What Most Children Do at This Age:

**Social/Emotional**
- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for a crying friend
- Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers”
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self

**Language/Communication**
- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Can name most familiar things
- Understands words like “in,” “on” and “under”
- Says first name, age and sex
- Names a friend
- Says words like “I,” “me,” “we” and “you” and some plurals (cars, dogs, cats)
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

**Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)**
- Can work toys with buttons, levers and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what “two” means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon
- Turns book pages one at a time
- Builds towers of more than 6 blocks
- Screws and unscrews jar lids or turns door handle

**Movement/Physical Development**
- Climbs well
- Runs easily
- Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike)
- Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step

Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your local public school. For more information, go to [www.cdc.gov/concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/concerned) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

Learn the Signs. Act Early.
You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 3-year-old child today.

### What You Can Do for Your 3-Year-Old:

- Go to play groups with your child, or other places where there are other children, to encourage getting along with others.
- Work with your child to solve the problem when he is upset.
- Talk about your child’s emotions. For example, say, “I can tell you feel mad because you threw the puzzle piece.” Encourage your child to identify feelings in books.
- Set rules and limits for your child, and stick to them. If your child breaks a rule, give him a time out for 30 seconds to 1 minute in a chair or in his room. Praise your child for following the rules.
- Give your child instructions with 2 or 3 steps. For example, “Go to your room and get your shoes and coat.”
- Read to your child every day. Ask your child to point to things in the pictures and repeat words after you.
- Give your child an “activity box” with paper, crayons and coloring books. Color and draw lines and shapes with your child.
- Play matching games. Ask your child to find objects in books or around the house that are the same.
- Play counting games. Count body parts, stairs and other things you use or see every day.
- Hold your child’s hand going up and down stairs. When she can go up and down easily, encourage her to use the railing.
- Play outside with your child. Go to the park or hiking trail. Allow your child to play freely and without structured activities.