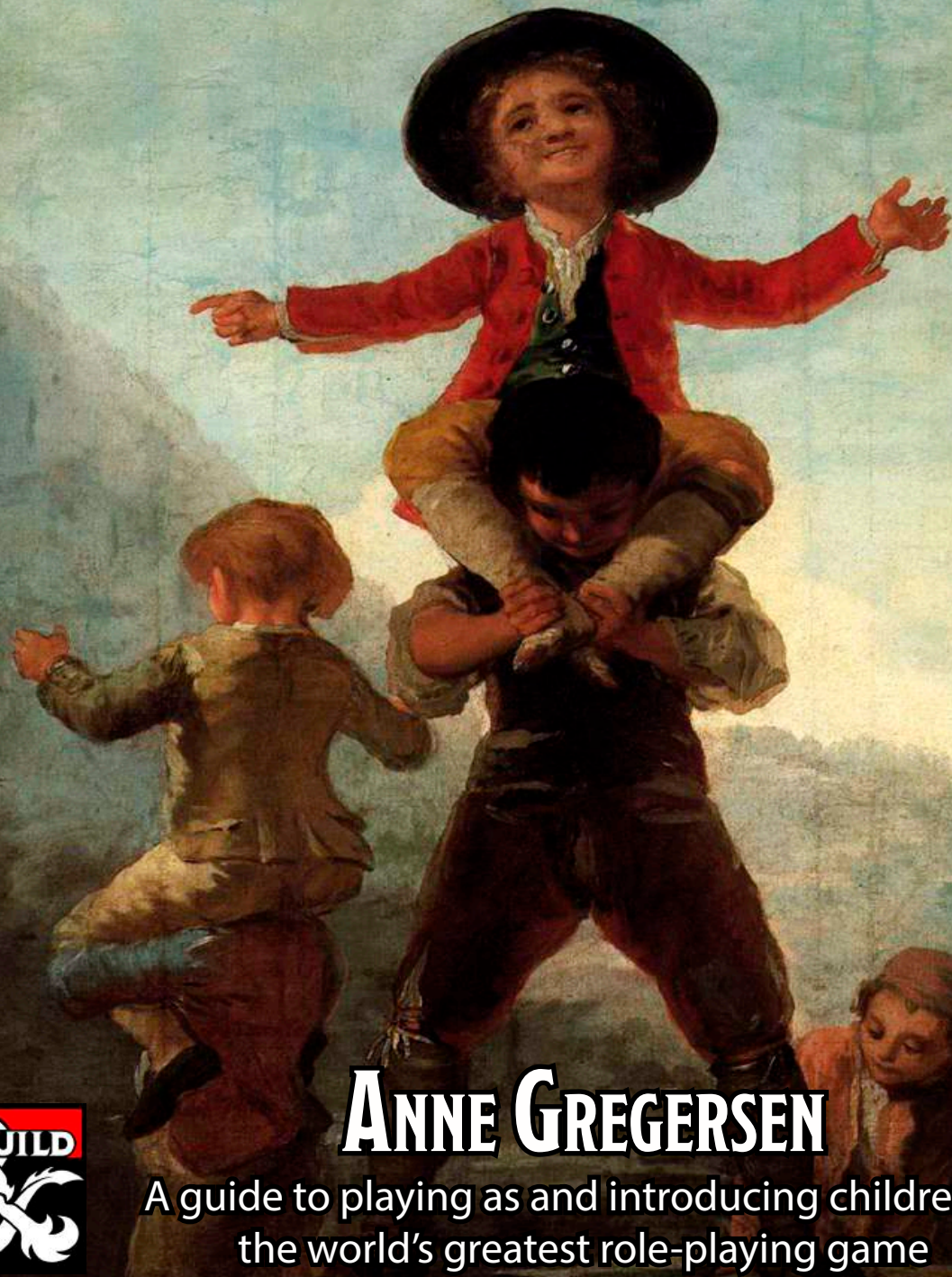# LITTLE HEROES

A Guide to Children at the Table

Anne Gregersen

A guide to playing as and introducing children to the world's greatest role-playing game

If you want your children to be intelligent,
read them fairy tales

If you want them to be very intelligent,
read them more fairy tales

- Albert Einstein

CREDITS

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Introduction

In the universe of Dungeons and Dragons, mighty adventurers frolic about the countryside, saving people from cultists and defeating ancient, powerful beasts thought only to exist in myth and legend. Tales of their actions are told far and wide, shared by many a tavern dweller who delight those around them with stories of these great heroes and the glorious deeds they have done.

But how did they get to that point? Usually, adventurers are already grown and capable when they set out on their heroic crusades. Old enough to know better, some would say, yet also young enough that they don't wish to settle down just yet. Adventurers rarely leave ties behind them, having little to no family and if they do, they are put in the background to be forgotten as the adventurer dives into yet another trap-ridden dungeon.

This book will explore a lesser known group of heroes. Heroes who have not grown to greatness and whose deeds are not yet tales told around a campfire. These little heroes might stumble onto the path of an already existing group of adventurers, following them as they carve their way into history, or they may have their curiosity get the better of them and go explore the forgotten crevasses of a haunted house.

Or perhaps they are sitting at your table, eagerly waiting for their story to begin.

Player Characters

Before proceeding with reading the hows and whats found in this document, it should be made clear to everyone that children are precious things. In stories, they tend to play the role of plot device, cleverly placed to move the party along the main storyline and it is easy to understand why. Those wearing the moniker of 'hero' will have a hard time looking themselves in the eye if they let something as pure and innocent as a child come to harm.

Involving children in the story, be it either as a player character or an NPC, automatically raises the stakes in a way that cannot be ignored. Children NPCs can be controlled and kept safe by the DM by placing them in non-hostile environments, but the same cannot be said for characters helmed by a player. Assuming that you are playing a standard D&D adventure, combat and injuries as a result thereof are bound to occur at some point. The severity of these injuries can be lessened somewhat by how the DM chooses to describe them, but they are very likely to happen, and with injury comes the risk of death as a result of battle and combat.

If you choose to play a child character, you should consider how this will affect your fellow players, as it will most likely influence how they will act around your character. You should not surprise your table with your choice of playing an adolescent character, and should discuss it with both your DM and your fellow players.

Keeping Children Safe

Not everyone will be alright with witnessing children come to harm, be it either through watching an NPC being in danger or witnessing a player character participate in combat. The presence of a child, even a fictional one, is likely to change the behavior of those present, even if they are not aware of it. Raunchy comments and threats are stifled somewhat, as the apparent innocence of the child must be protected.

This can make conversation and role-playing a chore to some, as they are constantly having to be aware of what they are saying. Combat is likewise affected, as protecting a child is something that comes natural to most characters and it will most likely encourage a specific type of play that protects the child from being injured. It would also make sense for certain characters to actively protest bringing a child into dangerous areas where combat might occur, which could also create tension within the party.

If a child character in your adventure is under duress or is injured in some way, there are plenty of ways this can be handled without it being too gruesome for those sitting at the table. You should, as a general rule, try to keep the gory details to an absolute minimum when children are involved. Your players might not mind detailed descriptions of blood and violence when it concerns the monsters they are fighting, but they might have a whole other reaction when it is a child getting hurt. If a child is harmed or injured, try to keep the tone serious and calm and avoid using too detailed or gruesome descriptions.

An unspoken rule that most people keep at their table is that they do not kill or gravely injure children. This means that children can come to harm, but not so serious injury that they cannot

recover, and that children can be in danger, but never be brought to a stage where they would perish from it. This also means stopping players from attacking or harming children, and likewise for the DM to not put children in a position where the players would be forced to attack a child. There are of course exceptions to this, where an enemy might have taken on the appearance of a child to mess with the adventurers, or a child has become possessed or brainwashed and must be saved. These are possibilities for great moments of storytelling, but the people at the table should discuss the matter of children taking this sort of center stage before making them a point in the story.

Usually when children are involved, the DM should be wary of letting anything seriously detrimental happen to them. In the same vein, the DM should be careful about taking agency away from the players and force them to harm or injure a child while being, for instance, mind controlled or otherwise compelled.

Avoiding killing children becomes harder when the child character in question is a player character, which is yet another reason why the topic of creating an adolescent character should be discussed with everyone at the table, and not just the DM.

Not Every Child

The following chapters and paragraphs will describe children in wide and somewhat generic terms. Children are very complicated and should be looked at as individuals, both when portraying them and when having them as players in a role-playing group. Some children might act very differently from what has been written in this book, or possibly in complete opposition. What they need and want might be different from what is written here, and you should assess the nature of the child you're interacting with accordingly.

If the child you are playing with does something that contradicts what has been written in this document, do your best to fit the needs of the child in question. In these situations, you should do your best to know the kid you're working with.

With all that being said, I hope you'll enjoy using this document and I wish you all great adventures ahead.
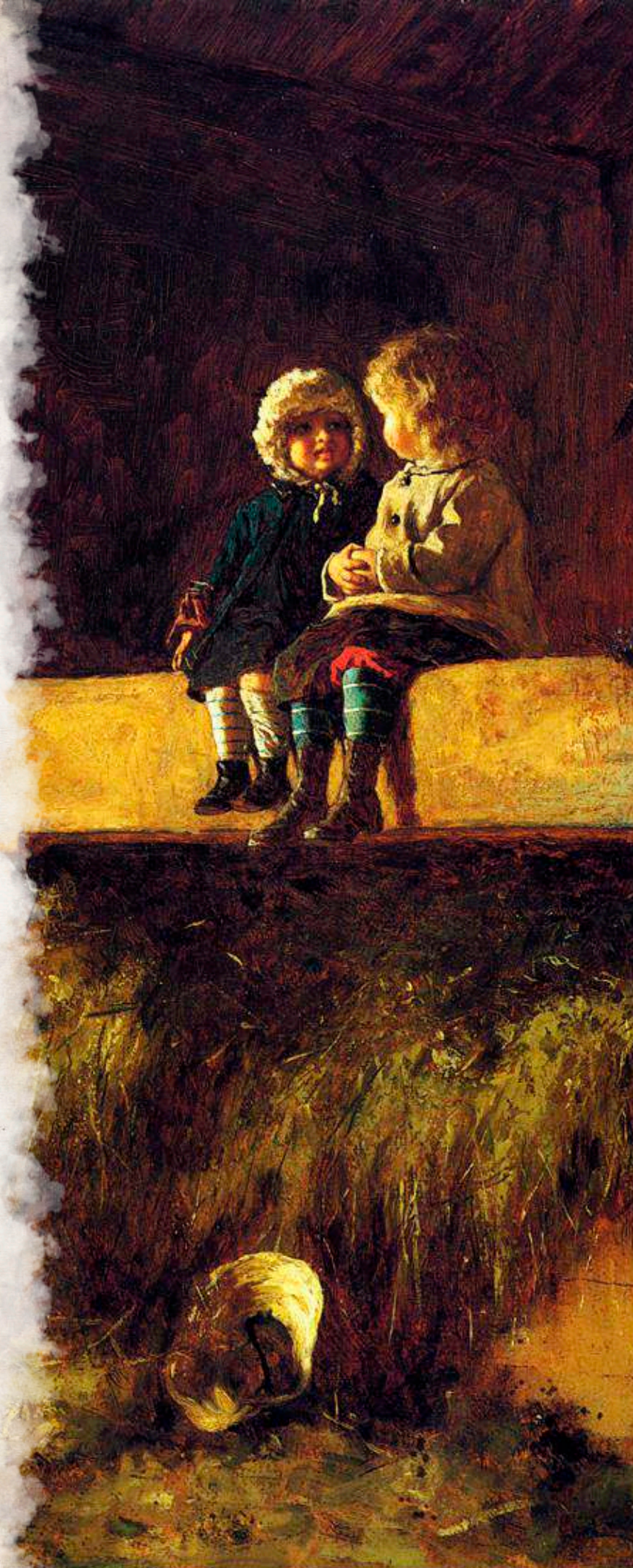
Chapter 1: Kids at the Table

As most people know, players come in all shapes and sizes, but also ages. Children have become more involved in the tabletop RPG scene in recent years as the hobby has become increasingly popular for many people. Several parents are starting to introduce their children to D&D, involving them in a great and ever-expanding universe of heroics and grand stories. But not everyone is entirely certain how to handle these young people appearing at their tables.

This chapter will offer advice to those who are planning to run games or are currently running games with children as the playing party of excited adventurers. Some of the information herein can also be seen as generally good advice for running any game, and might be obvious to some more experienced players, but they have been added nonetheless to emphasize their importance.

The ages of the children playing D&D can vary greatly, and largely depends on how mature and interested the individual child is in role-playing games. Some groups can have players as young as five or six years old, and the experiences they have with their first games will shape how they will view the hobby as they grow up. To many, this might be scary to think about, but playing RPGs with children can be an immensely enjoyable and rewarding experience if handled with proper care.

Luckily, most children find it very easy to let their imaginations run wild, so playing with kids can be great experience, not only for the child who gets to act out adventures and fairytales, but also for the adults who might be joining in at the table.

Should Kids Play D&D?

Though D&D as a hobby is both engaging and can be fun for all ages, questions from worried parents and teachers still exist about the possible detrimental effects of engaging in these sorts of role-playing games. D&D has carried a lot of stigma since its foundation, and many people are surprised when they find out how beneficial playing D&D can actually be, especially for younger children.

By participating in role-playing games, children are practicing socializing, as well as problem solving and critical thinking. In cases where D&D has been used in the context of play-therapy, the games have shown to advance children's cognitive abilities, and even help teach them anxiety management.

While playing D&D, the players are engaged with a fictional character and story on a much deeper level compared to other forms of character-driven media, such as films or books. By stepping into the shoes of a different character, a child can practice visualization and creativity, improve their social skills, and get to experience different perspectives, all the while playing and having fun with their friends.

The medium offers other avenues of learning as well. The game involves complex rule comprehension, and young children involved in these sorts of role-playing games have shown improvement in their spelling and reading ability, as well as their ability to solve basic math problems.

There are many benefits to playing D&D, the most important of which is that is fun, engaging, and inviting to all kinds of different people, no matter their skill level or background.

Character Creation

It should come as no real surprise that most children don't really care much about the nitty gritty parts of the role-playing experience. Placing the numbers in the most optimal or perfect way can be a daunting and positively boring task, and can result in them losing interest in the game before it even begins.

To remedy this, you should do your best to keep the rules very simple. Don't worry too much about the most optimal way to place the stats, and instead have most of the number-crunching done before the game begins. The step of making a character sheet should not take too long, since the attention of the children present will shift away from the game very quickly if too much time is spent on explaining all the intricate rules of the game.

Making a Character

Despite children generally finding it rather boring to make their sheet, they do not find it boring to make their character. Because of the ease of it, you might be considering giving them a pre-generated character sheet with a class and race and tell them

to go with that. Though it might seem like the easy choice, chances are the child you've given this sheet won't feel connected to the game, story, or character if you choose to do this.

Not only does a pre-generated sheet muffle much of the child's creativity, but it also forces them into playing something they didn't choose and they won't be as invested in playing as they would have if they had been able to make their own character. This is not just a good rule to keep in mind with children, but a good rule for working with anyone who is starting their first role-playing game.

However, choice can be overwhelming. That is not just the case for children, but for anyone new to D&D and the many options the game offers when entering into the process of character creation can be daunting. There are several classes, races, and backgrounds to choose from, and it can be way too much to be presented with, especially since each class and race have specific bonuses and abilities tied to them, all of which have to be learned and memorized.

You should remember that completely new players won't understand even the most basic terminology when talking about the game, and children are no exception to this. Try your best to not use too many unknown terms and phrases, especially early on when you are just getting started.

The Character Template

Instead of spending a long time trying to explain all the rules of character creation to a group of children who really just wants to play and have fun, you can offer them a template character instead. This character, typically a Human Fighter or something equivalently easy to play mechanically, will make up each character sheet, giving the same stats and abilities to each character. However, this Human Fighter is just a template and the children are in no way forced to play that class or race.

In the earlier section, it was suggested that you do not give a pre-generated character to the children playing. The Human Fighter template differs from this suggestion in that the children are now allowed to come up with whichever character they want, completely ignoring what their sheet says about what race or what class they are.

Using the template, the children can then be allowed to be creative. If they want to be a pirate pig or a dancing pony who's also a princess, they should be allowed to. Let them put down anything they want for their race and class, but give them the playable options of a Human Fighter. That way, the children can be free of restrictions when it comes to character creation, and use simple stats that are easy to follow and understand when playing the game. The children are totally playing as a magical squirrel or a clever beaver, but they are using the stats of something legal within the context of D&D.

Depending on the age and maturity of the child playing in your game, they can be more or less involved when putting down the stats on the character sheets. It is suggested however, especially for their first few games, that the sheets are made by you before starting the game, so they don't have to sit and fill out everything required for them to start playing.

Collect the Sheets

After playing, is a good tip that you or another adult keep the children's character sheets with you between the sessions. Between coloring, doodling, and all around handling by the younger players, the sheets will most likely be lost or ruined in the time passing between sessions.

To keep from having to write up new character sheets every other week, it is advisable that you handle and take care of the sheets. If the children really want to keep them, you can also make photocopies you can easily reprint if the originals should fall into harm's way or disappear from one week to the next.

Keep Their Attention

When you are dealing with children at the table, you are also dealing with the possibility of them losing attention or becoming distracted. Unlike older and more mature players, children don't have the stamina to play for several hours, and will most likely become tired after playing for an extended period of time. This means that the DM should do their best with the time they have set aside for the session and try to keep the attention of the players throughout the game.

Session Length

The time frame for a session can vary depending on the age of the children you are playing with, how many of you are sitting at the table, and how used they are to role-playing games. More experienced and older players can play for several hours at the time, sometimes stretching well past the six or seven hour mark.

What you should aim for when playing with children is short and sweet adventures that can be wrapped up in a session and lasts 1-2 hours. This time frame can be stretched to go longer or shorter to fit the players, and you will have to read the energy of the children present to determine if you can continue longer. You should always be gaging the attention of the players, and be careful not to stretch the session too far beyond what the energy of the table allows.

For this sort of session, two to three encounters should be sufficient, and don't get upset if you didn't make it as far as you hoped if it meant the players at your table had a better experience.

When ending the session, try to do so on when the energy among the players is still high. Doing this will leave them wanting more and excited about things to come. Having this energy means

they are likely to stick their heads together when you are done playing and then chat about what just transpired in the session, both with each other and with you.

When ending the session, you can also give the players hints as to what might happen next time you play, as this will give them something to look forward to and talk to each other about between sessions.

Minimize the Mechanics

While playing, you should do your best to minimize looking up game rules and clarifications while you are playing. When you do this, you lose the attention of your players and they will begin to drift away from the game and start doing other things. Bringing them back in can be hard, and it will most likely break the flow of the session if you have to recapture the attention of the table.

If there is a rule you become uncertain of while playing, do your best to improvise around it. The players will likely not know you are improvising anyway. Instead of having the books at hand and having to go through them every time there is a specific rule you are uncertain of, have the few rules you need printed out on a sheet of paper that you keep next to you. You should avoid rifling through the book every other moment as much as you can.

D&D has a lot of rules, some more nuanced than others, but they are not all required to enjoy the game, especially when playing with children. Conditions, such as prone, paralyzed, stunned and so on, offer great strategic options for players who are familiar with the rule system, but it can be overwhelming for new players to be introduced to.

If you boil the game down it its most basic components, it is about rolling dice and adding a number to it to measure success. Start by only involving this very basic part of the game, and as the players become more comfortable with the concept of role-playing and rolling dice, start adding more options into the game. The idea of advantage and disadvantage is also fairly easy to understand, and can be introduced early on in the playing process.

Simplify the Dice

Some children might have trouble with understanding the dice and how they are used. That is not just an issue for younger players, but is a problem most new players have to deal with when first introduced to D&D. Be patient and do your best to help them understand how and when to use the different dice.

You can choose to remove a lot of dice from the game if you feel it will unnecessarily complicate the game. The d20 is a staple of D&D and is used for pretty much every roll in the game, and children will probably be able to identify this die very quickly as it is the die they are using the most. However, the other dice might turn out to be an issue. They will most likely mistake the d20 for the d12, and will be confused when you ask them to roll an eight-sided die.

Not all children will be confused by this, but if you think it will be a problem at your table you can remedy it by eliminating all other dice than the d20 and the d6. This means replacing the damage and healing dice with a d6 instead of whatever it was before. Children are probably already familiar with the six-sided die from having played board games and the like, and won't be confused if you then ask them to roll it.

Alternatively, if you have a lot of dice, you could refer to the different kinds of dice by color instead of by shape. That way, when they have to roll a d10, you can tell them to roll the blue die, and when they have to roll a d8, you tell them to roll the red die, and so on.

Etiquette, Sensitivity, and Setting the Rules

A big part of having children at the table, is knowing how to act appropriately around them. There is the obvious part of it where you keep the tone civil and don't use inappropriate language around them. If one of their characters is hurt or wounded, keep the description vague and simple.

You should shy away from baby-talk and talking down to the players as much as possible, but don't be afraid to go overboard with your role-playing. Your expressions and gestures can - and should - be over-exaggerated, and it will greatly help to draw the children into the game and the experience, if you give yourself fully to telling the story.

Adults and Kids Playing Together

It is often the case that a parent or other family member will sit with you at the table, playing alongside the children. When this is the case, you should skew towards catering the game towards the children more so than the adults and focus on making the experience enjoyable and understandable for the younger players.

Having other adults at the table can also be very practical for both you and the children playing. The adults can be there to help the kids when there is something they don't understand, so you don't have focus on helping everyone at once. For some children, it can also be a frightening experience to admit that there is something they are having trouble with, and having a person they trust sitting next to them can help them feel more comfortable at the table.

If the adults begin to become impatient with the children when there is something they want to know or they don't understand, you should still keep your attention on the kids. The adults will have to be adults about the situation, and wait until every player is ready to take the next step in the adventure.

Make the Rules Clear

Before you start playing, it is important that you set up the rules. Just like when playing any game, the kids need to be told what they are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do. To make it so the children better understand the boundaries you're setting, the list of rules should be short and not take very long to go through. There's already a lot they are trying to remember when they start playing, and adding too many additional rules to something that is already taking a lot of energy to understand means the children are more likely to forget the rules you were just stating rather than remembering them.

When explaining the "rules" of the game, you should open up with the positive ones first. Some suggestions could be that it is okay to talk loudly. It is okay to get up from the table and jump around. It is okay to make silly faces and voices, and so on and so on. Children enjoy being active and move around, so don't be surprised if a child starts to act energetically while you are playing.

After that, you should list off what is *not* okay to do. Examples of such rules could be that it is not okay to hurt the other characters, since they are your friends and we don't hurt our friends. Remember to share the treasure you find while exploring. No yelling at or being mean to the other people at the table. It's not okay to hurt other people while we play, but you can hurt the

monsters, since they are dangerous. The rules you set up should fit the children you are with, and you should tailor them so they make sense for your table.

These boundaries are good for the children to know, and it is important that they are established before the game starts.

Yes, and...

You should make sure the kids know that it is always okay to ask the DM what they can and can't do while playing. Make sure they know they are always allowed to pause the game if it gets too intense or if they get scared, and they are always allowed to ask the DM if a specific cause of action is possible or not.

When they do ask if something is possible to do, such as asking "do I have to fight them?" or "I don't know what to do," then do your best to help them through it. Work with them and offer options if they are overwhelmed by the available possibilities.

"Yes, and..." works wonders for this specific sort of situation. By doing it, you are affirming what a character has said and then you add onto it, moving both the scene and the story forward. This is true when dealing with players of all ages, and it is no different when dealing with a younger group of adventurers.

Children Never Die!

If there is just one rule you should take with you after reading this document, it is this: never kill a child's character, especially if it is a child you don't know very well. Losing a character can be heartbreaking for an adult, mature player with plenty of role-playing experience and know-how. Losing a character can be traumatizing for a child to experience and should always be avoided unless you are absolutely certain the child can handle it.

Avoid setting up situations and encounters where there is a likelihood of the characters dying, and if you do make a mistake and accidentally kill someone's character, you should have some back-up ideas ready that can quickly bring the character back to life. These could be a monster slipping on a wet rock and dropping a healing potion into a character's mouth. It is allowed to be silly, children enjoy silliness, but you need to have a plan so you don't accidentally kill a child's character.

Especially when playing with very young children, the topic of death and killing other creatures can be much too dark for them to handle. When in combat and a creature is brought to 0 hit points, you can choose to make it so that the creature or character runs away scared instead of them dying from the blow.

Telling the Story

The themes and topics that will be appropriate for the children at your table should be determined on a group by group basis. Children can come from many different backgrounds, and though one child will be totally okay with engaging with a particular level of scariness or danger, another child might have a completely different reaction.

You should always try to know and understand your players, and this is true no matter the age of the player in question. What is likewise a good idea when playing a session is to move the focus from character to character and player to player throughout the game. That way no one gets left out and everyone gets their moment in the spotlight.

Share the Story

Being provided with choices when playing D&D is a great feeling for the players, as it gives them a chance to directly interact and influence the world they are playing in. In most adventures and settings, the DM will have prepared crossroads or situations where the players can make decisions about various things pertaining to the story they are in.

Children love participating in stories, and they love creating the stories they are in. Through a child's imagination, a small hill in the backyard can be a massive castle or a bowl of water can be a never ending ocean. When playing, you should give the children plenty of options and moments where they can participate in the story. They can do this by telling you what they see, describing what a creature or person looks like, or how a certain interaction might go. Work with them while they do this and ask them how they see the scene you have presented for them.

Hey, I Know That!

Role-playing can be scary for many new players, as they don't fully understand the circumstances and rules of the game they are playing or the world they are exploring. Most D&D settings draw on references from the real world, both to make the setting feel more authentic and to make it easier for the players to engage with the world.

These references are excellent for involving children more in the story. Referencing their real life interests or characters from popular media makes a connection between them and the fantasy world, which means they understand it better. Where the involvement of a popular superhero or magical little pony would take older players out of the experience, these sorts of references are likely to get children even more involved in the story than they were before.

More Success, Less Failure

It can be extremely frustrating to be faced with a seemingly unsolvable problem or to have been exploring for a long time, only to run into yet another dead end or false clue. The feeling of getting nowhere is frustrating to all players, but especially so for children. Being faced with defeat after defeat can be extremely demotivating for a child to experience, and is likely to make them lose interest in the game.

This does not mean that you can have no tough choices or negative consequences in your games. Children can handle things being difficult, they just cannot handle it being difficult all the time. Most people aren't able to do that, regardless of their age or experience.

Providing the necessary clues or helping them with a problem they are stuck on is preferable to them feeling defeated and bad for not understanding the problem presented to them.

Chapter 2: Playing a Child Character

This section is for DMs and players alike. For certain adventures, the DM might need some assistance in creating child NPCs, and players who are making a child character to play as can read about ways they could more accurately portray their character through role-playing. By knowing more about how a child behaves and reacts to things, the character they are portraying will seem more child-like and authentic, instead of the common effect of having them feel more like a adult in a child's body.

As with all things, these act more as guidelines for role-play than actual rules and can of course be bent to fit a specific character or circumstance. Likewise, it should be noted that children, just like adults, are very different, both with how they behave and their personalities. The following sections serve as a general look into how children act and can serve as inspiration when making and writing adolescent characters.

If you are considering making a child character, make sure to discuss the matter with your DM and your fellow players before settling on the idea. If someone decides to play a child character, it doesn't only affect the player and the DM. It affects everyone at the table, so you should discuss the idea of playing a child with everyone before starting the character creation process.

Kids of Different Ages

Depending on the age of the child in question, they might act in different ways and behave much differently to someone just a couple of years older or younger. In just a few years, a child can have changed so much that they can sometimes be hard to recognize.

Below you can read a short guide to children's personalities at different stages of development. This is a very superficial description, but it can be practical when thinking of making a child character for use in an adventure or setting, or just to get a general idea of how children act at different stages of their lives.

The ages described below are tied to the development and aging of a human child. If the character you are making is of a different race,

such as a half-orc or elf, the child would mature at a different rate than a human.

Babies (Birth - 1 year). At this stage, children can't do much - or really anything - by themselves and needs constant attention, care, and affection by those around them. They can't emote or communicate beyond crying and eventually smiling. Babies rely fully on other people to take care of them and are defenseless to any danger that might befall them.

Toddlers (Ages 1 - 2). Children of this age don't care much for change, and will do their best to remind you of it if you try to pick them up or otherwise interact with them without their consent. Like all other children, toddlers want to feel safe and this need for safety shows itself in clear ways when dealing with them. They will want to stay with or close by people they know and are familiar with, and will most likely cry and protest if they are taken away from them, whether it is calmly or by force. Though they might act confident when moving around, they will make sure to keep an eye on their surroundings at all times so they are certain their parent or caregiver is close by.

Young Children (Ages 3-5). At this age, children begin to master walking, as well as speaking and communicating. As they are still training this newly found skill, they use their speech a lot. They ask a lot of questions and are extremely curious about the world around them. They mostly work under the notion that they are much more grown up and capable of taking on the world than they actually are, and will try to do things by themselves more and more. This includes exploring or playing, but they still very much require both attention and affection from their guardian.

Middle Children (Ages 6-8). It is during these years when children become increasingly insistent on being treated like grown-ups. Children around this age will insist on doing things themselves, and are mostly able to do so as well, within reason. They don't like to be talked down to, and communicating with them with baby-talk or deliberately talking over their heads or ignoring them, will likely cause the child to become upset or angry.

Older Children (Ages 9-11). The development of children in this age range varies greatly, and can be hard to properly describe. Some are quite mature, while others still act like younger kids instead of the teenagers they are slowly turning into. It is during this time that children begin taking on more responsibility, and also when children in most medieval fantasy settings would find work or start to help our at their family's business, store, or homestead. As a result, children of these ages will become more independent and can strike out from home for longer periods at a time to explore their surroundings, though they will rarely do so for more than a few hours before returning home.

Teenagers (Ages 12-15). This is a period where the child's body and mind change very rapidly. Generally, teenagers become more self-conscious about how they move around in the world and their characteristics are solidifying into a clearly identifiable personality. They most likely want to spend more time with people their own age rather than people their junior or senior, and sometimes care more about the opinion of their peers than the opinions of their family or the opinions of authority. They grow much more independent during this stage, and are capable of looking after themselves and others. In most settings, this would result in them being given more responsibility when in comes to their work and actions.

Young Adults (Ages 15-18). These children, though still not fully into adulthood, can be treated as grown-ups with very little life experience. How they act can vary greatly, and can sometimes change on a day-to-day basis. Some young adults might be impatient to get out and make their mark on the world, while others are still working to figure out who they are and what they want to do with their life.

THINGS TO AVOID

When writing and role-playing children, there are several tropes and common characteristics that people associate with the glamored version of a child character. These tropes and characteristics are rarely ever realistic, and should almost always be avoided.

WITHERED AND WISE

The all-seeing, all-knowing mind of a child is present in many different sorts of stories and tales, and though it might be true that children are able

to see some situations more objectively than their adult fellows, they are not fonts of endless wisdom and should not be treated as such. Children who can calmly and confidently answer any question the adventurers might have, and also have the ability to give acute and detailed observations, are a clichéd anomaly that should be avoided if you want to stay realistic.

This does not mean that children see nothing. Children see many things, they just might not know what exactly it is they are seeing or if that thing is important or not, and are likely to accidentally blurt out important information, simply because they don't know it is important.

Being a Small Adult

Making a child character should not be boiled down to slapping a bunch of characteristics found in mature, grown adults together, and then putting it in a child's body. Though children can undoubtedly be clever and charming, it is important to know that they are not just small adults who already know everything there is to know about the world.

Baby-Talk

While children, particularly younger children, might have some trouble properly enunciating or pronouncing certain words, this is mostly the case with very young kids. Not to say that children over that age don't sometimes resort to baby-talk, they just do it to much less of an extent than what most people seem to believe.

As with most stereotypes in the context of a role-playing game, it is alright to indulge in the common, high-pitched child voice, but try not to overdo the simplicity with which your character talks. Instead of using baby-talk, try using short and simple words, as that gives a much more realistic depiction of a child's speech pattern.

What Characterizes a Child?

This is a big question and also the most difficult one to answer. It's important to note that children have individual personalities, goals, and flaws, and ignoring them would mean boxing them into an uninteresting stereotype.

When creating a child character, you should consider all the same things that you would when making any other character. What motivates you? What makes you likable or unlikeable? What kind of flaws do you have? What makes you happy, or sad, or angry? These are all aspects of a person, and children have them just like everyone else.

However, there are a few things that can be identified as definitively childlike in nature, and can be added onto a character to make them seem more authentically adolescent.

Seeking Safety

If a child is given the option between going with what they like and what they don't like, they will almost always go with what they like. This is true especially for younger children. If a young child is given the option between holding hands with two different people, or playing with one toy over another, they will choose the one they like the best.

Children also have a need to feel comforted and protected, and will seek to feel safe whenever they can. This might show itself in trepidation when encountering new people or situations, where the child will hide behind their mother's skirt or hold onto their father's hand.

Likewise, if a child is questioned by someone they don't know or they feel uncomfortable with, they will look to an authority figure they feel safe around before answering. An example of this could be an adventurer asking a child about something they possibly saw the day before. The child would look to a parent or older sibling for confirmation before answering anything. If the child was cornered and alone when asked the same questions, the child would have been robbed of this sort of safety and would either start to cry or attempt to get away. Either way, they will be mostly unable to give any useful information.

Testing Boundaries

One of the more well-known defining characteristics of a child is their desire to learn about and explore the world around them. Children are often curious and investigative, as well as unafraid of things they don't know could be dangerous.

As a result of this, children often seek to test their boundaries. Common examples could be stealing apples from an orchard or climbing walls and buildings they are not supposed to climb. This is especially true for children who don't encounter many boundaries in their day-to-day lives. When they then do encounter them, they often try to push at and test them.

Wanting Attention

Attention is something all children need to a certain degree, and if they don't get enough attention they will perhaps start to act out in various ways. The type of attention needed can vary greatly, but the most common way the need for attention presents itself, is through a child acting out and doing things they know they are not supposed to. They do this partially because, by acting out, they get the attention they so desperately want, even if that attention is someone yelling at or berating them.

If the child starved of attention has found a venue where they can get it consistently, even if it means doing a bad thing, they will continue to do it as the reward of the attention is more important to them than the scolding they will most likely get.

Curious and Gullible

Because of their limited life experience, children have a habit of wandering into places they shouldn't be. For an adventurer, curiosity is an important quality to have when exploring and investigating ancient ruins and dungeons, but children have so little experience that it can be hard for them to understand the danger or severity of the situation they are in.

Children can be easily duped because of this. They have not yet realized that the world might be out to get them, and tend to trust what other people, adults especially, tell them. Promises matter to a child as they haven't been hardened enough by reality to know that there are people out there who will try to take advantage of them.

In the same vein of thinking, children have a hard time grasping their own mortality and will most likely put themselves in danger, simply because they don't understand the seriousness of the situation at hand.

Mature Beyond Their Years

Depending on the child's upbringing, they might be more or less inclined to trust and help a band of roaming adventurers. The way a child behaves as to how they treat others, both among their peers and people of authority, can often be traced back to events in their past that incited a strong sense of uncertainty and distress.

This is a wide generalization, and does not fit each and every child, as this facet of their lives is extremely complex and cannot be explained or understood in just a few sentences.

Common tropes employed on child characters who exist in the realm of a medieval fantasy setting include a lessened likelihood to trust strangers, a strong sense of independence and capability, and the depiction of the children acting older than their years.

This trope can be used in storytelling, but the accuracy of it is debatable. Some children might become this way, having to rely on themselves instead of others, or they might become partially dependent on an authority character for a large portion of their development.

What is most important to remember is that children are children, and no matter their background, maturity, or capability, they should still be treated as children, with love, care, and affection.

Chapter 3: Character Options

Making a child character is not as simple as making a character who is an adult, as there are many more things to consider in the character creation process. Logistically, it makes little to no sense to see a ten-year-old running onto the battlefield wielding a greataxe and a mind to murder, and most child characters tend to fall into the categories of rascals and pranksters, supporting spellcasters, or magic users with little to no control of their arcane powers. Martial characters do not mix well with playing as a child, as many of them need to rush into the fray and actively put themselves in danger, which can be hard for other characters to accept without issue. Children are also generally weaker than adults, and having a small child win over a fully grown man in a fight requires a large suspension of disbelief.

In this chapter, you can read about some specific options that might help make your character seem a bit more child-like. These are all optional, and should be discussed with your DM before using them when creating your character. For DMs, this section can also be very helpful, as it can serve as an aid to help you add some flavor or uniqueness to adolescent NPCs in your adventure or world setting.

Racial Traits

When playing a child, certain things are assumed about your character. Thematically, children tend to make poor martial characters as they are physically much weaker and frailer than adults.

The following stats are an optional addition to anyone who chooses to play a child character and wishes to add some flavor to set them apart. These stats are in addition to the benefits and traits already granted to you by your chosen race, and they do not work as a standalone playable race.

The traits gained by being a child disappear when your character becomes a teenager or a young adult. When exactly this change occurs is to be settled between you and your DM.

If your chosen race is already a small race, such as a gnome or halfling, you do not become Tiny as a result of choosing to play a child of those races, and you will continue to have a Small size.

Child Traits

You gain the following benefits and traits when you choose to play a child character in addition to any traits granted to you by your race.

Ability Score Decrease. Your Strength score decreases by 2.

Size. Since you aren't fully grown, you are smaller and lighter than an adult member of your race. Your size is Small.

Negative Trait. Being a child comes with some limitations. Choose one trait from the *Negative Traits* list.

Positive Trait. Children can do things adults cannot. Choose one trait from the *Positive Traits* list.
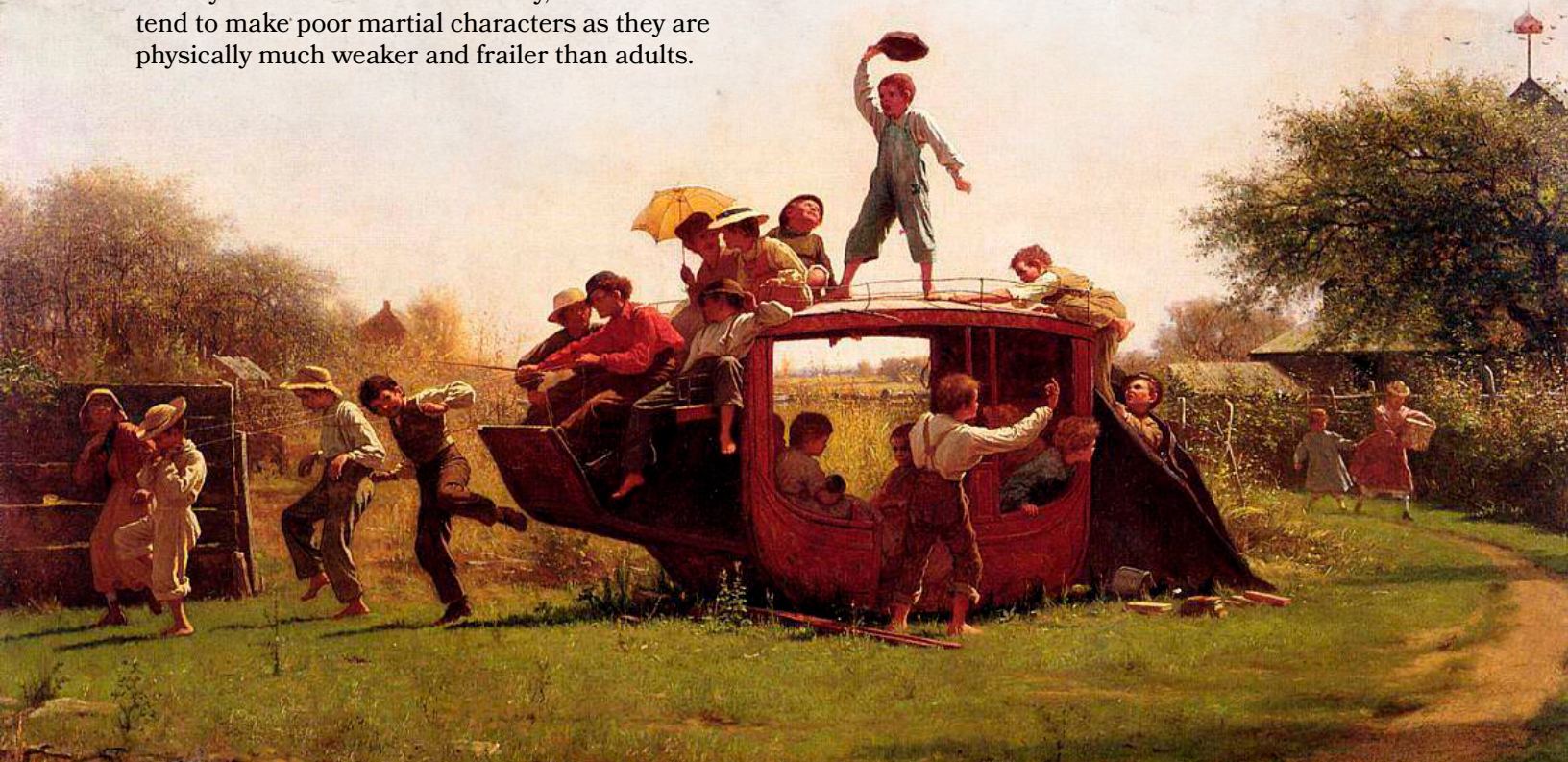
Negative Traits

You can pick one of the following traits to help define your character.

Adorable. You have disadvantage on Intimidation checks made against adults.

Illiterate. You cannot read or write.

Monolingual. You can only speak, read, and write Common. If one of your languages is tied to your race, such as Elvish or Dwarvish, you can choose to know this language instead.

Poor Constitution. You have disadvantage on saving throws against poison.

Scared. You have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Short Legs. Your movement speed is lowered by 5 feet.

Positive Traits

You can pick one of the following traits to help define your character.

Agile. You have advantage on Acrobatics checks made to escape a grapple.

Innocent. You have advantage on Deception checks made against adults.

Light Weight. You have advantage on climbing checks.

Nimble. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours.

One With the Crowd. You have advantage on Stealth checks made to hide in large groups of people, and your movement isn't restricted when moving through crowds.

Slippery. You can disengage as bonus action.

Backgrounds

Most of the backgrounds provided in the *Player's Handbook* or similar material, tell of a character's life before they took on the career of being an adventurer. For children, their lives have barely even started, so they have not had the time to grow strong enough to become a soldier or influential enough to take on the mantle of a guild artisan. With the exception of the urchin found in the *Player's Handbook*, most of the other backgrounds make ill fits when trying to attach them to a child character.

The following backgrounds are meant to better fit into the archetype of a child or young adult who has not had a detailed life prior to adventuring. They are here to offer some background variation to a child character, but the backgrounds are not exclusively tied to children and can also be used by adult characters. Because of this, some of the characteristics tied to a background will not make sense for the character of a younger child. If you need more options, you can go to the end of this chapter of the document to find traits specifically tailored towards a child character.

Apprentice

It is not unusual to have a child be heavily involved in the family business as they grow up. For many working families, it is assumed that the children will take over the business when they become an adult. If a family has the right connections, they may choose to place their child under the teachings of a craftsman or artisan so they can learn a skill and trade.

You got your apprenticeship at a young age and have been working hard to learn the intricacies of your craft. You might be working as an assistant in a store or shop, or work the bellows at the local smithy where you are being taught how to work on tools, weapons, or just simple horseshoes. Regardless, you are tied to a specific profession and are on your way to be fully trained with the craft of your master.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from Animal Handling, Athletics, and Nature
Tool Proficiencies: Two types of artisan's tools
Equipment: A set of common clothes, a small knife, a sewing needle and a spool of thread, a set of artisan's tools, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Working Familiarity

You have an easy time talking to people of the working class, especially with those whom you share a trade. These people are more willing to share information with you than they otherwise would be, and you can make a modest living by offering your working experience to relevant stores and sites.

Variant: Farmhand

You grew up on a farm, working with and around animals. You spent your days tending the nearby fields and orchards of a farmstead, either your family's or your master's, and befriending and feeding the animals giving life to your home.

Suggested Characteristics

Apprentices are tied to the job they are being trained to do. Their training is yet to be completed, and they can be both diligent students who are eager to learn, or daydreamers who are wishing to do something else with their lives.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I thoroughly enjoy doing menial tasks
2	I get easily distracted when I'm supposed to be focused on something
3	I daydream when I should be working
4	I don't like working with other people
5	I am proud of my craft and enjoy talking to other people about it
6	I take on a leader role and like to work in groups

d6	Ideal
1	**Teamwork.** Everyone must chip in and do their part (Lawful)
2	**Improvement.** I will remove anyone who stands in my way (Evil)
3	**Helpfulness.** If someone is falling behind, they should be helped (Good)
4	**Effort.** Everyone can be useful (Neutral)
5	**Prowess.** People should do what they are best at and not what they are told to do (Chaotic)
6	**Diligence.** If you work hard, you'll be rewarded for it (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I want to improve on my craft
2	Everything I do, I do to support my family
3	My previous master was cruel to their staff, and I am looking to make them pay
4	I want to find a true master of my craft and have them teach me everything they know
5	Something I did ruined the life of a fellow apprentice. I must right the wrongs I caused
6	I've never known my family, and I would like to find out who they are

d6	Flaw
1	I don't know how to think for myself and need to follow orders
2	I feel stupid among people not in my field, and keep quiet as a result
3	I am extremely gullible
4	I don't wait for people, and move on if they don't appear on time
5	I lie to appear more smart and scholarly
6	I am disrespectful towards other types of craftsmanship than my own

Caregiver

Growing up in a family with a lot of children, or maybe being raised in an orphanage alongside many other kids of varying ages, the eldest will often be given additional responsibilities.

As a caregiver, you looked after the younger children who you grew up with, taking on a more parental role of authority and control. Your days spent with these youngsters has helped with developing leadership skills, as well as a dominant and unwavering personality.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Medicine
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set and one type of musical instrument
Equipment: A set of common clothes, a gaming set, a handmade toy, a worn book of stories, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Parental Aura

Children, especially younger children, are very comfortable with you and act much more calmly than they usually would when you are around them. You are able to quickly discern how a child is feeling, and the child will be more willing to trust you and do what you say, as well as help you by answering questions or doing minor favors.

Suggested Characteristics

Caregivers are kind-hearted and protective by nature and are always looking for ways to help others or shoulder part of their burdens. They tend to have a soft spot for those who can't help themselves and will defend their loved ones with all their might.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I love children and taking care of children
2	I have a strong need to protect those who can't protect themselves
3	I often tell stories or sing songs out loud, even when no one is listening
4	I expect people to behave properly and will become cross if they have bad manners
5	I don't like people telling me what to do
6	I have a hard time being alone and need other people's company

d6	Ideal
1	**Manipulation.** People who trust me can be made to my bidding (Evil)
2	**Kindness.** Everyone deserves to feel loved and safe (Good)
3	**Consequence.** You made your bed, now lay in it (Chaotic)
4	**Order.** Rules mean structure, and structure is good for everyone (Lawful)
5	**Patient.** We are only as fast as our slowest member (Neutral)
6	**Confidence.** You should rely on others when you have to, and on yourself always (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I once helped someone in a way that made them hate me for it
2	I've lost many people in my life, and I don't want to lose any more
3	No one gets left behind
4	I've angered a noble by speaking openly about how poorly they treat those who work for them
5	My pain is my burden to bear, so I will share it with no one
6	I am willing to suffer so others won't have to

d6	Flaw
1	I am too quick to trust
2	I hate being dirty
3	I want things to be structured, perfect, and flawless
4	I talk over other people and interrupt them without realizing
5	I make decisions for other people without asking them their opinion first, because I know what's best for them
6	I never forget if someone hurts someone I care about, even when they apologize

Messenger

When news needs to travel from one part of the city to the next, speed is of the essence and small children have talent for diving in and out of alleyways and can push through crowds with a speed and ease not found in adults. You made a living running all over the city you grew up in, taking orders and news from store to store and street to street.

As a messenger, you are quick of both mind and body and have knack for remembering important information. People trust you to keep their messages and deliver them accurately, and you may even have been employed by a member of the nobility or a wealthy merchant to carry their messages from the city's upper avenues to its underbelly and outskirts.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Persuasion
Tool Proficiency: One type of musical instrument or one type of gaming set
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, a pair of good shoes, a notebook with information about local stores in your home city, and a pouch containing 15 gp

Feature: Out of My Way!
While you are in a large city and you a traveling alone, you can move at a fast pace no matter how many people are crowding the streets or how well you know the city. In addition, you can get into places and sections of the city that are usually off limits for the common populace, as you put on the guise of having important messages to deliver.

Variant: Town Crier
When news and announcements are relayed to the citizens of a city or township, you were given the responsibility of delivering this information. You've spent hours of your younger days in the town squares and busy streets of your home city, bellowing about local events, news, and rumors. This information was provided to you by the city's officials, whom you were also employed by.

Suggested Characteristics
As a messenger, you are the deliverer of news, both good and bad, and people trust you to be honest with the messages you give them. You are quick witted, and have proven yourself to be capable at memorizing spoken phrases and orders.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I speak a lot and very loudly
2	I enjoy having the attention of others, and I have a commanding voice
3	I like to finish a job quickly so I can efficiently move on to the next one
4	People tend to not notice me until I speak
5	I never say more than is necessary
6	I always have stories to tell and will do so, even if people have already heard them several times

d6	Ideal
1	**Attentive.** I don't know what life will bring me, so I am always ready for anything (Chaotic)
2	**Conniving.** I can use the information I gather against those who slight me (Evil)
3	**Sharing.** Information should be shared so people won't be surprised by things to come. (Good)
4	**Importance.** The information I have is precious, and it is my responsibility to keep it safe (Lawful)
5	**Indifference.** Other's business is no business of mine (Neutral)
6	**Preparedness.** I'm ready for anything (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I overheard some sensitive information about a powerful individual who is now looking for me
2	I wish to become someone people tell news about, instead of being the one who tells the news
3	I have an unyielding respect for authority and the rulers of my home
4	My employer is keeping vital information secret from the public and refuses to share it
5	I have purposefully spread false information, and others have suffered because of it
6	I was mistaken for a thief and lost everything I had

d6	Flaw
1	I am a horrible gossip and can't keep secrets
2	I am good at coming up with fantastical stories, and they are rarely completely truthful
3	I follow orders blindly
4	I have no patience for long conversations
5	I sell all information and secrets I'm given
6	I purposefully hide information from people I dislike

Servant

When a noble family or a wealthy merchant takes on staff to work at their estate, it often ends up being entire families they take into employment. One parent might work in the stables, while the other makes their living in the kitchen. The children of such couples are given responsibilities equal to a servant, and are expected to help out with minor tasks around the estate.

As a child of these circumstances, you grew up alongside the children of the family you were serving, striking up friendships or rivalries with them as you got older. As you grew up, this relationship might affect how the family that once employed you now see you and respond to you.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from Animal Handling, Insight, and Perception
Tool Proficiencies: One set of artisan's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of ragged fine clothes, a small knife, a set of fine but heavily used cutlery, and a pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: At Your Service

Having spent a lot of time around the upper classes, you know how to properly address them and communicate with them. Likewise, you are comfortable with talking to the serving staff of a noble family, and can strike up conversations with them more easily, and potentially make them reveal some gossip or information about their wealthy masters.

Variant: Stable Hand

While others were working the interior of your master's house, you spent your days in the stables, taking care of the horses of the estate. You were charged with grooming and feeding them, as well as cleaning out their stalls and keeping their tack and saddles in good condition.

Suggested Characteristics

It is a common saying that the servants of a house knows all there is to know about the family. It is impossible to keep a secret from those who live and breathe in the house around you, so servants always have some fun stories to tell about their masters.

d6	Personality Trait
1	Serving something greater than myself is my purpose in life
2	Hard work pays off, and a sloppy job needs to be done twice
3	I have a familiarity with the higher classes that means I see myself as an equal to them
4	I enjoy fantasizing about living the luxury life my masters lead
5	I like giving advice and helping others
6	I do what I'm told, but I do it at my own pace

d6	Ideal
1	**Decency.** All people deserve to be treated properly, regardless of their station or background (Good)
2	**Power.** By serving someone powerful, I can make myself valuable to them and use them for my own purposes (Evil)
3	**Dutiful.** I do what I'm told within reason and within the limits of the law (Lawful)
4	**Dependability.** I enjoy to play my part and don't go beyond it (Neutral)
5	**Opposition.** I stand up to any authority who disrespect me because of my station (Chaotic)
6	**Quality.** I take pride in my job and will do my best to excel at it (Any)

d6	Bond
1	My master's family has become like my own
2	I know secrets about the family I serve that could ruin their reputation
3	There have always been a separation between the lower and higher classes. I want to change that
4	I have served others all my life, and will do so no longer
5	I know that a rival to my master's family is looking to frame them for a crime
6	I have a strong relationship with a member of the family I serve, and they must be kept safe

d6	Flaw
1	I have no patience for wealthy people who talk about the minor difficulties they are going through
2	I am lazy
3	I believe wealthy and noble people are always trying to undermine me
4	I don't make decisions for myself
5	I steal small things that I know no one will miss
6	I look for gossip wherever I go, and will reveal sensitive information to get more secrets

Squire

If you were born into a noble lineage, your family may have decided to place you into the service of a knight or other military figure as a squire. As a squire, you were given the responsibility of keeping your knight master's equipment in good condition and to act as their servant when it was required. In return, the knight was charged with teaching you the ways of war and battle, and would train you in the ways of combat. They would also teach you how to behave when addressing people of various social standings, and teach you the laws and history of the land you traveled.

Depending on the knight you were serving, you might have spent many years wandering the roads of the nation, or you might have accompanied your knight master to royal feasts and gallas, meeting different people as you took on your training as an upcoming knight.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, History
Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set or vehicles (land)
Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a token from your knight master, a scroll of pedigree, and a pouch containing 20 gp.

Feature: Knightly Manners

You know how to act and talk to people of most social standings, having traveled both among the common folk and mingled with the higher nobility. You have learned to carry yourself with a grace and elegance that demands the attention of people who see you, and you are treated with respect by both the upper and lower class, as long as you don't insult or threaten them.

Suggested Characteristics

Young nobles in training are often made squires, and much of their personality and character is molded by the knight they end up serving. Noble families take care to choose a good match for their children, a match that either elevates their status or is of equal merit to their own lineage.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I speak slowly, as if every word I say is important
2	To dishonor myself would be the greatest shame
3	I protect those who cannot protect themselves
4	I am used to people doing what I tell them to do
5	I carry myself with righteous importance
6	If the story isn't about me, I change the story

d6	Ideal
1	**History.** I am a part of a noble lineage and must follow their creeds to avoid shaming my bloodline (Lawful)
2	**Power.** I am above all, both the commoners to serve me and the family who seeks to control me (Evil)
3	**Equality.** We are one people, and I aim to treat everyone with equal respect (Good)
4	**Freedom.** I have depended on others my entire life, but now I will live by own terms (Chaotic)
5	**Serenity.** I will live my life to the best of my ability (Neutral)
6	**Family.** Those closest to me are all that matter (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I always fight fairly, even when those around me do not
2	I failed to protect someone who asked for my help, and they suffered deeply for it
3	My family believes I am dead, and it is better that way
4	I am loyal to my knight master before anyone else
5	I want recognition and infamy for my deeds
6	I wish to renounce my family name, but I fear the repercussions

d6	Flaw
1	I am extremely arrogant
2	No one tells me what to do. Ever
3	I am secretly afraid of something harmless and menial, such as spiders or heights
4	I take insults personally, even if they aren't directed at me
5	I act rashly without thinking of the consequences
6	I have never been told I was wrong about anything

Street Performer

It is not uncommon to find children made victim by unfortunate circumstances. These children often end up on the streets, begging for money or picking pockets to make a living, though others might find an avenue of entertainment that can help them earn their coin.

You have survived on the streets by playing music or by performing tricks of entertainment with an animal you've befriended. You have become used to people giving you attention, and also to people ignoring you if you don't make your self actively visible.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Performance
Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit and one type of musical instrument
Equipment: A set of dirty common clothes, a pet cat or other tiny animal, a gaming set you are proficient with, a musical instrument, and 5 gp

Feature: Unseen Eyes

Having been on the streets for a large part of your life, you know that it is easy to remain unnoticed when people don't want to see you. You know how to spot and find those who are usually an invisible part of the landscape, and can convince them to share any secrets or slander they might have spotted. By offering them a few coins, you can hire them as watchers and spies, though they will be unwilling to put themselves in active danger for you.

Suggested Characteristics

Your life on the streets may have turned you hard and suspicious as you grew up in a cold, unforgiving world, or you could have adopted a more peppy, optimistic personality to try to keep the grim thoughts of the streets out of your mind.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I hate when people stare at me
2	I don't have any idea how to talk to people of a higher standing, and have terrible manners
3	I never finish my meal and always keep some of it to eat later
4	I worry that I everything I own will eventually be taken away from me
5	I never throw anything away
6	I have a great appreciation for the simple things

d6	Ideal
1	**Loyalty.** You never betray your friends (Lawful)
2	**Jealousy.** People who have good lives don't appreciate or deserve it (Evil)
3	**Selfishness.** You should always help yourself first, and then maybe others second (Chaotic)
4	**Honesty.** You should always be honest, even when you feel ashamed (Good)
5	**Realistic.** Not everyone makes it (Neutral)
6	**Diligence.** I am strong enough to live a life better than this (Any)

d6	Bond
1	I left many friends behind on the streets. I want to help them have a better life
2	My family left me to fend for myself, and I want to find them
3	I had a patron who helped me survive, but I don't know where they are
4	I always give as much as I can to those who need it
5	I once turned someone in for a crime they didn't commit
6	I am in debt to a seedy character who helped me survive on the streets

d6	Flaw
1	I panic if people try to take my things away from me
2	I am scared to speak my mind and always try to be amiable in conversation
3	I don't trust anyone other than myself
4	I am uncomfortable doing things others consider normal, such as sleeping in a bed or bathing regularly
5	I don't like sharing and will lie to make sure I get to keep what is mine
6	I am scared of most things and can be threatened into doing almost anything

STUDENT

If your family had the funds or the right connections, they could have chosen to send you away at a young age to be taught the art of magic. You were put in a school away from everything you knew to be taught the intricate ways of the arcane.

You grew up surrounded by talented spellweavers and arcane casters, learning about the lore and life of magic through studying and practical lessons.

Skill Proficiencies: Choose two from Arcana, History, and Religion
Tool Proficiencies: Calligrapher's tools
Languages: One of your choice
Equipment: A set of common clothes, a quill and inkwell, a notebook, and a pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: ARCANE PUPIL
Having received training in the magical arts and the lore hereof, you are able to identify various symbols and signs pertaining to different kinds of magic. If a symbol is tied to a specific school of magic, you know which school it belongs to.

Suggested Characteristics

Students can come in many different varieties. Some might be enjoying the scholarly life and find great value in spending days pining over books and scrolls, where others will become bored by the mere thought of spending a few hours inside of a dusty library.

d6	Personality Trait
1	I always share my latest library findings, even if people don't care
2	I don't speak unless I feel like I can contribute to the conversation
3	I am always looking for more stories
4	I get very excited when someone starts talking about something that interests me
5	I never know when to stop asking questions
6	When I talk, I expect that people listen to me

d6	Ideal
1	**Excellence.** Studying gives us a chance to improve ourselves so we can better help others (Good)
2	**Paranoia.** By learning everything, no one can take advantage of me (Evil)
3	**Knowledge.** To learn and to teach is important no matter who or where you are (Neutral)
4	**Remembrance.** Making your mark on the world is the greatest thing you could strive for (Chaotic)
5	**Protection.** Knowledge is dangerous and should be kept under control so it can't be used against us (Lawful)
6	**Improvement.** We should always seek to do better (Any)

d6	Bond
1	The school that taught me everything I know has secrets I want to uncover
2	I have heard stories of an ancient and powerful artifact, and I wish to find it
3	While I studied, my family suddenly stopped answering my letters and I don't know why
4	I was expelled from my school and want to prove to them that they made a mistake
5	I grew close with another student, but I have not heard from them in a long time and I worry for their safety
6	I found some detrimental information while going through the school's library and now I fear someone might be after me

d6	Flaw
1	I don't understand subtlety when it comes to socializing
2	I experiment with everything. Especially things that shouldn't be experimented with
3	I always take notes about what I observe in the world, often to the great dismay of those around me
4	I am uncomfortable in loud and boisterous places
5	I love to hear myself speak
6	I often overcomplicate simple matters

Generic Child Traits

The aforementioned backgrounds were made specifically to offer more options when making a child character. However, though the backgrounds may be thematically appropriate, some of the traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws are more suitable for an adult character.

Children, especially younger children, will have personalities and characteristics that clearly define them, but they do not have enough life experience to have a solid foundation for having strong opinions. At least not opinions strong enough to define their entire character.

Alignment and Ideals

Alignment has come under some scrutiny in recent years, especially in the era of 5th edition D&D. Though it can still be a valuable asset when creating a character, as it can serve as a guide or anchor when making decisions, it can also lock you into behaving in a way that makes little to no sense for how a situation is unfolding.

Young children want to feel safe and because of their small stature are unable to properly defend themselves in the ways a grown adult or teenager would be. As a result, children tend to focus on themselves before others out of necessity. From an alignment standpoint, children can be seen as falling into the Chaotic Neutral category, as they are mostly focused on themselves and their own well-being. There are of course exceptions to this, as the personality and characteristics of different children can vary wildly, but this alignment works decently for creating generic child characters.

Children change as they grow up, however, as they are molded by the world they explore and the people they encounter. It would make sense for a child to start with one sort of alignment and

then slowly grow into the alignment matching the adult character they will eventually become. The years of your adolescence are when you are changing the most, so locking an alignment to a child character would not really make sense. Be open to changing your alignment as your character grows more mature, and talk to your DM about the changes your character will be going through.

Because of the fluidity found in child characters as they are in the process of developing into an adult, choosing an ideal for them can be tricky. Ideals are often extreme and absolute, giving little opportunity for drastic development. Because of the complexity of ideals and the alignments tied to them, they are not offered in this section, but you can still pick an ideal from your background if you wish.

You can look over the provided ideals granted by a background and try to water it down slightly so it is not as intense. Alternatively, you can choose to forgo having an ideal at first, and pick one along with an alignment when your character reaches a more mature age.

Traits, Bonds, and Flaws

If you are looking for specific characteristics that are more suitable for young children and adolescent characters, you can read through the tables below.

The following traits, bonds, and flaws have been written to appear generic enough that they can fit to most backgrounds, and can be mingled with traits, bonds, and flaws found in your character's chosen background.

d10	Personality Trait
1	I don't like when adults talk to me like I am a child
2	I always tell people where I'm going, even if they don't ask
3	I say "why?" to everything
4	People sometimes forget that I'm young because of how tall I am or how clearly I speak
5	I have never been able to get along with children my own age
6	If I'm accused of doing something, I will deny it, even if I was caught doing it
7	I exaggerate the truth when telling stories
8	I give things away to people that need them, even if they aren't my things
9	I make gifts for people almost every day
10	I always say what I think about people out loud

d6	Bond
1	I miss my family and want to be with them again
2	I lost something given to me by a family member, and really miss it
3	I put on a brave face when I'm sad so others won't think they need to take care of me
4	I get angry if someone is treated unfairly
5	I'm busy learning and want to improve as fast as I can
6	I love animals and sometimes prefer their company over people's

d8	Flaw
1	I don't trust adults
2	I can't fall asleep if I'm alone
3	I need someone to take care of me, but will never admit it
4	I am gullible and believe everything people tell me
5	My expectations of adults' capabilities are not at all realistic
6	I want to be the center of attention
7	I don't want to share my things with others
8	I cheat at games if it can help me win

Chapter 4: Having Children

Once an adventurer decides to leave the road in favor of raising a family, what happens? What happens if an adventurer decides that they want to settle down, away from the dangers of crypts and dungeons, and maybe think about starting a family? This chapter describes how one might go about having children in a D&D setting.

Before deciding whether or not to use these types of mechanics in your game, you should take care to discuss the matter with your fellow players to make sure it is something people at the table are interested in having as a part of their role-playing experience.

Birth and Pregnancy

This section is tailored specifically towards player characters becoming pregnant and eventually giving birth to a child, but it can be used on NPCs as well if necessary.

Being pregnant and an adventurer can complicate matters for both you and your party. If you become pregnant, you body will start to change to accommodate the child you are carrying, and you will not be able to do the things you normally would. Moving around becomes harder, food might have trouble staying down, and if you are springing into combat and action you run the very real risk of hurting not only yourself, but also your child.

Before deciding to incorporate this system into your game, you must discuss the matter with your players first. Being around a pregnant character might make some players uncomfortable for a variety of reasons, so springing a surprise pregnancy on a group of adventurers, either by way of a player character or an NPC, should be avoided. Likewise, you should never choose to make a player character pregnant without first discussing the matter with the player in question. Having a child is a lot of responsibility and it will affect how the player behaves both in social situations and in combat. Becoming pregnant means having to deal with a lot of tough choices that the player might not be interested in, and this should always be respected.

The following options provide mechanics for completing a pregnancy, ending in the eventual birth of a little baby.

Conception

Once you have discussed the matter of pregnancy with your table, you can begin exploring the ways which you can become pregnant. The most common way of becoming pregnant is the traditional method, but in a D&D setting other means of conception could be very possible. Either through arcane means or by divine intervention, a character becoming pregnant without the need of a partner is entirely possible. This section, however, will only explore the circumstances for becoming pregnant using the traditional method.

To become pregnant, you must be a female character and have an intimate relationship with a male character. Whenever you have intimate relations with a member of the opposite sex, there is a 10 % chance of you becoming pregnant as a result of it.

In the world of D&D, there might be specific magic items that either increase the chances of someone becoming pregnant or removes the risk of it entirely. These items can be deployed into the game at the DM's discretion, and they can be found at the end of this chapter.

Pregnancy Effects

Depending on how far along you are in your pregnancy, your body will be affected in different ways. For simplicity's sake, it is assumed that all available playable races have a gestation period of nine months, and that the effects of the pregnancy change every trimester, or every three months. The effects of a pregnancy can vary greatly from person to person, so the sections below has generalized some of the known effects of a pregnancy, a rather complicated matter, and turned it into simpler mechanics to accompany the 5e D&D rule system.

First Trimester

The first trimester runs from week 0 to week 12, and it is during this time the baby develops the basic and vital parts of its body. It is also during this period that the risk of losing the baby is highest, as mistakes in the child's development at this stage of gestation are likely to mean that the baby is unable to survive.

While in the first trimester, you character has the following traits.

Morning Sickness. Every time you finish a long rest there is a 20 % chance you will feel nauseated when you wake up. If you feel nauseated, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw after eating your next meal, or throw up the food within the next hour and getting no value out of the meal. After you've thrown up in this way, you are no longer nauseated.

Second Trimester

The second trimester goes from week 12 to about week 22-24. It is during this trimester that the baby will start growing in length and weight, and your pregnancy will start to become visible to others. People may react or comment on your pregnancy and offer advice, whether you want it or not, and you will begin to feel the baby move and kick.

While in the second trimester, you character has the following traits.

Cravings. There is a chance that you will have cravings for strange or specific foods during your pregnancy. You roll for a new craving at the beginning of each month of your trimester, and the craving lasts for the remainder of that month.

d8	Craving
1	Pickles
2	Honey
3	Sugary foods
4	Sour fruits
5	Salted fish
6	Fruit juice
7-8	No craving

Morning Sickness. Every time you finish a long rest there is a 20 % chance you will feel nauseated when you wake up. If you feel nauseated, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw after eating your next meal, or throw up the food within the next hour and getting no value out of the meal. After you've thrown up in this way, you are no longer nauseated.

Restricted Movement. Your growing belly is making it harder to move around. Your movement speed is lowered by 5 feet, and you suffer a -2 penalty to Dexterity saving throws.

Third Trimester

The third trimester runs from week 22-24 and until birth which is around week 40. During this period, the baby is finishing its development and is nearly ready to be brought into the world. You can no longer hide your pregnancy, and you have a harder time moving around.

While in the third trimester, you character has the following traits.

Big Belly. People will approach you and congratulate you on your pregnancy. Parents and mothers especially might come up to you and ask to touch your stomach, and are more willing to talk to you or answer your questions. You have advantage on Deception and Persuasion checks against adults because of your visible pregnancy.

Cravings. There is a chance that you will have cravings for strange or specific foods during your pregnancy. You roll for a new craving at the beginning of every month of your trimester, and the craving lasts for the remainder of the month.

d8	Craving
1	Pickles
2	Honey
3	Sugary foods
4	Sour fruits
5	Salted fish
6	Fruit juice
7-8	No cravings

Morning Sickness. Every time you finish a long rest there is a 20 % chance you will feel nauseated when you wake up. If you feel nauseated, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw after eating your next meal, or throw up the food within the next hour and getting no value out of the meal. After you've thrown up in this way, you are no longer nauseated.

Restricted Movement. Your large belly is making it harder to move around. Your movement speed is halved, you have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, and getting up from being prone costs your full movement.

Injuries While Pregnant

When you enter into combat while pregnant, you are not only endangering yourself, but also the life of your baby. If you fall unconscious as a result of dropping to 0 hit points, there is a chance that your baby will take damage in the process.

Right after you drop below 0 hit points, there is a 50 % chance that your baby will have sustained fatal damage by you being injured. If this is the case, you will lose the child.

Childbirth

Though a general due date for the baby can be determined, there is always a bit of leeway when waiting for the birth to start. You can never be completely certain when the birth will begin, and it can be hard to plan around.

Beginning seven days before the assumed due date, which is after 40 weeks, the DM will roll a d100 at the beginning of each day to see if you go into labor. For the first seven days, there is a 20 % chance that the birth will start, and the chances of it starting increases when you reach the due date. Upon reaching the due date, the chance increases to 50 %, and upon going seven days past the due date it increases to 90 %. After this point, the DM may choose to not roll and instead simply start the labor process if it hasn't started yet.

The duration of the labor can vary and is determined by the DM secretly rolling 2d6+2. The number rolled determines the amount of hours the character will spend in labor. For every three hours you spend in labor, you will receive one level of exhaustion. Once labor ends, the birth will start.

While giving birth, you will take damage and depending on the severity of the labor, the damage might end up being fatal. When the duration of labor is over, the birth has started and you must make five individual Constitution saving throws, all with a DC of 10. You make the saving throws at advantage if you are proficient in the Medicine skill or if you have someone helping you who are proficient in the Medicine skill.

For every Constitution saving throw you make, whether you are successful or not, you take 1d3 Constitution damage, which means that your Constitution score is lowered by the amount rolled. This damage can be lowered by one (to a minimum of 1 damage) if you are proficient in the Medicine skill or if you have someone helping you who are proficient in the Medicine skill.

You need to make at least two succesful throws to give birth to the baby. If you have less than two successes, the baby will not survive the birth.

Kids of Two Races

Many races exists within the settings of D&D and they are all very different from each other. Though all official races fall under the same category of being humanoid, that doesn't necessarily mean that they would be able to produce offspring if their bloodlines were mixed.

How this is handled is fully decided by the DM, as you could argue many sides of this case. Some DMs might go by the 'mule rule' where half-breeds, such as half-elves and half-orcs, are infertile and cannot have children, whereas others might wave that idea completely. Some might determine that, with the exception of humans, the different races cannot mingle and produce living offspring, and have to reproduce within their own race.

Though it is widely recognized that humans can produce offspring with many other races, the same is not necessarily the case for others. Tieflings are touched by their fiendish bloodline, and it could be argued that this effect would persist even if the tiefling were to have a child with a member of another race, definitively turning any children they would have into a tiefling also. Dragonborn are another race also connected to powerful beings and their traits could likewise be dominant if mixed with that of other races.

Ultimately, the decision of which races can and cannot breed, as well as the fertility of their combined offspring is the decision of the DM, as they are the deciding factor as to the laws and rules of the setting you are playing in.

Items of Reassurance

The following items can be deployed into your D&D world if you wish to offer additional options to characters planning on, or actively deciding against, having children.

Pendant of Birth Control

Wondrous item, common

While wearing this small, iridescent pendant, you can't become pregnant by any natural means.

Philter of Fertility

Potion, uncommon

After drinking this potion, you become incredibly fertile. The next time you attempt to become pregnant or make someone else pregnant, there is a 95 % chance that you will succeed.

Potion of Small Death Ward

Potion, uncommon

After drinking this potion, the first time your baby suffers damage that would be lethal, the damage is blocked by arcane means and the baby is protected from harm until the moment of its birth. The potion stays in effect for seven days after you've drunk it.

Chapter 5: Toys and Trinkets

This chapter offers a small selection of favorful trinkets and magic items well suited for playing a child character. At your DM's discretion, you may roll for a random trinket from the Little Trinkets table when you make your child character. How and why you have this item is up to you, and can act as a safety blanket - sometimes literally - against a big and scary world.

Magic Items

The following magic items are centered thematically around a child character, and is suited best for being used by them, but any character, regardless of their age, can still use the items as they normally would.

Bear of Squeezing

Wondrous item, uncommon

This stuffed bear is made from soft material, and looks to have been loved dearly by its previous owner. This stuffed bear has three charges. As an action, you can expend a charge by squeezing the bear's hand and cast the spell *calm emotions* centered on yourself with a DC of 13. The bear regains all expended charges each day at dawn.

Lullaby Music Box

Wondrous item, uncommon

This music box is made in light wood and has inlaid designs made in silver. The music box can be drawn up using an action, after which it plays a harmonious and calming lullaby, which lasts for one minute. After the minute has passed, any creature who listened to the music and who is willing, will fall into a restful, comfortable sleep. They will sleep for at least one hour, until they take damage, or someone uses an action to wake them up.

Safety Blanket

Wondrous item, rare

When you would take damage from an area-of-effect spell, such as a *fireball* spell, you can use your reaction to pull this blanket around you. Doing so protects you from the effect of the spell, negating all damage.

Once you've used the blanket in this way, you can't do so again until the next dawn.

Little Trinkets

When rolling a trinket for your character, you may choose to roll on the Little Trinkets table instead of the table found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Little Trinkets

d20	Trinket
1	A doll made of rags
2	A blanket made for an infant
3	A pet rock
4	A wooden animal figurine
5	A stuffed bear
6	A toy boat
7	A worn and torn blanket
8	A book of children's stories
9	A notebook with child drawings inside
10	A toy wagon with functioning wheels
11	A hat made for an adult that has clearly been worn a lot
12	A handcarved figurine of a monster
13	A spinning top
14	A music box
15	A stick with the head of a horse on one end
16	A toy knight
17	A set of three balls meant for juggling
18	A toy dragon
19	A porcelain doll
20	A baby's rattle