include in play.

## Intellectual/Cognitive Development

- A stimulating learning environment helps the child progress from sensory (understanding is limited to what can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled) to more concrete (being able to think about what is sensed) use of the mind.
- Vocabulary increases rapidly-- spoken (what the child says) and receptive (understanding what others say).
- Concept of time is emerging and child learns various new words to describe the past, present and future.
- Learning the meaning of direction words is common (up, on, under, around, through, etc.).
- Eye-hand coordination (effective use of sight to manipulate objects with hands) and the ability to adapt maneuvers (move in different ways to accomplish the same goal) noticeably improves.
- Visual tasks are accomplished with much more ease.
- Small object play increases (e.g., playing with Legos).
- Learning and working are seen as exciting.