



Your Preschooler's big gains

The biggest physical change is that his body is transforming from a baby to a child. Here's what you can expect to see:

- Body and legs are more in proportion to each other.
- Percentage of body fat peaks at age one, then decreases.
- Muscle tone and posture improve, so he appears longer and leaner.
- Face becomes less round.

Because his growth has slowed down, your child may be eating less than before. Just continue to offer healthy foods and encourage well-rounded eating habits. Early eating behavior helps set the stage for life-long habits and can influence his health throughout life.

Learning how to be social

You'll see a lot of different sides of your child's personality now. There are times when he cares only about what he wants, doesn't share and prefers to play alone. Then, suddenly, he's playing pretend, taking turns in a game and imitating what other people say and do.

Understand that he's learning important social skills:

- Appreciation for how others feel is part of his emotional maturity.
- Role-playing helps him prepare for future social situations, as it helps him understand how others will respond to his actions.

This learning process will be a reminder of what a valuable role model you are for him. He's watching and listening to your every move.

His thinking grows up

You'll notice a few key changes in his intellectual development that signal a more mature way of thinking. Gone are the days when he learned only by touching and listening. Here's what you can expect from your child now:

- He can form mental images and work some problems in his head.
- He's beginning to understand relationships between objects. Sorting similarly shaped toys and easy puzzles are something he can handle.
- He understands cause and effect. Flip a switch and the toy turns on. Wow!
- His play makes more logical sense and has a flow. Putting his teddy bear to bed means first putting on the bear's pajamas, then tucking him in and covering up with a blanket.