

PRE-SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Two-year-old child

Emotional response

- Dependent on caregiver for emotional regulation
- Does not recognize and identify their own emotional responses
- Highly sensitive to emotional mood of caregiver

Cognitive ability

- Rote/semantic knowledge developing
- Understanding of world very personal to child and family
- Repetition necessary for learning

Linguistic ability

- Family may understand child's language and vocabulary
- Highly dependent on verbal cues from adult
- May not have sufficient language to be interviewed by a stranger

Physical and Environmental needs

- Benefits from routines
- May have difficulty making transitions or switching between activities
- Unable to monitor his/her own needs and limitations
- Play is mostly parallel play

Three-year-old child

Emotional response

- Challenged to regulate their own emotional state and responses
- May experience separation anxiety in new situation
- Benefits from having caregivers label and validate their feelings

Cognitive ability

- Increasing rote/semantic knowledge and vocabulary
- Poor distinction between fantasy and reality
- Can recall past experiences – information is limited and not sequential
- Thinking is concrete and personal
- Categorization is very simple
- Unable to track his/her understanding of instructions or questions
- Does not understand that you do not know what he/she knows

Linguistic ability

- Variety in meaning of words – some shared with culture, others personal to child and family
- Uses words before they fully understand the meaning
- May answer questions they do not understand

Physical and Environmental needs

- Benefits from routines
- Enjoys engaging in familiar pleasant activities
- Attention span is short for any single activity

Four-year-old child

Emotional response

- May enjoy new experiences in limited doses
- Returns to safety of caregiver, when feeling insecure
- Can experience inner turmoil when stuck in the gap between their desires and their abilities

Cognitive ability

- May have developing skill with letters, numbers, and basic concepts
- Limited understanding of social rules
- Still concrete in thinking and perception
- Asks lots of questions
- Has poor memory search strategies

Linguistic ability

- Developing greater vocabulary for expressing thoughts and feelings
- Improvement in language structure
- May enjoy talking about personal topics of interest
- Active expression of likes and dislikes

Physical and environmental needs

- Still do not exhibit “executive functioning” – the ability to regulate attention and behavior based on the demands of the task
- Benefit from exposure to new experiences with preparation and support
- Needs assistance to “stay on task”

Five-year-old child

Emotional response

- May be able to identify and label basic emotions
- Basic understanding that others may think or feel differently than he/she does
- Beginning to adopt social and gender roles
- Engage in simple problem solving
- Still working toward socially appropriate control of emotional responses

Cognitive ability

- Increasing pool of knowledge from a variety of sources
- Developing interest in specific topics
- Enjoys the experience and demonstration of mastery
- May get some benefit from use of interview instructions
- May not yet sequence his/her recount of a remembered experience

Linguistic ability

- Increase in knowledge and experiences with others
- Expanding vocabulary
- Increased ability to engage in question-answer dialogue

Physical and Environmental needs

- Often engaged in early childhood setting
- Increases understanding of “rules” as being environment specific
- Begins to find other adult authority figures