

Changes

Somewhere in those months between 3 years and 3 1/2 years there is a magic transition from toddler into child. Your 3 year old is full of humour and original ideas. He is self-confident, charming, and a wonderful talker. All of the skills and information he has been learning over the past 2 years are coming together. Your child loves praise for his accomplishments and is content to be away from mom and dad with people he knows.

This is a stage of energy and motivation. Your child is learning so much from active play. He is aware of the world around him and will ask lots of questions starting with "How" and "Why". This is also a time of developing friendships, taking turns, sharing, and play acting. Making friends shows your child's readiness to move beyond himself and his family. It is important to remember that not all children will reach this stage at the same time.

You may think toddlerhood is over...but your child is still young and thinks differently than an adult. The occasional tantrum will occur, and he may still grab, push, or bite other kids. There will be times of whining, and being cranky or uncooperative.

Your child will want to help you and you should let him, even if it slows you down. He can set the table, pour his own cereal, and help bake cookies. By giving your child small jobs to do with you helps him feel successful. Taking time to encourage participation and responsibility will pay off in later years. Take time to enjoy your 3 year old.



Can I Carry You

I guess that I can hold you one more time before you grow.
And tell you that I love you so that you will always know.
Please let me tie your shoe again. One day you'll tie your own.
And when you think back to this time, I hope it's love I've shown.
One day you might just care for me, so let me care for you.
I want to be a part of every little thing you do.
Before you join a baseball team can I pitch you one more ball?
And one more time can I stand near to make sure you don't fall?
Please let me help you up the hill while you're still too small to climb.
And let me read you stories while you're young and have the time.
I know the day will come when you will do these things alone.
Will you recall the shoulder rides and all the balls we've thrown?
I want you to grow stronger than your Dad could ever be.
And when you find success there will be no soul more proud than me.
So will you let me carry you? One day you'll walk alone.
I cannot bear to miss one day from now until you've grown.
-adapted from a poem by Brad Anderson

Food Safety

Keep in mind that young children, especially under the age of 5 can choke on small, hard or round pieces of fruit, vegetables, and their seeds. Slice foods with round shapes (grapes, carrots) in half, length-wise, to reduce choking risk. Try grating, mashing, or cooking hard foods until softened. Remove seeds from fruits (cherries, plums, watermelon, etc.). Always supervise children while they are eating.

Fun with Fruits and Veggies

A is for asparagus; B is for broccoli; C is for cauliflower... Your child loves to play this game with you but may not like eating different types of fruits and vegetables. If you are concerned that your child isn't eating enough fruits and vegetables, he might be doing better than you think. Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends 4 servings of fruits or vegetables each day for a child that is 3 year old. Some examples of a serving of fruit or vegetables for your child might include:



- One small fruit or vegetable, or half of a large one
- ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetables
- ½ cup 100% fruit or vegetable juice

Keep in mind that Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide describes a pattern of eating that promotes good health over time. Don't be

concerned if your child doesn't eat exactly according to the Food Guide each day. If you are still concerned that he is resisting fruits and vegetables, the following tips may help:

- Never pressure your child to eat fruits and vegetables. Don't bribe him or reward him for eating. If he refuses don't push the issue. Keep mealtimes pleasant.
- Have fun with food. Allow your child to help prepare foods, let him help you with grocery shopping, read books about food, or take him to a local farm or produce stand.
- Make food interesting. Children love dips or cheese sauce for veggies, fruit or veggie "**faces**", or mini-pizza with a veggie topping.
- Serve a new fruit or vegetable with a familiar one.
- Keep trying – most children need to be introduced to a new food over **10 times** before they will try it. Don't give up on any fruit or vegetable.
- Set an example. Make sure that you are eating fruits and vegetables with your child.



Screen Time and Physical Activity for Kids

Parents often wonder how much TV is okay for children. The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology recommends no more than an hour of screen time per day for children aged 2 – 4 years, but less is better. Screen time would include watching television and playing with non-active devices such as video games, tablets, computers, or phones. This is based on what is known about children and screen time. Young children have a great need to interact with parents, other adults, and kids. This encourages healthy brain development. They do not get this in front of a screen. A high amount of screen time is linked with weight problems, a lowered ability to interact with others, a lack of interest in learning, and less creativity.



The Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology also recommends preschoolers aged 3 – 4 years should get about 180 minutes of physical activity of any intensity throughout the day.

This would include:

- Any activity that gets kids moving
- Climbing stairs and moving around the home
- Playing outside and exploring their environment
- Crawling, brisk walking, running, or dancing

The older children get, the more energetic play they need such as hopping, jumping, skipping, and bike riding. Children should progress to getting at least 60 minutes of energetic play a day by age 5.

Look At What I Can Do!

From 3 to 3 ½ years, these are some of the things I can do

3 Years

- I may add 10 to 20 new words to my vocabulary each week
- I like to draw with crayons and markers
- I can tell you how old I am or show you 3 fingers
- I draw stick people usually with no body
- I like to “read” my favourite books to myself
- I like to play with other children, not just beside them
- I can get dressed and put on my shoes without help
- I know my full name
- I like to count things
- I can recognize either the first letter of my name or my whole name
- I can walk up and down stairs using alternating feet
- I can match colours and objects
- I like to play kicking, throwing, and catching games

3 1/2
Years



Create Your Own Sound Shakers

Your child will have lots of fun making a musical instrument with you. Use paper cups, toilet paper tubes, yogurt, or margarine tubs. Gather together things like sand, gravel, marbles, dirt, pieces of paper, buttons, and anything else you have to use to make noise in your containers. After putting your noise-makers in the containers, tape on the lids or paper to secure everything in place. Your child will enjoy decorating the shakers. You can try to find two shakers that sound the same, or make music. Enjoy the different sounds these shakers make!



Enjoyable Toys

By three years of age, your child will be more interested in creating a product rather than just enjoying the process. He might enjoy making a book of his artwork. He can tell you about his picture and you can write a story to match. Don't forget the date! If you frame one of your child's creations he will be more proud.

Toy ideas:

- Several different kinds of markers, chalk, paints, pastels, crayons (all non-toxic and washable)
- Non-toxic glue and children's safety scissors
- Books and simple interlocking puzzles
- Felt board and felt story pieces
- Chalk and chalk board
- Paint easel
- Beads and threading laces





Learn

Hands and Feet are Neat!

Your child will have fun hopping, jumping, galloping, and doing summersaults. She loves when you laugh with her. Pouring is lots of fun. Let your child practice in the kitchen or bath before pouring a drink. Towers of small blocks are fun to build and knock down. Your child likes the face you make when the blocks fall and the song you sing when you build together. **"This is the way we build the tower, build the tower, build the tower...."** Beads of different shapes and colours are fun to string together – she can match different colours and shapes. When you wear what your child makes, she feels proud.

Song:
 Feet, feet, feet, feet
 Isn't it neat to have some feet?
 Right foot (stomp)
 Left foot (stomp)
 Loud feet (stomp loudly)
 Soft feet (stomp softly)
 Hands, hands, hands, hands
 Isn't it grand to have some hands?
 Right hand (clap)
 Left hand (clap)
 Loud hands (clap loudly)
 Soft hands (clap softly)



Play

Sharing? She Knows How!

Your child likes to play ball – she can catch and throw. She loves to ride her tricycle, wearing her helmet. When you go for a walk let her ride. She is becoming quite the artist. You can cut and draw and paste together. Your child has fun when two or three of her friends come to play. She doesn't mind taking turns and sharing with her friends. She can use the words **"stop it"** instead of striking out when things aren't going the way she wants. She likes to hear her favourite bedtime stories. Read them to her again and again. She likes when you tell stories to each other – share lots of them!



Talk

Your Chatty Cathy!

Your child is really using her words now! She tends to use 4 to 5 words together in a sentence and she is becoming very chatty. As she is growing, she is developing her ability to produce sounds in words. Other people should be able to understand what she is saying most of the time. Help your child use her words by speaking clearly and slowly. She may become frustrated if other people cannot understand what she is saying. ***If you have any concerns about your child's speech, call tykeTALK at 519-663-0273 or toll free at 1-877-818-8255 to find out more that you can do to help your child learn to talk.***

Life Goes On

Unfortunately, your child will eventually be faced with the death of a pet, relative, or friend. How much children can understand about death depends largely on their age, life experiences, and personality. To help your child prepare for this, start with everyday examples that are not painful. Flowers wilt and die. Leaves turn colours and fall from trees. This is normal, natural, and easy for your child to understand. The best approach to dealing with a child who has experienced the loss of a loved one depends on his age but some general guidelines will always apply:

Explain Death in a Child's Terms – Be honest and encourage questions. This can be hard because you may not have all the answers but it is important to create an atmosphere of comfort and openness, and to send the message that there is no one right or wrong way to feel.

Until a child is 5 or 6 years old, his view of the world is very literal. Explain the death in basic and concrete terms. You may have to explain that **"dying"** or **"dead"** means that the body stopped working.

Children this young often have a hard time understanding that all people and living things eventually die, and that it is final and they won't come back. Your child may continue to ask where the loved one is or when the person is returning.

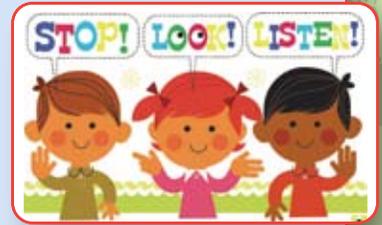
Avoid using euphemisms, such as telling your child that the loved one **"is at rest"**, is **"asleep"**, or **"went away"** or even that your family **"lost"** the person. Because young children think so literally, such phrases might inadvertently make them afraid to fall asleep or be fearful whenever someone goes away.

Mourning the Loss – Whether a child should attend the funeral depends on his age, his ability to understand the situation, his relationship with the dead person, and most importantly, whether he wishes to go. A child should never be coerced or made to feel guilty if he prefers not to be involved.

If you think that your own grief might prevent you from helping your child at this difficult time, ask a friend or family member to care for and focus on your child during the service. Choose someone you both like and trust and who won't mind leaving the funeral if your child wants to go.

Getting More Help – As children learn how to deal with death, they need space, understanding, and patience to grieve in their own way. They may not show grief as an adult would. A young child might not cry or might react to the news by acting out in some way. Remember that learning how to deal with grief is like coping with other physical, mental, and emotional tasks – it's a process.

Rules for the Road



A three year old is now able to understand some of the reasons why there are safety rules. This is a good time to teach her how to cross roads with you and how to be safe in the world. She is easily distracted, however, and may not be aware of potential dangers. **Here are some tips to help your child learn to live safely:**

- Teach her to **STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN** and **LOOK LEFT and RIGHT** before you cross roads or walk behind parked cars. Children younger than about 9 years of age are not ready to cross roads on their own.
- Never leave your child alone in the car, even for a moment. She may overheat in the summer and freeze in the winter. Without your supervision, she might pretend she can drive the car and could start it rolling by accident.
- Practice what to do if you should get separated. The best advice to give her is to stay put and stay in one place. Teach her who she can approach if she gets lost, such as other women with small children or a store clerk.
- Do not let your three year old go into a public washroom alone.

Outings with your three year old may not always be relaxing, but taking your child different places allows her to learn and have fun.

Social Skills

Your young child is learning new social skills and becoming more interested in playing with others. He still needs your attention and to be reassured that he is behaving well. He still likes things to go his own way and can get upset when they don't – this normal behavior and is to be expected.



Here are a few suggestions which may help to make the days go more smoothly while still having fun:

- Stick to a routine – Your three year old still needs some structure to his day. It is also important to have day to day consistency. Things such as regular meal and bed times help to avoid difficult behaviour.
- Offer choices – Encouraging independence in some activities is a good way to show respect for your child. Simple choices such as **"Orange juice, or apple juice?"** gives him some control. You will still have to think about the choices you give – make sure they are ones you can live with! Choices such as **"Would you like to go and pick up your sister from school with me?"** are not such a good idea. You might not like his decision.
- Tell your child what he can do – Suggestions such as **"You can't run around in here but when we go outside you can run in the yard"** help him understand the boundaries.
- Set a good example – Watching you can give your child a lot of ideas. If you lower your voice, so will he. If you eat your vegetables he will be more apt to eat his as well.



St. Thomas Site

1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON N5P 1G9
519-631-9900 | 1-800-922-0096

Woodstock Site

410 Buller Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 4N2
519-421-9901 | 1-800-922-0096