

The Preschooler Personality

Preschoolers know much better than they behave, and their good intentions can be short lived. There is no better test to adult maturity than the immature ways of the preschooler. The secret to taking care of them is to understand their immaturity isn't a mistake but part of their developmental design.

This document summarizes the characteristics that often frustrate or baffle adults but are actually a natural part of the preschooler's development.

Attachment

- Seek contact and closeness
- Fear separation
- Need connection with caregivers

Emotion

- Prone to frustration and aggression
- Lack of self-control; impulsive
- Egocentric (focused on their own needs and perspective)
- Lack true consideration for others
- May be shy with unfamiliar people

Play

- Playful and imaginative
- Use play as a primary way to learn and express themselves
- May resist direction or instructions
- Driven by curiosity and exploration

Key Development Insight

Preschoolers are immature for a reason. Their brains are still developing, and this stage is necessary for healthy growth. Their behaviors—while sometimes challenging—are part of normal development rather than problems to be “fixed.”

Important Takeaway for Adults

Understanding preschoolers means recognizing:

- Their behavior is developmentally appropriate
- Their intentions are often good, even when actions are not
- Guidance and patience are more effective than punishment

Source: Adapted from Preschool Personality Infographic
Dr. Deborah MacNamara - Excerpt from the book *Rest, Play, Grow: Making Sense of Preschoolers (or anyone who acts like one)*