

WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF A PRESCHOOL CHILD?
A Summary of Age-Level Characteristics

| AGE | SPIRITUAL | SOCIAL | EMOTIONAL | PHYSICAL | COGNITIVE |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| I'm Two | Is beginning to transfer trust in adults to trust in God. Speaks of Jesus as a friend. Listens to others in worship. Views self as part of God's family. | Engages in parallel play. Is developing awareness of other children. Turns to adults for social assistance. Is learning to take turns. Talks to and with others. | Shows attachment to parent and other significant adults. Shows range of emotions such as anger, joy, confusion, sorrow, loneliness. Is building autonomy, sense of self. | Is learning to control whole body movement. Is developing eye-hand coordination. Is developing small muscle control. | Knows own name and the names of other significant people. Has emerging knowledge of colors, shapes and numbers. Has awareness of what he/she likes to do. Thinks literally/concretely. Enjoys learning through his/her senses. Engages in exploration and experimentation. Attention span of 2 to 3 minutes. |

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|------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| I'm Three | Demonstrates trust in God. Expresses in word and actions that Jesus is a friend. Knows God made him/her and takes care of him/her. Is beginning to want to obey God. Worships enthusiastically and loudly. Repeats prayers after others. Acts out Bible stories. | Engages in associative play. Interacts with others on a one-to-one basis. Shows interest in playing with others but may lack skills to initiate activity. Uses gestures to express social needs. | Is moving away from attachments from parent or other significant adults. Recognizes and speaks to/about other adults. Needs reassurance from adults when working or playing. Shows a range of emotions. Demonstrates love towards others. Is building autonomy. | Demonstrates control of whole body movements most of the time. Can run, jump, hop, leap, march. Developing accuracy when throwing and catching. Energetic. | Beginning to identify others and sort into categories (mommy, grandpa, brother). Enjoys telling about colors, numbers and shapes. Enjoys learning new words. Has a general sense about the world but may lack verbal skills to express it. Thinks literally and concretely. Asks 'why' with increasing frequency. Participates in exploration and experimentation. Enjoys learning through his/her senses. Attention span is between 4 and 8 minutes. |

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| I'm Four | <p>Feels secure in God's love and care. Uses the terms God and Jesus interchangeably. Sees Jesus as a man. Expresses Jesus' love for him/her and his/her love for Jesus. Wants to love and obey God. Feels shame and can ask for forgiveness. Worships enthusiastically. Knows prayer is talking to God. Enjoys acting out Bible stories.</p> | <p>Engages in associative play and some cooperative play. Enjoys playing with other children. Asks for help in getting involved in play with others. Developing ability to express needs and ideas in words. Enjoys conversations with others. Will share with a friend. Developing leadership skills.</p> | <p>Enjoys activities without adults. Recognizes that other adults are important (teachers, pastors, police, firefighters, etc. Asks for assistance. Is able to name basic emotions. Demonstrates initiative in tasks and play situations. Gaining control of emotions. Can begin and complete a task.</p> | <p>Demonstrates increasing coordination and accuracy of whole body movements. Can run, leap, jump, hop, slide, gallop and march. Developing accuracy in throwing and catching. Is energetic. Can use fingers and hands effectively.</p> | <p>Uses verbalization in solving problems. Imaginative. Interested more in peers than adults. May defy parents/other adults. Can sort objects into two sets. Can match colors and discriminate between them. Is developing an understanding about the world and how things work. Is able to connect experiences and to verbalize what he/she knows. Is beginning to know 'left' and 'right'. Can retell stories. Thinks literally and concretely. Enjoys intellectual challenges. Enjoys learning through the senses. Participates in exploration and experimentation. Enjoys playing out experiences and concepts. Makes up own stories. Attention span increasing to 12 to 15 minutes.</p> |

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| I'm Five | <p>Understands God can be trusted as he/she trusts adults. Expresses that Jesus loves him/her and that Jesus died for his/her sins. Shares his/her love for Jesus. Is beginning to understand that he/she can have a personal relationship with God. Confuses the terms Jesus and God. Knows sin needs to be punished. Asks for forgiveness. Worships joyfully. Says his/her own prayers. Acts out Bible stories. Sees self as part of God's family.</p> | <p>Engages in cooperative play. Enjoys small group play. Participates in group projects. Sympathizes with others' needs. Likes to assume responsibility. Uses language effectively. Enjoys conversing with others about things in which he/she is interested. Friendly and outgoing.</p> | <p>Enjoys meeting new people and new situations. Is becoming self-sufficient. Can work without a lot of supervision. Has control over emotions most of the time. Expresses needs in words. Has a need to belong. Understands the joys and disappointments of friendships. Shows enthusiasm for new adventures. Satisfied with self.</p> | <p>Can use his/her body with accuracy. Can participate in physical activity for long periods of time. Can run in place, do animal walks and simple jumping jacks. Enjoys moving in different ways. Uses fingers and hands for intricate skills. Good balance. Shows definite hand preference.</p> | <p>Identifies people by their occupations. Counts to 100 and recognizes numerals up to 30. Can group by ones and tens. Can classify things according to color, size and shape into four sets. Has a greater and more complex understanding of how things work. Can connect personal experiences with things in the world. Will try to explain what he/she knows. Will retell stories, analyze pictures, give directions. Identifies coins and recognizes calendars. Can say alphabet in sequence and read names and days. Enjoys new challenges. Enjoys learning through the senses. Engages in exploration and experimentation. Asks questions and attempts to answer. Tries to express reason. Distinguishes between reality and fantasy. Enjoys making up own stories. Attention span increases to 15 to 18 minutes.</p> |

Compiled by
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from these
resources:

Growth and Development of the Young Child, Martha Streufert Jander, DCM, LCMS 1997

In His Hands,
DCS, LCMS 2000

Preschool Learning Foundations, CDE 2008, 2010

Mar-12

SPIRITUAL