

About Your Cubbies

Preschool children develop in amazing ways:

- Spiritually they are learning to trust.
- Mentally they are exploring everything.
- Physically they are changing dramatically.
- Emotionally they express intense feelings.
- Socially they are developing personal relationships.

How do preschoolers think and learn?

Preschoolers are sensory learners. They take words literally. Most of their knowledge is intangible thought. In other words, they might be able to grasp the creation concept in Genesis 1:1. They can visualize everything taking place. But they can't really understand what it means.

For real learning to take place, preschoolers need to participate in a sensory activity that reinforces the Bible truth being taught. Preschoolers need to touch, see, hear, taste, smell or vocalize. As their physical senses reinforce what they have been taught, truth is confirmed. Then the truth can become reality to a preschooler. This is called concrete learning. And it's one reason why Total Time Teaching is so important for preschoolers.

About Your Cubbies ... Mentally

They are exploring everything! Cubbies are hungry for all types of mental stimulation. They love the experience of learning; it is a fantastic adventure for them. They are curious about everything. This is one reason Cubbies love to come to club – it provides a variety of enjoyable learning experiences.

Here are some other mental characteristics of preschoolers. Cubbies are:

- Learning language skills. They love to talk. Cubbies leaders need to help preschoolers learn the language of God.
- Curious. They ask endless questions. Leaders should use questions requiring more than a yes or no answer to help them think.
- Literal minded. They believe exactly what they hear. Take care not to use symbolic words (including songs), phrases or instructions. Examples to avoid are phrases like "ask Jesus into your heart" or "washed in the blood."
- Developing basic spiritual concepts and character traits that will define who they become. Leaders can best encourage exemplary character by modeling it.

About Your Cubbies ... Physically

Physically, preschoolers are total people. Their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual states are so strongly and intricately interwoven that they are inseparable. For example, Cubbies' physical movements are more than just activity. They are also a strong emotional experience. Cubbies may show happiness when they can zip their own coat or snap the Velcro® on their sneakers. To preschoolers this simple activity is a physical and emotional accomplishment. The children's physical condition affects them mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Here are some other physical characteristics of preschoolers. Cubbies are:

- Constantly active. Cubbies always seem to be moving. Alternating physical activities with quiet periods makes sense. Use teaching methods that encourage active learning.
- Playing hard and tire easily. Vary the intensity of play activities.
- Developing large and small muscle control. Play Time should include games that provide fun ways to practice muscle control.
- Adventuresome. They are learning. Use physical activity and play to teach your Cubbies.

About Your Cubbies ... Self-image

For most preschoolers, the Cubbies program is their first exposure to awards. While in Cubbies, they will begin to develop attitudes toward achievement. The way they think about achievement will have an effect upon their self-image.

A person's relationship with himself greatly affects the way he looks at the world and, ultimately, all areas of his life. One key distinction needs to be made here. There is a great deal of difference between self-love (the worship of self, which is idolatry) and self-image (one's conception of oneself or one's role). Our self-image is the way we see ourselves, not just as we are by nature, but as we are because of God's grace in our lives.

A proper self-image is only possible when a person becomes a new creature in Christ. Because most Cubbies are just beginning to understand the truths of Scripture and haven't yet trusted Christ as Savior, what can you teach them about self-image? Cubbies need to know they are valuable people, because they are each a unique and wonderful creation of God. They are made in His image, for His good purposes.

About Your Cubbies ... Socially

Preschoolers are developing relationships. In addition to discoveries through learning, Cubbies are making another wonderful discovery – friends. As is the case with other areas of relational development, Cubbies learn best about interpersonal skills through observing adults.

Here are some other social characteristics of preschoolers. Cubbies are:

- Learning how to interact with others. Cubbies leaders need to model getting along with others. They also need to provide guidelines on how to do this. (Jesus is the best example.)
- Experiencing a strong desire to please others. Encourage Cubbies to behave in ways that please Jesus.
- Friendly and enjoy playing with others. Encourage Cubbies to show love to others.
- Still in a world that revolves around themselves and Mommy and Daddy. Cubbies leaders need to develop healthy relationships with each child's parents.