

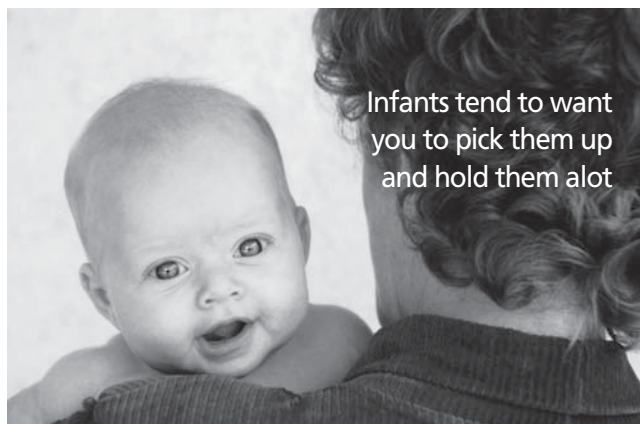
## Developmentally appropriate expectations

Caregivers must understand developmental stages of growth in order to appropriately guide children's behavior. Caregivers should not expect children to do things that they are not developmentally ready to do. Nor should children be scolded for behaviors that are normal for their age. Doing so forces children to fail, to feel badly about themselves, and/or to feel anger toward the caregiver. Inappropriate expectations also make managing a group of children considerably more difficult.

The following are examples of typical behaviors caregivers can expect to see in children of different ages.

### Infants (1 to 12 month-olds) tend to:

- ◆ Communicate their needs through crying
- ◆ Drop things, often on purpose, and expect you to pick them up and give them back to them (this is often a game they enjoy)
- ◆ Be messy (it is inappropriate to expect them to pick up after themselves or feed themselves neatly)
- ◆ Want you pick them up and hold them a lot
- ◆ Put everything within their reach in their mouths
- ◆ Not understand verbal requests to stop what they are doing, and
- ◆ Practice new skills and repeat new experiences with enthusiasm and perseverance. When they learn to bang things together, they bang everything! When they learn to crawl, they crawl everywhere!



Infants tend to want you to pick them up and hold them a lot

**Note:** It is never appropriate to discipline or scold infants for their behavior.

### Toddlers (1 to 2 ½ year-olds) tend to:

- ◆ Endlessly ask “Why?”
- ◆ Repeat the same activity many times
- ◆ Say “No!” and say it often!
- ◆ Have a short memory for rules or details, requiring frequent reminders
- ◆ Want to do things for themselves
- ◆ Be frustrated when they do not have the skills to do what they want to do
- ◆ Get upset by disrupted routines
- ◆ Grab things from another child if they want it
- ◆ Test their physical limits by climbing, running, and pulling themselves up on things, sometimes getting into predicaments
- ◆ Be distracted easily
- ◆ Solve disputes physically because they have not fully mastered language, and
- ◆ Bite their playmates out of frustration, anger, or to get what they want.

### Preschoolers (2 ½ to 5-year-olds) tend to:

- ◆ Increasingly feel they’re “all grown up” and know everything (they want to make their own choices and have control over their time, clothes, food, toys, and friends)
- ◆ Become social (they spend increasing time playing with each other and getting silly together)
- ◆ Begin to develop friendships
- ◆ Be sophisticated enough in their language to play with words (they mimic other people and experiment with bad language)
- ◆ Be curious about each other’s bodies
- ◆ Imitate violent, strong role models in their fantasy play
- ◆ Have less need for precise routines or orderly procedures, especially as they turn four or five, and
- ◆ Begin to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity.