

Physical Development of the Preschooler

Unit 4

Ages = 3-5



Height and Weight

- Grow 2 1/2 – 3 inches each year
- Girl preschoolers tend to be shorter – 1/2 inch or less
- Gain 3-5 pounds per year
- 75% of weight gain is due to muscle development
- Girls tend to be about a pound lighter

Other Body Changes

- Until about age 30 months, the waist, hips, and chest measure almost the same.
- By age five years, the waist is smaller than the shoulders and hips.



Bones and Teeth

- Bones are continuing to ossify and grow larger and longer.
- Deciduous teeth begin to fall out between ages four and five.
- Permanent teeth are growing under gums, even if they do not surface yet.
- Malnutrition can harm bone and teeth development!



Organs

- Other organs are maturing
- Heart rate slows and becomes steady
- Digestive tract is maturing, but lagging behind other organs
 - A preschooler digestive tract is often more irritated by high-fiber foods and seasonings than the adults!



Fat and Muscle Tissue

- Boys lose baby fat quicker than girls
- With good nutrition and physical activity, most of the baby fat will have disappeared by their first day of kindergarten.



Motor Development

- A preschooler's reaction time becomes shorter!!
 - Reaction Time = The time required to respond to a sight or sound.



Gross-Motor Development

- Dynamic Balance = Balance maintained while moving
 - Examples: walking a line or balance beam
- Static Balance = Balance maintained while being still
 - Examples: Standing on one foot with arms outstretched or folded across their chest

Which of the two do you think is easier for preschoolers?

Gross-Motor Development

- Throwing ability, distance, speed and accuracy is improved through:
 - Body Rotation = The action of turning the trunk of the body to one side when the hand of the other side is used to throw.
 - Weight Shift = The change of weight from the back foot to the front.

Fine-Motor Development

- Preschoolers' ability to manipulate or work with by using the hands, is still awkward.
- The more they work with objects, their small muscles develop and fine motor skills improve!

Sequence of the Development of the Fine-Motor Skills

Age	Skills
Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Build uneven tower of blocks•Pours water from a pitcher•Copies a circle (with some skill)•Draws a straight line
Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Cuts on a line with scissors•Washes hands•Copies a letter t•Makes a few letters
Five	<p>Folds paper along the diagonal Copies a square and a triangle Traces a diamond shape Laces shoes and may tie them Copies most letters</p>



