

Healthy Kids Check Childhood Development

- Early intervention is essential if outcomes are to be optimal for the child
- Development varies from child to child
- Child development is a process affected by various factors
- It can occur in peaks and troughs and can plateau at different stages
- 17% of children have a developmental delay but many are not diagnosed prior to starting school.

Being Four Means.....

- I have my own personality
- I have a great imagination
- I am learning to share
- I like to play with friends
- I like to ask lots of questions
- I am trying to be more cooperative
- I love dressing up and explore my world through play
- I can follow simple directions

Gross Motor Development

- Can confidently walk and run, runs on tiptoes
- Push and pull objects
- Can negotiate stairs one foot to a step
- Skilful climbers on play equipment and other household objects
- Able to ride a tricycle, may be riding bike with or without training wheels
- Can stand on one foot for 3-5 seconds; able to hop
- Able to bend and pick objects from floor bending from waist
- Able to sit on floor cross-legged
- Becoming more confident and skilled at ball games such as throwing; catching; kicking and bouncing

Fine Motor Development

- Able to build tower of blocks of ten or more
- Can build three steps with six blocks
- Begins to hold pencil in adult grip
- Can copy a cross, can draw a square, letters V, H, T and O
- Drawings of people have head, legs, body, arms and fingers
- Able to thread beads on string
- Able to pick up small objects with thumb and fore finger
- Can do simple puzzles of about 15 pieces
- Learning to cut with scissors
- Feeding self with utensils

Speech and Language

- Vocabulary consists of up to 1200 words
- Sentences are complex
- Speech is becoming grammatically correct and able to be understood by most people
- Sounds that are difficult to pronounce "s, r, z, th, v, f"
- Able to give full name and address
- Can give a detailed account of events that have occurred recently
- Can recite stories and songs
- Often can count up to 10-20
- Begins to ask questions "Why; When; What; How"

Social and Emotional Development

- Becoming more independent and strong willed
- Can have verbal altercations with other children if needs are not met "I'm not your friend, That's mine! "
- Imaginative play with dressing up "Look at me I'm superman"
- Needs and wants the companionship of peers, alternately cooperative and aggressive
- Can display concern for siblings and or peers
- Enjoys interactions with peers
- Role playing adult roles "Let's play Mums and Dads"
- Can have fears "there's a monster under my bed"
- Begin to understand how behaviour attracts attention "Showing off"
- Developing a sense of humour, will laugh at funny things

When to be concerned

- If parent or carer is concerned
- If child is unable to do most of the activities mentioned
- Child unable to jump with both feet
- If child is behind in comparison to their peers
- If child is not understood by most people when speaking
- If child shows no interest in their surroundings or other children
- If child can not hear a whisper or constantly says "What"
- If child has significant behaviour issues- aggression or withdrawal
- If child is ritualistic and displays repetitive behaviours
- If child's development has regressed

Toileting

- Toilet training works well when the child has shown signs of readiness and there is no pressure from parents/carers
- Children must be able to attend to clothing in order for independent toileting to be successful
- Some children may not be dry at night until early years of primary school
- If child has been constipated there can be a decrease in sensation and a loss of control resulting in soiling

Concerns

- Soiling continuously
- Long term constipation
- Blood in stools
- Wetting again after being dry during the day (this does not include intermittent accidents)
- Not able to be toilet trained and not usually dry during the day

References

- Child, Youth and Women's Health Service, South Australia Health www.cyh.com
- Parenting South Australia, www.parentingsa.gov.au
- Sheridan, M (2008). From birth to five years. Routledge: New York

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