

# FIVE YEAR OLDS

If you have a five-year-old, you are probably getting ready for kindergarten. Some children are excited about going to school, while others may have some feelings of anxiety about this upcoming experience.

Most adults are interested in the development of infants, but by the time the child has reached the age of four or five, growth may be taken for granted. If you have not been particularly aware of your five-year-old's development recently, then you may like to consider what many five-year-olds are like. Remember, though that each child is an individual. All five-year-olds will not be the same size, or behave in the same way. However, if you are concerned about any phase of your child's development, you should see an appropriate professional about this.

Five-year-olds are active, and because they can balance themselves well, they hop, run, skip and climb with ease. They are likely to be so active that they tire rather quickly. While they are usually in a pleasant mood, they may be irritable when they are tired. Five-year-olds are so active that they need time, space and a variety of play equipment for indoor and outdoor large muscle exercises. They may need some supervision to help them alternate activity with quieter periods. Such items as books, paints, puzzles, music and table games can provide a child with something to do while he or she rests from physical strenuous activity.

Five-year-olds try to behave like adults, because they are anxious to please. They are delighted by praise, and are likely to be friendly and talkative. Five-year-olds are happy to help around the house, and they should be encouraged to develop responsibility for certain tasks. For example, racks for hanging their clothes should be placed within their reach. Other such adjustments will allow them to help their parents in many ways. Parents must have patience to help the five-year-old learn to do things, such as making beds, emptying the garbage or cleaning. However it will be well worth any parent's time to allow the child of this age to perform such tasks.

Fives are such imitators that adult behavior is instantly replayed by them. For this reason, parents must remember to be models of good behavior for their children.

Five-year-olds are aware of a written language and often pretend that they can read or write. They are interested in numbers and will play numbers games with enthusiasm. Good play equipment that can stimulate children while they play includes pencils, paper, and old typewriter, rubber stamps, chalkboards, rulers, tape measures and clocks. Dominoes are good for this age, and a play "office" or "store" can be fun.

Most five-year-olds play well in small groups with other children. They are able to bargain for what they want and most disagreements are handled with words rather than physical fights. They are aware of the rights of other people, and can understand how to take turns, and the difference in "mine" and "yours." Five-year-olds should be allowed to participate in a variety of activities that include social interaction with other children, as well as some time to be alone.

Five-year-olds are creative with play equipment, art materials and story telling. Parents should try to provide their children space, materials, and an opportunity to explore and experiment with these to help them develop their creative potential. Because they are filled with curiosity and anxious to gather facts, they can enjoy certain reference books and should have appropriate story books provided. Music and dance are also important creative outlets for children. Five-year-olds can handle tools and should be allowed to do so with supervision. They can manage saws, hammers, screwdrivers, and tape players. They can mix paints to achieve desired colors and they try to paint realistic pictures.