

Unit: 3: Childhood

(Developmental Psychology)

Presented by

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Childhood: Its Characteristics

- In Developmental Psychology, childhood refers to a period between infancy and adulthood.
- Different psychologists and biologists have used their own range of ages to describe childhood as a stage of human development.
- **One view:** Childhood is a stage between 3 to 12 years. Two sub-stages: **Early childhood**, ranging from 3 to 6 years of age and **Later childhood**, ranging from 7 to 12 years of age or to the onset of puberty.
- **Another view:** Childhood is a stage between 6 to 12 years of age of a child. **Early childhood** : from 6 to 8 years of age & **Later childhood** : from 9 to 12 years of age.
- Here, we will consider the **second one**.

Childhood: Its Characteristics

☐ **Main Characteristics:**

- Slow and steady physical growth
- Capacity to learn
- Logical information processing
- Development of social sense
- Extrovert nature
- Playfulness (Group play)
- Homosexuality
- Development of Constructive Instinct
- Emotional Stability
- Development of moral sense

Developmental Tasks during Childhood

❑ According to Havighurst,

“A developmental task is **a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life** of the individual, **successful achievement of which leads to happiness and to success with later tasks**, while **failure leads to unhappiness and difficulty with later tasks**”.

❑ Developmental tasks during early childhood:

- ✓ Getting ready to read
- ✓ Learning sex differences and sexual modesty
- ✓ Learning to distinguish right and wrong
- ✓ Beginning to develop a conscience

Developmental Tasks during Childhood

Developmental tasks during later childhood:

- ✓ Learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games
- ✓ Building a wholesome attitude toward oneself as a growing organism
- ✓ Learning to get along with age-mates
- ✓ Beginning to develop appropriate masculine or feminine social roles
- ✓ Developing fundamental skills in reading, writing, and calculating
- ✓ Developing concepts necessary for everyday living
- ✓ Developing a conscience, a sense of morality, and a scale of values
- ✓ Developing attitudes toward social groups and institutions
- ✓ Achieving personal independence

Physical development of early and late childhood

❑ **In early childhood:**

- ✓ Physical growth is slower in comparison to infancy
- ✓ Muscles grow and bones begin to stretch (long)
- ✓ Children become taller and heavier(height [3 inch per year] &weight increase)
- ✓ Steady development of brain
- ✓ Development of fine motor skills (use of smaller body parts such as finger to control objects, building towers of blocks, use of crayons ,writing alphabet and words)
- ✓ Refined motor skills (learns to run, jump, climb, walk up & down stairs independently, catching, throwing, riding tricycle, self-feeding, dressing etc.)

Physical development of early and late childhood

❑ **In later childhood:**

- ✓ Slow & steady physical growth
- ✓ Height (2,3 inch per year) & weight increase
- ✓ Change in facial structure
- ✓ Bones and muscles become stronger & harder
- ✓ Motor activities refined (Boys better in GMS & Girls better in FMS)
- ✓ Temporary teeth (milk-teeth) replaced by permanent teeth
- ✓ Brain volume stabilize

Emotional development of early and late childhood

❑ **In early childhood:**

- ✓ Natural reactions to all stimulus
- ✓ Emotional expression is generally intense
- ✓ Excessive and unreasonable fears, temper tantrums (more common in boys), outburst of jealousy towards siblings
- ✓ No proper control on emotions
- ✓ Variations in emotional patterns among children
- ✓ Emotional expressions based on need satisfaction
- ✓ Express fear to strangers
- ✓ Become Self-centred which leads to jealousy and insecure feeling

Emotional development of early and late childhood

❑ **In later childhood:**

- ✓ Skilled at talking about own and other's emotions
 - ✓ Understand the need to control and manage their emotions
 - ✓ Learn to control outward expression of emotions
 - ✓ fear to strangers reduced
 - ✓ Develop capacity for genuine empathy
 - ✓ Gradually develop social qualities which reduced jealousy and insecure feeling
 - ✓ Beginning of how to cope with emotional stress (Catharsis/Bireson)
 - ✓ Discover the technique of emotional catharsis and use it in the form of play, laugh or cry to clear their pent-up emotional feelings
- ❑ **Family size, parental attitude, nature of discipline, child-rearing methods, general social and economic environment of home etc., influence the emotional life of children during the age.**

Social and Personality development during childhood

- **According to Ross Thompson:** Understanding social and personality development requires looking at children from **three perspectives** that interact to shape development.
- ✓ The **first is the social context** in which each child lives, especially the relationships that provide security, guidance, and knowledge.
- ✓ The **second is biological maturation** that supports developing social and emotional competencies and underlies temperamental individuality.
- ✓ The **third is children's developing representations** of themselves and the social world.
- Social and personality development is **best understood as the continuous interaction** between these **social, biological, and representational** aspects of psychological development.

Influence of family in social development in childhood

- Social development of children based on **three specific process**:
 - ✓ **Practical knowledge** of desired action & behaviour
 - ✓ **Social role played** with respect to age , time and environment
 - ✓ **Recognition** of social qualities by elders
- **Main aspects for socialization** of children:
 - ✓ Congenial home environment : material condition, emotional environment, democratic environment, motivational environment etc.
 - ✓ Inculcation of scientific attitude
 - ✓ Transmission of culture through observance of social festivals
 - ✓ Inculcation of social and moral qualities
 - ✓ Inculcation of human values
 - ✓ Enhancement of self-confidence and self-realisation
 - ✓ Enhancement of self-discipline etc.

Influence of school in social development in childhood

- School is a **special environment**, where a **certain quality of life and certain types of activities and occupations** are provided with the **object of securing the child's development along desirable lines. (JOHN DEWEY)**
- Schools are **institutions devised by civilized man** for the purpose of aiding in the preparation of the young **for well adjusted and efficient membership of society. (J.S.ROSS)** As an agent of socialization, a school contributes towards the **process of 'creating a social self'** in an individual.
- A school is formulated for the purposes of **transmitting culture** thereby aiding in socialization.
- It helps children to **learn social skills, values, and norms** that shape their future interactions with society.
- ✓ Children learn social skills like respecting others' opinions and authority, and time management.
- ✓ Unwritten rules, rituals, and teacher-student interactions can significantly impact a student's value system.

Influence of school in social development in childhood

- Schools are responsible for socializing children to specific values and skills, which can contribute to **social conformity**.
- Formal rule and regulations of the schools help children to become **emotionally stable and develop ability to differentiate right & wrong deeds**.
- **Others:**
 - ✓ Theoretical knowledge about social development and social qualities
 - ✓ Inculcation of self-discipline through formal rules and guidelines
 - ✓ Development of intimate relationship between teacher and taught
 - ✓ Active participation of children in diverse occasions e.g. Swaraswati Puja
 - ✓ Leadership training through decentralization of power
 - ✓ Practical lesson for social development through CCAs
 - ✓ Social learning through group activities like project, educational tour etc.

Personality Development

- An individual's personality is the **sum total of the person's behaviour, qualities, characteristics, attitudes and traits, beliefs and motives** which make up his unique identity.
- Therefore, personality development means **improvement and development in all these fields** of the individual's life.
- Personality development refers to **a deliberate process of grooming and developing the inner and outer qualities and characteristics** to bring in positive changes in the life of the individual.
- **These process involves attempts at improving** language and communication skills, enhancing self-confidence, developing fruitful hobbies, broadening the mental horizon, refining manners and etiquette, including grace and elegance in appearance, walks and talks and instilling liveliness, positivity and peace in behaviour.

Personality Development

- Personality development is the **result of continuous interaction of temperament, environment and character** of an individual.
- **Temperament** refers to the **genetically determined traits** of the individual that determine attitude and approach of the individual and how the individual learns about the world around him.
- The **second** important factor in shaping the personality of the individual is the **environment** in which he lives.
- Temperament is also called **“nature”** while environmental factors are called **“nurture”**.
- The **third factor is character** which refers to the set of cognitive, affective, and behavioural patterns learned from experience and it is these patterns that determine how an individual thinks, feels and acts or behaves.
- Though a person’s character continues to evolve throughout life, **inborn traits and early experiences cast strong influence** on his character and personality.

Influence of Family in Personality Development in Childhood

Genetic influence:

- The shape and size of body, colour of eyes & hair, complexion, temperament and numerous other traits of an individual are influenced by his/her inherited genes. (N.B.: Though temperament of a child is relatively stable, familial involvement/ environment can influence and alter it to considerable extent)

Environmental influence:

- **At an early stage**, if family members including parents have **trusting and supportive relationship** with their child, then the child overcomes the trust versus mistrust crisis and establishes **the virtue of hope**.
- **At a later stage**, if parents **allow a child to fully explore** his or her options and commit to his or her own then it can obtain **identity achievement**. On the other hand, if a child is **not allowed a specific amount of autonomy** in the family, the child will not overcome the crisis of identity versus identity diffusion (ERIK ERIKSON's Psycho-social development theory)

Influence of Family in Personality Development in Childhood

- The **level of response and involvement of parents** to various aspects of a child's life influence **emotional regulation**, or the ability to control emotions and emotional responses, & **behaviour regulation** of the child.

Example: if a child faces fearful situation in the presence of parent, the child looks toward the parent and examine facial expressions. If the **parents shows signs of distress** then the child behaves in the same manner. **On the other hand**, if the parent **does not show signs of emotional distress**, then the child too displays less distress and more engagement in the situation. This is known as **social referencing** through which children experience emotional stability.

Example: Parents, who are **accepting, grant more autonomy, and show higher levels of behavioural control** in the form of rule and guidelines they help children in achieving higher levels of **behavioural self regulations, maturity, identity, and work orientation.**

Influence of Family in Personality Development in Childhood

- **Parental attitudes** also influence the development of personality by influencing the development of **maturity and achievement motivation**. Parent's **faith** in their child's academic success influences the child's success and motive to excel. Parents who **play an active part** in their child's life and **get involve in academic aspects** positively influence the **achievement motivation and success** in their children.
- **Parents' interventions** in a child's negative behaviour to correct him help the child to **internalize moral standards** and these moral standards become part of his/her personality. **Parents who stimulate moral reasoning with moral discussions**, and are supportive and encourage autonomous thinking help children to function at a **higher level of moral reasoning**.
- **Nature of social relationship** of children with parents and family members influence the patterns of **social behaviour and personality** of the children. Children who are tied by a **strong sense of attachment with parents are resilient/lively, empathetic, and self-dependent, have higher self-esteem, and are more curious.**

Influence of Family in Personality Development in Childhood

- **Parental love and affection toward children** gives definite shape and direction to individual's personality at a very early stage.
- ✓ If parents **do not sufficiently love or sympathize** with children, **repressive behaviour** in the children may arise leading to introvert personality. Such children may live in the realm of imagination and day-dream where they can enjoy the things denied by their parents. They may experience difficulty in adjustment leading to maladjusted personality characteristics.
- ✓ On the other hand, if parents shower **too much love and affection** upon their children, they may become **excessively dependent** upon parents. Overprotection of children by parents often lead to lack of socio-economic skills and difficulty in social adjustment.
- **Parent's attitude of rejection** towards children may develop in them feeling of **insecurity, mistrust and other negative feeling** leading to conflicts in personality.
- The **relation between parents/ family members** also is an important factors that affects the personality of children. The **absence of love and sympathy** may turn them into **delinquent**. On the contrary, **healthy, happy and gratifying** relationship between family members leads to **healthy development of personality**.

Influence of School in Personality Development in Childhood

- ❖ **Development of academic potential:** Schools help in the development of maximum academic potential / academic achievement of each child.
- ❖ **Development of cognitive skills:** Acquisition of cognitive skills such as memory, thinking, reasoning, and other mental abilities as a result of academic exercise in school help children to give definite shape to their character and personality
- ❖ **Language and communication skills development :** Development of language and communication skills as a component of children's personality is greatly influenced by the training received at school.
- ❖ **Development of physical and motor skills:** Schools, through its various programmes of physical activities including games and sports, NCC, scouting etc help children to develop their physique and motor skills and abilities which help in the development of personality of the pupils.
- ❖ **Emotional development and maturity :** Children learn the skills to control the intense expression of their emotions at school which give acceptable shape to their behaviour and personality.
- ❖ **Development of social skills:** Schools provide wide opportunities for developing social skills. Schools help children form solid social relationships and to connect with other children and adults in a caring and empathetic manner.
- ❖ **Character building and development of self concept:** Schools provide lessons on compassion, respect, empathy and integrity. Schools also help them to develop self esteem and self concept.

Influence of School in Personality Development in Childhood

- ❖ **Development of creativity:** School is a laboratory for creative experimentation by children. Children, when encouraged by teachers and peers in their creative endeavor, develop creative talents and excel in creative expression.
- Schools give **desirable knowledge, skills and experience** besides opportunities to think, reason and develop a broader outlook on life.
- Schools help **to attain emotional maturity, cultivate values and attitudes**.
- Schools provide **opportunities for social learning and social behaviour** through group life.
- Schools provide **opportunities for social competitive and co-operative work** and experience.
- Schools **discipline the child morally and help to achieve self-control**, through a body of rules, regulations, morals and social values.
- Schools also **prepare students for different social roles**, by developing them into good citizens, increasing their socio-economic competence, initiative and independence.
- Schools provide **knowledge and constructive attitude towards socio-cultural heritage** that help them in their adjustment with society and culture.
- Schools **develop feelings of self-confidence, security and adequacy** leading to healthy personalities.



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YOU