



My how I've grown!

Curriculum Idea: We are living beings that grow and develop. As time moves on, we grow and change in many different ways.

Related Episodes: Mini Monkey

Ages: 3-6

Subject: Life Science

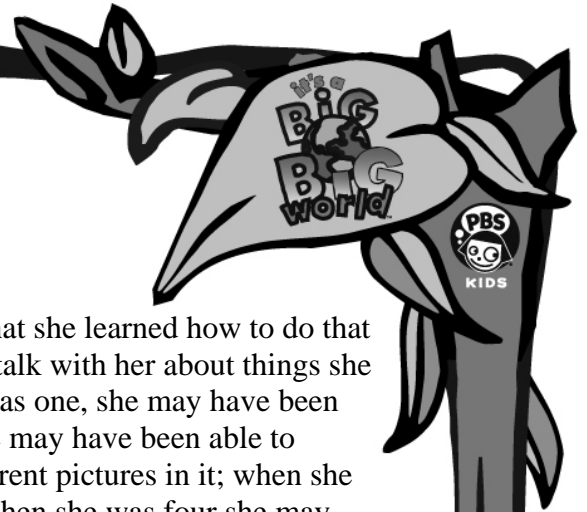
Skills: Understanding Cause and Effect, Comparison

Materials: Paper, tape, crayons/markers/pencils [optional: pictures of child at different ages, glue]

Directions: Ask the child to draw pictures of things she has recently learned how to do. Some examples might include riding a bike, reading a book by herself, playing a new computer game, or participating in an activity with older siblings or friends.

Now look at the pictures and ask her to think about the ways she has grown and developed that allows her to do these new things. Did her legs grow longer so she could reach the bike pedals? Or did her hands get bigger so she could hold the computer mouse? These are examples of physical growth. Or did she learn how to read sentences so she could read the complete book? Or did she learn how to cooperate with a group so she could play with older kids? These are examples of how she changed and developed mentally as she grew. Talk about how a result of growing and developing is that you are able to do new things.

When people talk about a “growth chart” they are often talking about a way to track how much taller a person has grown, physical development. Tell her that mental development is also a part of growing, and to show that, you are going to make a “mental development chart.” Get a piece of paper that is longer than your child (or tape several pieces together). Along the side mark off the years of your child’s life (1 year old, 2 years old, 3 years old etc) up to her current age. You may want to glue a picture of your child at each of these ages next to the mark.



At each age, have your child draw a picture of something new that she learned how to do that year that shows how she developed mentally. You will have to talk with her about things she learned when she was a baby/toddler. For example, when she was one, she may have been able to point to an object that she wanted; when she was two she may have been able to choose the book she wanted you to read to her and identify different pictures in it; when she was three she may have been able to share toys with a sibling; when she was four she may have been able to write her name, etc. Hang the chart up so everyone can see how she is developing mentally.

Talk About It: Growing allows us to do new things. Have your child to name some things that she can't do now but she would like to be able to do, for example, reach the highest cabinets in the kitchen or drive a car. Ask her what kinds of ways she will need to grow and/or develop before she can do those things. Will she need to grow taller? Or learn how to read road signs? Are these examples of growing physically or mentally?

Discuss how her physical skills can also change and become more coordinated and precise through practice. For example, if she wants to become a better piano player, she may need to grow physically so her fingers are longer and she can reach more keys easily, but she will still need to practice her coordination if she wants to improve. Or to ride a bike, even if her legs are long enough to reach the pedals, she may still need to practice her physical skills like balance and moving the pedals around quickly to ride without training wheels.

Take It Further: Make a "height chart" and mark off how your child has grown since birth. Hang it next to the mental development chart. As your child gets older, continue to update both charts.