

Cognitive Development

Typical five-year-olds can match 10 colors and identify eight colors when these are named for the child. They can identify a square.

At this stage of development, children clearly understand past and future and can distinguish morning from afternoon. They know the days of the week and can identify which day of the week certain regular events of their life occur. They are fascinated by clocks and have some understanding of the relationship between the position of the hands on a clock and when events occur. Although five-year-olds' focus is very much on their own present world, some begin talking about what they want to be when they grow up.

Typical five-year-olds can count 13 objects, and by five-and-a-half some can count as many as 20 objects. Some can orally add and perhaps even subtract small numbers. They may or may not use their fingers when counting and performing calculations. Typical five-year-olds have some grasp of the relationship of number symbols to spoken numbers and can match numerals with the correct quantity of actual or pictured objects.

Five-year-olds' sequencing skills have also expanded. They can sort objects by size and identify which object is in the middle. They can also extend the sequence of events in a story in a logical way.

During this period, children love matching games and can sort by many categories—color, shape, texture, smell, taste, use, association, and so on.

Language Development

Five-year-olds have a large vocabulary and can converse in quite a mature manner. They like to talk and talk a lot. They talk about anything and everything. Their sentences are longer, more complex, and better constructed than earlier, and their grammar is more accurate. Most are able to use pronouns, verb tenses, and irregular plurals cor-

rectly. Most five-year-olds can give their full name, address, age, and perhaps their birthday and can describe the weather.

During this period, children are extremely curious and ask many questions in search of information. They delight in making ridiculous statements and in saying things to fool other people.

Five-year-olds love new words and big words and are intensely eager to learn what words the letters on signs spell. Most can recognize the letters of the alphabet and are fond of spelling out words they see in print or on signs and asking "What does ___ spell?"

Five-year-olds have a great interest in letters. Most recognize their own name in print.

By five years of age, most children hold their pencil between thumb and first finger in adult fashion. Most can print some letters, and by five-and-a-half the majority can print their first name and some can print both their first and last names.

Five-year-olds like being read to and usually want to look on as they listen.

Emotional Development

Typical five-year-olds have a well-developed sense of self. They show pride in what they do and enjoy seeing their work displayed. They need to feel successful, and they need the adults in their lives to share their enthusiasm for their accomplishments. They thrive on recognition and encouragement. They need to receive affection and are generous in giving affection.

Five-year-olds are often victims of adults' desires to hurry children to accomplish academic tasks for which they are not developmentally ready. Some five-year-olds are capable of doing some academic work. However, when they are pushed to do academic work, their inability to fulfill adults' expectations causes them intense frustration.

Five-year-olds are increasingly flexible and able to cope with change. In most cases, their level of self-control is noticeably improved. They are less impulsive in their responses and have a greater capacity to delay gratification.

During this period, children's level of awareness of their own emotions and the relationship between their feelings and their behavior continue to improve. They are able to understand the results of their actions and behavior, although they still view the world with themselves at the center. This often leads to defiant or rude behavior and an inability to admit that they have done something wrong.

Five-year-olds are also increasingly aware of other children's feelings. They are able to be helpful to other children in their group and to offer comfort to other children who are sad or frustrated.

During this transition period, children continue to thrive on pretend play. They are ready for more elaborate props. A wide selection of props for pretend play is a must for this age group.

Social Development

Although five-year-olds are extremely active, they are typically quieter, more predictable, and more in control of themselves than four-year-olds.

By five years of age, children's understanding of friendship has matured, and they have both a great need to make friends and the ability to get along well with friends. They are becoming more skilled in the give and take of social interactions and have a good understanding of the meaning of fair play. Much of their play time is given to sociodramatic play.

During this transition period, children are learning to identify with others' feelings. They can be very protective toward younger children and are also increasingly willing to include more children in their play. Some play very well in groups larger than two or three.

Interacting with Infants

The caregiver/infant relationship is the most important factor in a quality infant care program. In this section we will examine several different ways that caregivers should interact with infants. But first we will take a look at the six basic behavioral states that are characteristic of infants.

Infants' Behavioral States

Infants spend their first nine months in the secure environment of their mother's womb where their biological systems are automatically regulated.

During the first several months after birth, infants work hard to attune themselves to their new environment, to regulate their biological systems and their behaviors, and to become organized. This is a complex process, and many of the behavior patterns of newborn infants—jerky movements, fussy crying, irregular breathing, disturbed sleep—are rather chaotic and disorganized.

At different times, infants display different behaviors and temperaments. These different conditions are called *behavioral states* or sometimes simply *states*.

Behavioral states are self-generated, that is, they arise from within the infant, and indicate the degree to which the infant's system is regulated and organized in a given context at a particular time.

Behavioral states are characterized by different degrees of alertness and motor activity. Infants' various behavioral states fluctuate, reflecting both their disorganized tendencies and periods of balanced and stable well-being. Behavioral states range from a high degree of disorganization and agitation, such as when the infant is crying, to a high degree of organization and calm, such as the states of quiet alertness or deep sleep.

While all infants display all of the following behavioral states at some time, individual infants show considerable variation in the amount of time they spend in any one state. Infants' reac-

tions to stimuli differ depending on their state.

Crying

Loud crying is the infant's way of communicating a variety of complaints—hunger, pain, fatigue, general fretfulness, loneliness. This state is often characterized by uncoordinated flailing of the arms and legs. Infants in the crying state are not able to give their attention to anything but their fretfulness. This is the most upsetting state for infants.

Quiet Alertness

The quiet alert state is a relatively relaxed state characterized by a low level of physical activity. This is the state in which infants are most attentive to their environment. They are wide awake, bright eyed, attentive, and receptive. They appear ready to learn. This is the ideal state for adult/infant interaction.

Active Alertness

In the active alert state, infants are wide awake. Their deep involvement in their own body movements distracts them from an awareness of other stimuli. In particular, they are less attentive to visual stimuli.

Fussy Alertness

The fussy alert state is a disorganized state in which infants turn their attention away from stimuli and become fussy. This state often follows an active alert state. In the fussy alert state infants are unable to control their responses to stimuli and need adult help to gain control and deal with their feelings of frustration.

Drowsy

The drowsy state is a transition state between deep sleep and quiet or active alertness. This state may appear when the infant is about to fall asleep or just waking up. Body movements are rather subdued.

This is a rather disorganized state in which the infant is only slightly atten-

tive to external stimuli. The infant's attention is not focused, and as she struggles to adjust from one state to another, she may whimper or cry.

Light Sleep

Infants in the state of light sleep startle easily. Their breathing is irregular and their arms and legs, which may move in spurts, are typically drawn close to their body. Infants are quite vulnerable to external stimuli in this state. When roused from a state of light sleep, some infants will awaken fussy and disorganized. Others attempt to shut out the external stimuli and sink into a deeper sleep, although this may be quite a struggle.

Deep Sleep

When infants enter the state of deep sleep, they become very still, their breathing becomes regular, their eyes are tightly shut, and their arms and legs are limp. The infant's face will be relaxed and expressionless.

Holding Infants

Infants need to be held. Before infants are able to creep, crawl, or sit alone, they need to be held and carried a lot. Even after infants are mobile, they still need to be held and carried.

Why Hold Infants?

Being held and carried benefits infants in many, many ways. Here are some of the major benefits:

- Being held close to an adult's body helps organize and regulate the infant's irregular and disorganized biological systems. The infant benefits from feeling the rhythm of the adult's walking, heartbeat, and breathing. Carrying even stimulates the functioning of infants' sense of balance.
- Infants who are carried tend to be more content and to cry and fuss less. The same natural rhythms of the adult's body that help organize and regulate the infant's