

Science Development and Young Children

Children are born with a sense of wonder and a passion to understand the world around them. They naturally ask questions, observe, and try out solutions—all important parts of thinking scientifically. As young children explore through play, they learn many science concepts. And even more learning occurs when a child is offered a variety of learning opportunities.

Here's a look at how children develop science skills, age by age:

A child may

0
to
2



- * use her senses to identify objects and people around her.
- * begin to predict and anticipate sequences of events and notice cause and effect.
- * begin to classify objects in a simple but intelligent way.
- * use language to classify objects according to basic characteristics (toy animals, blocks, books).

2
to
3



- * ask many questions about why things are the way they are and how things work.
- * observe similarities and differences between objects.
- * conduct his own experiments, such as stacking the blocks in a new way.
- * be able to predict cause and effect.

3
to
4



- * enjoy sorting and classifying objects.
- * begin to classify things by their functions.
- * notice and compare similarities and differences between objects.
- * use words to describe the things she observes.
- * become interested in complex experiments and using new materials in a variety of ways.

4
to
5



- * enjoy exploring and using new materials and objects.
- * use concepts such as height, size, and length to compare objects.
- * enjoy learning about real-life places and things and how they work.

5
to
5



- * engage in long-term science projects such as growing plants, recording the weather, and collecting and comparing shells.
- * classify items by a variety of similarities and differences.
- * have a long attention span for activities that interest him.