



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



5 Years

A Great Big World

Your child at 5–6 years

At 5 years old, your child is stepping into a bigger world — and they are more ready for it than you might think.

What your baby can do

Your child's **language is strong and growing:**

- They can speak in sentences of 5 or more words and tell longer, detailed stories
- They can have a real back-and-forth conversation
- They ask big questions and are starting to understand that words can have more than one meaning

Your child is **moving with skill and coordination:**

- They can skip, hop, balance on one foot, and climb with confidence
- They can draw pictures of people and objects that you can recognize
- They can cut along a line with scissors and may be starting to write letters and simple words

Your child is **growing in play and friendship:**

- They want to please their friends and are much better at taking turns and following rules
- They may have one or two close friends they talk about often
- They can work with others toward a shared goal, like building something together

Your child is **growing emotionally:**

- They are getting better at handling big feelings, though hard moments still happen
- They have a stronger sense of right and wrong and may feel upset when rules are broken
- They can count beyond 10, recognize most letters, and may be starting to read simple words

Every child grows at their own pace. Your child may reach milestones sooner or later than other kids and still be doing just fine.

What you can do

- **Read together as much as you can.** Ask your child to retell the story or make up a new ending. This builds language, memory, and a love of books.
- **Ask "What do you think?" or "How did that make you feel?"** This shows your child that their ideas matter.
- **Let them do more on their own.** Small jobs like picking out their clothes or helping set the table build confidence and pride.



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- **Talk about feelings, including the hard ones.** "That sounds really disappointing." Naming emotions helps children find the words they need to handle their feelings.
- **When your child gets stuck, ask, "What do you think you could try?"** This helps them build confidence in their own thinking.
- **Explain the reason behind rules in simple terms.** Stay calm when your child pushes back. This teaches self-control over time.
- **Make time for active play every day.** Running, climbing, and playing with other kids builds strength, coordination, and social skills.
- **Playdates and group activities give children a chance to practice sharing and working through conflicts.**

Other things to know and try

- Play card and board games to build focus, turn-taking, and the ability to handle winning and losing
- Take trips to the library, museum, or park to spark curiosity and give children new things to talk about
- Let your child help with simple chores — like putting away laundry or feeding a pet — to build responsibility and a sense of belonging
- Limit screen time and keep content age-appropriate. Watch together when you can

At this visit

The care team will measure your child's length, weight, and head size, and check their heart, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your healthcare provider will discuss vaccines with you at today's visit. The team will talk with you about growth, sleep, eating, and safety — and there will be time for your questions.

What comes next

Kindergarten is a big step — and most children are more ready than their parents expect. Your child will keep growing in reading, writing, and math. Friendships will get more complex. Children this age care a lot about fairness and fitting in. Big feelings are still part of the picture. Your calm, steady presence matters more than you know. Reading every day, keeping routines, and staying connected in small everyday moments will help your child feel safe and confident.

Have more questions?

Talk to your child's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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