

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual beliefs are closely related to the moral and ethical portion of the self concept and must be considered as part of the child's basic needs assessment. Children need to have meaning, purpose and hope in their lives. Also, the need for confession and forgiveness is present even in very young children. Extending beyond religion, spiritual affects the whole person: mind, body and spirit. James Fowler has identified seven stages in the development of faith; four of which are closely associated with and parallel cognitive and psychological development in childhood.

STAGE - 0 UNDIFFERENTIATED FAITH

Birth - 2 years (Approximate)

During this stage children have no concept of right or wrong, no beliefs, and no convictions to guide their behavior. However, the beginning of a faith is established with the development of basic trust through their relationships with the primary caregiver. This is to paralinguistic and preconception stage that embodies the trust between parents and infants. The primary caregiver provides the infants and young child with a variety of experience that encourages the development of mutuality, trust, love and dependence, progressing to autonomy.

STAGE - 1 INTUITIVE PROJECTIVE FAITH

Toddler and Preschool Ages 3-7 (Approximate)

This stage primarily is a stage of imitating the behavior of others. Children imitate the religious gestures and behaviors of others without comprehending any meaning or significance to the activities. If sins are washed away, then perhaps one can see the sins floating on the water after a baptism. The child becomes very upset when the adult rituals they have learned are interrupted or changed.

During the pre school years children assimilate some of the values and beliefs of their parents. Parental attitudes towards moral codes and religious beliefs convey children what they consider to be good and bad. Children still imitate behavior at this age and follow parental beliefs as part of their daily lives rather than through understanding of their basic concepts.

The danger of this stage is the fears inherent in a child's mind. A child may become terrified of hell and not be able to sleep, or an adult may use the fears of a child to manipulate the child into cooperation by descriptions of God's punishment.

Fowler, James W., (1995) *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* Harper Collins.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR

2

YEAR OLD

AGES AND STAGES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LANGUAGE

- ☞ Uses two or three words in sentences
- ☞ Uses telegraphic sentences: "throw ball"
- ☞ Has difficulty in pronunciation
- ☞ "Mine" most prominent pronoun
- ☞ Spontaneous language; rhythmic, repetitive
- ☞ Constant talking; interested in sound
- ☞ Sings phrases of songs, not on pitch
- ☞ Can't articulate feelings
- ☞ Frustrated when not understood
- ☞ May stutter
- ☞ Asks "Whassat?" about pictures
- ☞ Can match words with objects
- ☞ Repeats words and phrases
- ☞ Uses 50 to 300 words

INTELLECTUAL - COGNITIVE

- 📖 Investigates with touch and taste
- 📖 Intrigued by water, washing;
- 📖 likes to fill and empty things
- 📖 Has limited attention span
- 📖 Lives in present
- 📖 Understands only familiar concepts
- 📖 Colors and numbers are meaningless
- 📖 Needs own name used
- 📖 Likes simple make-believe
- 📖 Does one thing at a time
- 📖 Remembers order of routines
- 📖 Recalls where toys are left
- 📖 Knows and can point to: arm, nose, mouth, feet, eyes
- 📖 Names familiar objects in books

Each of us wonders whether our children are developing appropriately and if they're achieving as they should. These are guidelines on what to expect from your child at age three. Remember that these are only guidelines. Child development is not age-specific. Each child develops at his or her own special rate.

SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL

- ♥ Self-centered
- ♥ Unable to share, possessive
- ♥ Clings to familiar, resistant to change
- ♥ Ritualistic, insists on routines
- ♥ Dependent
- ♥ Likes one adult at a time
- ♥ Quits readily, easily frustrated
- ♥ Goes to extremes
- ♥ Impulsive, shifts activities suddenly
- ♥ Easily distracted
- ♥ Pushes, shoves
- ♥ Finicky, fussy eater, some food jags
- ♥ Refers to self by given name
- ♥ Treats people as inanimate objects
- ♥ Dawdles, slow
- ♥ Plays parallel
- ♥ Watches others
- ♥ Likes people
- ♥ Excited about own capabilities

PHYSICAL - MOTOR

- Uses whole-body action
- Pushes, pulls, pokes
- Climbs into things
- Leans forward while running
- Climbs stairs one by one
- Depends on adults for dressing
- Can help undress
- Has reached one-half potential height
- Bladder/bowel control
- Begins feeding self
- Thumb-forefinger opposition complete
- Grasps cup with two hands
- Awkward with small objects
- Lugs, tumbles, topples, unsteady
- Alternates hands, preference developing
- Can rotate to fit objects
- Expresses emotions bodily
- Sensory oriented
- Cuts last teeth
- Has difficulty relaxing

Reference:

Gordon, A. & Brown, K. W. (1996).

Beginnings and Beyond. New York: Delmar Publishing.