

# Children's development

There are a number of important things to know about preschool children's development. Brain growth and thinking abilities are a result of children's age and stage of maturity. Pre-schoolers tend to:

- be self-focused — they view everything from their own perspective. This can mean they believe things happen because of them — such as parents getting angry (even when it is unrelated to them)
- have trouble seeing another person's point of view
- have difficulty consistently understanding the concept of sharing
- often believe what others tell them, for example, they are bad/shy/silly/naughty
- have trouble understanding that some things are permanent — such as death or parents separating
- often misinterpret words due to their limited knowledge and language skills
- have difficulty with the concept of time — they might not be able to monitor what five minutes or an hour mean, and concepts such as next week or next year are often meaningless to them
- worsen in their behaviour when they are tired, sick or hungry.

Parents can sometimes feel that their pre-school child is **manipulating** them. But at this age and stage, children do not yet have the concepts of being able to *make* others do things or the *goal* to change others in this way. Their behaviour is directly related to whether others are meeting their emotional and physical needs.

Children at this stage of development require:

- consistency — especially between different parents/carers
- clear boundaries
- routines — so they can predict what happens at different times
- stability.

