

How a Child Grows

Adapted from Erna Fishhaut



- **No two children are alike.** Each one is different. Each child is a growing, changing person.
- **A child is not a small adult.** He does not think, feel, or react as a grownup person does. Children cannot be made to grow. But even though children will grow in some way, no matter what care is provided for them, they cannot reach their best growth possibilities unless they receive adequate care.
- **All normal children follow a similar sequence of growth.** For example, a child crawls before she walks. No two children will pass through this sequence in just the same way. Some will grow slower or faster than others and still be normal children.
- A child must successfully complete one stage of growth before he can successfully manage the next stage. For example, a child cannot be a successful three-year-old without first being a successful two-year-old.
- **Growth is continuous, but it is not always steady and does not always go smoothly.** For example, the pleasant, wanting-to-please three-year-old becomes the rebellious, stubborn, imaginative four-year-old.
- We must know all sides of a child's development if we are to understand her.
- Every child needs good physical care. A fatigued child, poorly-fed or unnourished child, or physically ill child cannot grow as full as he might otherwise.
- **Behavior is influenced by needs.** The active 15-month-old baby who touches, feels, and puts into her mouth everything about her is responding to a growth need—not just being a nuisance and “into everything.”
- A child needs to feel that he is loved, that he belongs, and that he is wanted.
- It is important that experiences offered to him fit his maturity level. **If he is pushed ahead too soon, if too much is expected before he is ready, his failures may discourage him.**



A five-year-old is not an incomplete adult, a young ten-year-old, or a seven-year-old in the making.

A five-year-old is a perfect, complete, and delightful person, fully alive and aware.

**A five-year-old is a wonder—to be enjoyed, savored, and celebrated—
JUST AS IS.**