

Literacy



Numeracy



Fitting the Pieces Together:

3 Year Olds

Communication



Imaginative Play



Frederick County Public Schools

Special Thanks

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Additional copies of this document are available at:
www.fcpsteach.org - click on *Family Involvement* under the Curriculum heading

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Fitting the Pieces Together: 3-Year-Olds

What you will find on the following pages...

Developmental Stages

Each child grows and develops in a unique way. This section of the booklet is designed to give you general information concerning the development of children. Because child development is an ongoing process, this section includes a three-year look at how children in this age group change and grow. A typical 3-year-old will be in a variety of stages in this three-year look.

Information and Suggested Activities

This section of the booklet is written to introduce you to some information about 3-year-olds, their needs, and activities that will reinforce these goals. Within this section you will find much information, including ideas for reading, speaking, understanding math, as well as social and emotional development. Much of this section will assist you in getting your children ready for public school and its curriculum. If you want more information about the Frederick County Public Schools, go to www.fcps.org.



Developmental Stages of 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds

Please remember: Each child grows and develops in a unique way.

Age	Personal	Physical: Small Muscles	Physical: Large Muscles
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Is constantly in motion *Tires easily *Likes to say, "No!" *Gets upset easily *Cannot reason, but can be distracted *Needs consistency with routine *Needs 9-13 hours of sleep per day *Needs sense of security, which may include nightlights, security blankets, or stuffed animals *May be interested in toilet training *Washes hands with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Feeds self with spoon *Experiments by touching, smelling, and tasting *Scribbles vigorously on paper *Can turn pages of a book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Pulls toys behind while walking *Carries large toy or several toys while walking *Begins to walk on tiptoe, run, and climb *Walks up and down stairs holding on for support *Kicks, tosses, or rolls a large ball *Likes to push, pull, fill, and dump *Stoops or squats *Opens cabinets and drawers *Can bend over to pick up object without falling
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wants to do things "right" *Acts in a determined and self-willed manner *Tests limits *Needs consistency with routine *Needs 9-13 hours of sleep per day *Needs sense of security, which may include nightlights, security blankets, or stuffed animals *May relieve anxiety through thumb-sucking, chewing clothes, and having security items *May be involved in toilet training *Washes hands independently *Brushes teeth *Begins to dress self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Transitions from infantile grasp to holding a spoon, fork, or writing tool correctly (with three-finger grasp) *Sometimes changes handedness (left and right) *Feeds self completely *Scribbles and draws on paper *Screws and unscrews jar lids *Turns book pages one at a time *Starts to use scissors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Walks well and runs easily *Swings arms freely *Climbs well *Fears falling *Begins to throw and catch a large ball *Begins to pedal tricycle *Enjoys gross motor play (climbing, running, jumping, hopping, throwing) <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Enjoys positive praise *Uses "vivid" imagination *Experiments with feelings *Shows extreme emotions *Loves anything new *Exhibits curiosity *Likes limits and structure *Dresses self *Needs 9-13 hours of sleep per day *Is able to reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *May show preference for left or right hand *Draws simple stick figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Hops on one foot *Catches ball with two hands *Enjoys gross motor play (climbing, running, jumping, hopping, throwing)

Social	Intellectual	Listening and Language Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Imitates others *May have imaginary playmate *Enjoys solitary play *Enjoys parallel play (playing near, but not with, others) *Claims everything is “mine” *May show defiant behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Has increased interest in language *Enjoys books and music *Begins to sort by colors and shapes *Begins to point to <i>one</i> and <i>many</i> objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Points to objects or pictures when they are named *Recognizes names of familiar people, objects, and body parts *Is able to follow one-step directions *Uses two- to four-word phrases and sentences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Shows sensitivity to the reaction of others *Likes having friends *May enjoy having imaginary friends *Pretends to be someone or something other than self (dog, cat) *Enjoys being with familiar adults *Changes activities often *Begins cooperative play (taking turns, playing together) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Is expanding vocabulary *Increases understanding of parts and whole (i.e., can do simple puzzles) *Enjoys books and music *Begins to recognize likenesses and differences in colors, shapes, and objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Uses language to relate stories, experiences, and needs *Uses language to express wants and needs *Uses simple nouns, verbs, pronouns, and adjectives *Develops four- to five- word sentences *Listens with understanding in one-to-one situations better than in groups *Experiments with sounds and expressions *Is able to follow two-step directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Plays best in pairs *Begins to take turns and cooperate *Wants to be liked or accepted *Likes to play make-believe and dress up *Calls attention to own accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Matches and names colors *Names things from memory *Notes differences in size, weight, and length *Counts objects while pointing *Enjoys being read to *Likes to make things *Chooses own categories for sorting things *Begins to recognize and copy name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Uses language to gain information and to relate experiences *Is able to carry out sequence of two- to three-step directions *Listens with understanding to directions and conversations *Explores humor in language (rhymes, nonsense words)

Building Literacy

**“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”
Emile Buchwald**

A typical 3-year-old:

- Repeats words and sounds
- Enjoys listening to stories
- Repeats a story and discusses the ideas and events
- Repeats simple rhymes
- Is able to tell simple stories from pictures
- Is able to sing a simple tune
- Understands now, soon, and later
- Follows two-step directions
- Responds correctly to yes and no questions
- Enjoys talking on the phone

Reading

The most important thing that you can do is read to your child!

Before reading with your child:

- Turn off T.V. and radio
- Focus all your attention on reading
- Sit close
- Show how to hold the book
- Point to the front and back of the book
- Look at the pictures. Ask, “What do you think the story may be about?”



While reading with your child:

- Change your voice as you read about different characters
- Point to the words as you read
- Talk about the illustrations
(If your child gets fidgety, you may decide not to finish the book)
- Stop reading part way through the book. Ask, “What do you think will happen next?”

After reading with your child:

- Talk about what you like best about the story
- Talk about what the story was about

- Dramatize the story by dressing up as characters or using puppets or dolls

Rhyming

- Model rhyming familiar words and names (i.e. *cup-pup, Mommy-Tommy*)
- Recite familiar nursery rhymes, and stop so that your child can fill in the missing rhyming words (i.e. “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great _____ [child says *fall*].”)
- Ask your child if two words rhyme (i.e. “Do *hat* and *truck* rhyme? Do *hat* and *cat* rhyme?”)
- Make up nonsense rhymes (i.e. *fish, delish, quish, balish*)

Read nursery rhymes and do finger plays with your child

Jack and Jill

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down, and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after

Five Little Freckled Frogs

Five little freckled frogs
Sitting on a hollow log
Eating some delicious bugs
Yum Yum Yum
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool
Now there are four little freckled frogs



Five Little Monkeys

Five little monkeys
Jumping on the bed
One fell down and broke his head
Mamma called the doctor
The doctor said, No more monkeys jumping on the bed

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, Merrily, Merrily, Merrily
Life is such a dream

Suggested books on rhyming

Silly Sally by Audrey Wood
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
Is your Mama a Llama? by Deborah Guarino
In the Tall, Tall, Grass by Denise Fleming
Sheep in a Jeep by Nancy Shaw
Cat and the Hat by Dr. Seuss
One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish by Dr. Seuss

Playing with Sounds (Phonological Awareness)

- Shake different objects, such as a box of macaroni and a box of Cheerios, and ask, “Do they sound the same?”
- Hide a timer, and, when it goes off, ask your child from where the sound is coming
- Sing in soft voices and loud voices
- Have you or your child talk in a mouse (high) voice, a lion (low) voice, or a robot (monotone) voice
- When driving in vehicles, play word games (Ex. “Do *sit* and *run* sound the same?”)
- Emphasizing the first sounds in pairs of familiar words or names, ask if the words start with the same sound (i.e. “Do mmmommy and mmmoon start the same?”)
- When outside with your child, have him put his hands over his eyes and tell you what sounds he hears

Suggested items to include in your home:

- Books
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Children’s CDs
- CD player
- Puppets
- Stuffed animals
- Dolls
- Pillows
- Bean bag chairs



Building Communication

“At this age, it’s more important to focus on how your preschooler uses words rather than the number of words that they say.”

McAleer-Hamaguchi

A typical 3-year-old:

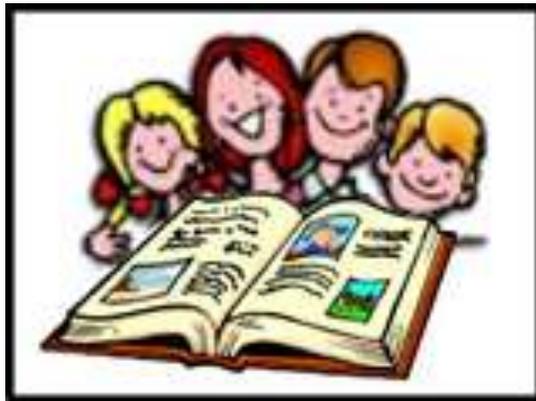
- Is able to understand more language than he can express
- Enjoys repeating words and sounds
- Speaks clearly enough to be understood by most listeners
- Has a speaking vocabulary of about 500 words
- Can string words together in short sentences of four to five words
- Asks who, what, where, and why questions
- Has the ability to use language to solve problems

Expanding Vocabulary

- Talk with your child about EVERYTHING, from what he is eating to where you will go on vacation
- Use a wide variety of words in everyday conversations (i.e. Instead of saying, “Look at the truck,” say, “Look at that beautiful, red, speeding truck!”)
- Use real names when talking about things, and share various words for different objects (i.e. If your child says, “Potty,” you might say, “Oh, do you mean that you need to go to the bathroom?” If your child says, “Me cup,” you might say, “I see, you would like to have your green cup.”)
- Describe what someone is wearing or how something tastes/smells/looks
- Use new words or concepts several times a day in different situations
- Be patient when explaining, discussing, and answering questions
- Pronounce words correctly—do not use baby talk
- Make a “picture book” using family photos, pictures from magazines, and catalogs, and together practice naming what you see
- Read stories aloud
- Talk about the stories read together
- Re-read books multiple times, always with expression
- Encourage your child to “pretend read” (let your child pretend that he is reading a book to you)
- Allow him to record his own voice and play it back

Suggested items to include in your home:

- Old cell phones
- Library books
- Homemade books
- Family photo albums
- Writing tools, such as, pencils, crayons, paper, envelopes
- Picture cards



Building Numeracy

Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely.”

Jean Piaget

A typical 3-year-old:

- Counts aloud 1-10
- Matches like objects
- Sorts by one attribute (color, size, shape)
- Identifies common colors
- Counts two to three objects
- Stacks five to seven building blocks
- Is able to put together a five- to six-piece puzzle
- Is able to draw a circle and a square
- Is able to sing number songs and rhymes



Problem Solving (Looking at things and figuring them out)

- Read books that ask questions or present puzzles, and talk with your child to help him figure out the answer
- Give your child a paper bag and have a scavenger hunt (i.e. “Let’s find something green. Let’s find something soft.”)
- When outside pick up natural objects, such as leaves, and talk about how they are the same/different
- Use a magnifying glass to look at leaves, and talk about their sizes, shapes, colors, etc.
- Play a listening game by having your child cover his eyes and identify the sounds he hears (i.e. cars, wind, footsteps, machinery, birds, and insects)
- After your child identifies a sound, ask, “How did you know that was a bird?” etc.

Shapes

- At lunch or snack, ask your child if he wants his sandwich cut into triangles or rectangles
- Talk about the colors, textures and shapes around you: an orange square of cheese; a white, oval egg; or a soft, blue, square blanket
- Talk about the blocks you have and describe the shapes in a sentence

Patterning

- Use everyday objects, such as food and clothing, to make patterns:
 - Shoe, sock, shoe, sock
 - Apple slice, banana slice, apple slice, banana slice
 - Lucky Charm, marshmallow, Lucky Charm, marshmallow
 - Pretzel goldfish, cracker goldfish, pretzel goldfish, cracker goldfish

Measuring

- At bath time, play with spoons, cups, and containers
- Let your child use teaspoons and measuring spoons to measure out and serve snacks
- Measure familiar objects with same size blocks (i.e. “How many blocks long is your shoe?”)

Sort and Classify

- Play matching games while sorting the laundry
- Talk about the different textures of the laundry
- Play “Memory” or “Concentration” with 10 picture cards (5 matches)
- Sort toys, every day objects, your child’s clothing
- Play a clean up game, and sort objects into one box for toys and one box for books
- Sort snack foods, such as trail mix, Lucky Charms, Fruit Loops

Same and Different

- Help your child compare things (i.e. Find leaves, and arrange them in groups, such as small/large, green/not green.)
- Go on a “Texture Hunt,” and ask your child, “Is this hard? Is this soft? Is this rough? Is this smooth?”

Sequencing

- Prepare food, and say, “First we get the bowl, next we get the cereal, and then we pour the milk.”
- Help your child line up his books from smallest to largest on the shelf.
- When your child is getting dressed, say, “First get your shirt, and then get your pants, and last get your shoes and socks.”

Suggested Songs and Rhymes:

Five Little Ducks

Five little ducks
Went out one day
Over the hill and far away
Mother duck said
"Quack, quack, quack, quack."
But only four little ducks came back



One Two Buckle My Shoe

One, two
Buckle my shoe
Three, four
Knock at the door
Five, six
Pick up sticks
Seven, eight
Lay them straight
Nine, ten
A good, fat hen

The Itsy Bitsy Spider

The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider out
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain
And the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again



Suggested items to include in your home:

- Stuffed animals
- Blocks
- Wooden stringing beads
- Shoes
- Plastic lids
- Cotton balls
- Refrigerator magnets
- Magnetic numbers and shapes
- Old measuring cups and spoons
- Keys
- Spoons
- Animal crackers
- Goldfish
- Grapes
- Raisins

Imaginative Play

**“Play is the work of the child.”
Maria Montessori**

A Typical 3-Year-Old:

- Plays alone for short periods of time (15-20 minutes)
- Stacks five to seven building blocks
- Enjoys playing alone, but near other children
- Imitates the language, manners, and habits of adults, family members, and pets when playing “house”
- May have imaginary friends
- Uses everyday objects (paper towel rolls, sticks, blankets) in imaginative ways, for example, as magic wands, telescopes, swords, capes, etc.

Benefits of Imaginative Play:

- Builds imagination and curiosity
- Promotes social skills
- Helps children practice solving everyday problems
- Advances physical development
- Helps express and work through emotions
- Allows for practice of different behaviors
- Helps children understand themselves and others
- Positively effects early brain development
- Develops sustained concentration
- Gives children control over their play



When your child:	Your child is learning:
Puts blocks in trucks and dumps them out	About size, weight, and number concepts
Uses blocks to build a zoo, a school, etc.	How to recreate the world around them
Puts on dress up clothes	To use small muscle skills and how to take part in “make believe” which develops abstract thinking
Pretends to be a grown-up	How to better understand life experiences
Plays beside other children	How to get along with others
Builds a castle out of paper towel tubes and tissue boxes	How to solve problems, make choices, and attend to a task

Encouraging Imaginative Play:

- Find a place, such as a corner of a room, under a table, in a large box, in a tree or play house
- Find the time for unstructured time everyday

Suggested items to include in your home:

- Pots, pans, plastic containers, wooden spoons
- Laundry baskets, appliance boxes
- Pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, dolls
- Bath towels
- Socks
- Cardboard tubes from paper towels
- Kid-versions of everyday objects – play telephones, plastic dishes, play watches/clocks, etc.
- Stuffed animals
- Musical instruments



A note about children watching television...

Current research reports that too much television can negatively affect brain development. Therefore, until more research is done about the effects of TV on very young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend television for children age two or younger. For older children, the Academy recommends no more than one to two hours per day of educational, nonviolent programs.