

## Everyday Tasks Help Children Grow and Learn

Two factors affect your child's growth and learning.

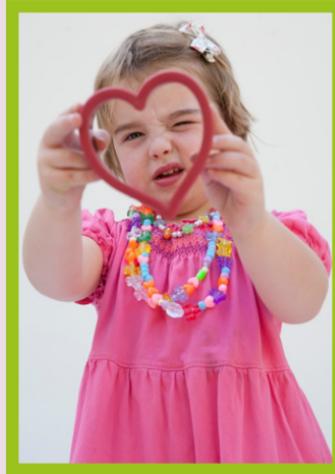
1. Genetics (genes). Parents pass genes on to their child at birth.
2. Environment. A child learns from what he sees, hears and does at home, at school and in the community. It can be *helpful* or *harmful*.

Parents control their child's experiences. Day-to-day activities help kids grow and learn. You *do not need special* games, videos, toys, books or teaching programs to prepare a child for school and success. Use your daily life to teach.

- Say loving words in your home. Treat everyone with respect.
- Read to your child daily. Check out books from the library. Buy used books.
- Teach colors at meal times. Green peas. Orange carrots. Talk about colors when your child gets dressed. Brown pants. Black shoes.

- Count silverware as you and your child set the table. Count groceries as you take them out of the bag.
- Learn to match as you and your child sort laundry.
- Talk about your tasks as you clean, cook, shop and do household chores. Naming objects teaches new words.
- Provide daily playtime – inside and outside.
- Buy toys that are 90% hands-on and 10% motor. They help your child create and imagine.

Every task and activity helps your child learn.



Contact your school to schedule a pre-school screening.

### Log on to Learn

The Parent Help Line — [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

Zero to Three — [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

PBS Parents - Child Development — [www.pbs.org/parents](http://www.pbs.org/parents)

How Kids Develop — [www.howkidsdevelop.com/developSkills.html](http://www.howkidsdevelop.com/developSkills.html)

Regional Office of Education — <http://roe51.org> Find local school information and phone numbers for schools in Sangamon County.

Springfield School District 186 — <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/> Click Schools. Click *School Locator* to find a school in your area. Call that school for information on pre-school screenings and programs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics — [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)



The Live Love Grow Learn series is a Parent Help Line program.



Help is just a phone call away.

For support, tips and referrals, call Parent Help Line at 217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.

Visit our website at [www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org) and our Facebook page: Parent Help Line at St. John's Children's Hospital



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3-4 Years



Live  
Love  
Grow  
Learn

Help your pre-schooler learn social skills and manage emotions.

- Arrange playtime with other children.
- Practice how to share and take turns.
- Give him words to express feelings. "I get mad when Jimmy takes my ball."
- Teach empathy. Say, "I'm sorry" to those you hurt. Hug those who are upset.

**Kids develop at their own rate. These milestones are average. Your child may do them earlier or later.**

**By the end of 4 years, your child should:**

- Catch a large ball with 2 hands. Kick a big ball.
- Hold crayons with her fingers, not her fist.
- Dress himself with a little help. Undress without help.
- Understand 2000–6000 words.
- Show an increased ability to listen to stories, songs and conversations.
- Be able to stand on one foot for 5 seconds.
- Hop on one foot. Walk heel to toe.
- Pedal a tricycle.
- Wash his hands and brush his teeth without help. He may not completely brush his teeth.
- Have speech that is understandable most of the time.
- Be able to eat without much help.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.....20.
- Begin to show if she is right or left handed.
- Stack 8 or more blocks.
- Walk up and down stairs without help.
- Sort objects by color and shape. Count 1 to 7 objects.
- Use some noun phrases like, “big, yellow house”.
- Learn new words quickly – 4 to 6 words a day.
- Use prepositions – of, to, in, on, at, under.

**Talk to your doctor if your child cannot do these skills. Call your child’s school for a free screening.**

**Parents help their pre-schoolers develop and reach full potential. *Everyday*, your pre-schooler learns from you — from what you do and say.**

## **Routines and Rituals**

**Routines and rituals *organize* daily life. They help your child to:**

- Focus on the time of the day – morning, daycare, meals, and bedtime.
- Get ready for outings. For example, prepare *backpacks for going to school* or *family activities*.
- Shift from one activity to the next. After TV time ends, get ready for bed.
- Feel secure – with a sense of control and order. She feels safe when she knows what will happen every day.
- Learn to plan ahead. He knows what comes next.

## **Discipline**

**A 3-year-old wants to be independent. Teach your child that actions have consequences.**

- Set rules and limits. Make them simple. *No name-calling. No hitting. Say please and thank you.*
- Talk about rules – *daily*. Make sure he knows what he can and cannot do and say.
- Make consequences for breaking rules. Be consistent as you enforce these rules.
- Look for and reward good behavior. Praise is powerful. Use praise more than “no”.
- When you tell her what “not to do”, also tell her what she can do instead.

## **Meals and Snacks**

**Pre-schoolers may not be interested in healthy eating. Be patient as you teach “new” eating skills.**

- Provide small bowls, plates and eating utensils. They are easier to use.
- Let your child put food on his plate. Teach him to start with small amounts. He can ask for more.
- Let her stop eating when she feels full. Do not make her eat everything.
- Allow dessert or treats only if your child is also eating healthy food.
- Allow him a small healthy snack between meals if he is hungry. He needs to learn when he is hungry and full.
- Never use food as a reward. Instead, use praise, hugs and positive attention.

## **Fears**

**Children fear what they do not understand. They are often afraid of what is new and different. Help your child overcome fears.**

- Do not make fun of his fears. Tell him he is safe. Hold him until he is calm.
- Show her that you are not afraid. She learns fears from you. She also learns how not to be afraid.
- Answer his questions. Keep your answers simple. Do not give details.

- Take small steps. Praise attempts and successes.
- Read children’s books that deal with fears.

## **Safety**

**Three-to-four-year-old kids love to explore their world. Protect your child from accidents.**

- Teach him to stay out of traffic. For example, *do not run into the street after a ball*.
- Practice looking both ways before she crosses a street. Explain how drivers may not see her in time to stop.
- Check outdoor play equipment for safety before he plays.
- Watch your child at all times – *around water, at the playground, at theme parks and public places*.
- Teach her about strangers. Tell her what to do if a stranger will not leave her alone.

