

# RUNNING INTO YOUR THREES: HOW TO KEEP UP WITH YOUR DEVELOPING CHILD

Running is an important skill for your toddler to reach by the time they are 3 years old. Before they can run, they need to have good balance, coordination, strength and know where their body is and how to move it. The other skills 3 year olds can do is walk on their toes, walk up steps in a step over step pattern, and pedal a tricycle.



## WHAT TO EXPECT AT THREE?

### COGNITION MILESTONES

Cognition is what allows us to learn, think, and problem solve. These skills help us:

- Organize information
- Manage time
- Act appropriately
- Complete steps to reach a goal

#### **BY AGE 3**

- Works toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts
- Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people
- Does puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
- Understands what “two” means
- Copies a circle with pencil or crayon



### SPEECH/LANGUAGE MILESTONES

Speech and language skills allow us to effectively and efficiently communicate our thoughts, feelings, and needs with other individuals.

#### **BY AGE 3**

- Follows multi-step instructions (2-3 steps)
- Understands words like ‘in’, ‘on’, and ‘under’
- Recognizes and names many common objects
- Says first name, age, sex

### FINE MOTOR MILESTONES

Fine motor skills are the ability to make precise movements using the small muscles in the wrist and hands.

#### **BY AGE 3**

- Enjoys playing with toys of different shapes and textures
- Plays with puzzles, blocks, paper, and crayons
- Strings four large beads
- Turns single pages of a book
- Snips with scissors



### SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL MILESTONES

Social and emotional skills allow us to understand thoughts and feelings and communicate them effectively.

#### **BY AGE 3**

- Can play in small groups with other children
- Understands concepts like ‘mine’, ‘his’, and ‘hers’
- Experiences and shows many different emotions



# CRANIUM HULLABALOO

<https://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/16518.pdf>

## Developmental Areas:

- Gross Motor: running from pad to pad
- Cognitive: knowing different colors (red, green, blue, yellow, purple) and shapes (circle, square, triangle)
- Social and Emotional: multiplayer game; can play with friends and family to “compete”
- Speech and Language: say aloud the color, shape, and object of the pad

## Instructions:

- Spread the 16 pads around on the floor, mixing up the shapes and colors
- Start on a purple “cranium pad”
- The game will tell you to run to either a certain shape or color
  - This will repeat for a few rounds
- When the game yells “freeze!” stop on the pad you are on (more than one player can be on the same pad)
- The game will then pick a random object on one of the pads (i.e., elephant, piano) and the player on that pad is considered the “winner”



## Equipment Needed:

- 16 pads:
  - 4 purple “starting pads”
  - 3 green (1 triangle, 1 square, 1 circle)
  - 3 red (1 triangle, 1 square, 1 circle)
  - 3 blue (1 triangle, 1 square, 1 circle)
  - 3 yellow (1 triangle, 1 square, 1 circle)
- Each pad has a picture of a random object on it (i.e., piano, ice cream cone, elephant)

## Modifications:

- When the child reaches the certain pad, have them name the shape and color of the pad and have them read the name of the random object that is listed on it

# RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

## Developmental Areas:

- Gross Motor: running and stopping quickly
- Cognitive: knowing different colors (red, green)
- Social and Emotional: multiplayer game; can play with friends and family to “compete”

**Instructions:** In this game, one person plays the “stop light” and the rest try to touch him/her

- All children are lined about 15 feet away from stop light
- The stop light faces away from the line of kids and says “green light”. At this point the kids are allowed to move towards the stoplight
- At any point, the stop light may say “red light!” and turn around. If any of the kids are caught moving after this has occurred, they are out.
- Play resumes when the stop light turns back around and says “green light”.
- The stop light wins if all the kids are out before anyone is able to touch him/her. The first player to touch the stop light wins the game and earns the right to be “stop light” for the next game.

**Equipment Needed:** space to run

**Modifications:** add a yellow command which requires the kids to run in slow motion



# OBSTACLE COURSE

## **Developmental Areas:**

- Gross Motor Skills: Running, crawling, tossing, tricycling and jumping
- Fine Motor skills: Picking up toys and other objects
- Cognition: Listening skills and identifying their colors and animal sounds
- Social and Emotional: Neighborhood kids and family can be incorporated
- Speech and Language: Saying colors, toys and animal sounds out loud



## **Instructions:**

Get creative, look around the house and create an age appropriate obstacle course for your child. Keep in mind that three year olds should be working on motor skills such as jumping, running, pedaling a tricycle, and throwing objects. Add in challenges from other developmental areas to increase difficulty. An example is:

- First, child will start at the starting line
- Next, the child will jump over the toy animal and say the sound it makes
- Then, the child will jump through hula hoops on their way to the kiddie pool
- Once they get to the kiddie pool, the child will have to scoop out a certain colored rubber duck and toss them into a bucket
- After the correct rubber ducks have been thrown into the bucket, the child will crawl under 3 arched pool noodles
- Finally, the child will run back to the starting line to finish!

## **Equipment Needed:**

- Anything around the house that is safe

## **Modifications:**

Obstacle courses can be made to be more challenging and more interactive. Depending on your child's current motor and cognition skills, you can build the course around your child. If your child has a tricycle, it would be a great idea to substitute the running with the tricycle every few laps. If your child cannot jump over the toy animal, start with taking a step over the animal.

# SIMON SAYS

## **Developmental Areas:**

- Gross motor skills - jumping, hopping, dancing, running
- Cognition - listening skills & ability to follow direction
- Speech and Language - locate blocks of various shapes and colors, use simple gestures
- Fine motor skills - draw a shape, stack blocks, or place small into small openings
- Social and Emotional - make a sad face, make an angry face, play with other kids



## **Instructions:**

- Designate someone to be "Simon" (can be the caregiver or child). Explain that "Simon" will give directions to perform a specific task. When "Simon says," everyone should follow the directions. If the task is done when you don't say "Simon says," there is a consequence. Be sure to do the tasks along with them!
- Task examples: jump 5 times, stand on one leg, hop twice on one leg, dance, touch your nose, stand on your tiptoes, run to the cone etc.
- Consequence examples: hop 5 times, count to 5, spin around, etc.

## **Equipment Needed:**

Area with plenty of room

Optional: colored objects or blocks, shaped objects, crayons, paper, pipe cleaners, small jar

## **Modifications:**

- If differentiating between when Simon does or does not say something is difficult, say "touch your nose" instead of "Simon says touch your nose." Then work up from there.
- Perform tasks in relation to emotion such as make a sad face, make an angry face etc., or play with other kids or family members and take turns being "Simon" to encourage use of social-emotional skills.
- Ask the child to pick up or locate blocks of various shapes and colors, point to familiar objects throughout the house, use gestures such as waving hello, nodding yes, giving a thumbs up, or provide 2 step instructions ("Simon says bend down and touch your toes") to work on speech and language development.
- Have the child draw a shape, stack blocks, or place small, non-hazardous objects such as a pipe cleaner into small openings to work on fine motor skills.

# WINNING AND LOSING

A life lesson that is important to teach children at this age is that life isn't always about winning and losing, it's also about recognizing the emotions that come with it and reacting to those situations with good sportsmanship. It is important to help your children strive for goals and success, but to also understand that it is ok if something didn't go to plan. Parents can help develop this understanding by teaching their children how to win and lose.



Consider adding a competitive edge to the activities explained in this brochure by adding other players. This will give the child the exposure of “winning” and “losing” in a safe, supportive environment where they can develop socially and emotionally.

Beforehand, talk it out with the child and help them understand the scenarios that could occur, and explain to them that if they lose they can move on and maybe win the next game. Also explain how to lose gracefully, with suggestions like “congratulations,” “good game” and giving the winner a high five. After the game, no matter the outcome, praise their effort and express why you are proud. Give them the tools to make the best of the situation, win or lose!

# SET-UP AND CLEAN-UP

Consider incorporating the set-up and clean-up into your child's activity to help develop responsibility, organizational skills and spatial awareness. Additionally, consider making a switch from play time to bath time or to dinner time, for example. Switch things up to provide practice with adjusting to changing situations to improve mental flexibility.



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