



**Course code BEC 123:**

**Course title: CHILD DEVELOPMENT II**

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**BEC 123: CHILD DEVELOPMENT II**

**Credit hours: 3hrs**

**Pre-requisites: ECD 102**

**Purpose**

To understand middle, late and adolescent psychology

**Course content**

Review of early and middle childhood development, late childhood (adolescence), explore achievement and major milestones in: physical, mental, language, socio-emotional and spiritual.

Theories of development, development of creativity and critical thinking, factors influencing creativity, transitional issues among teenagers.

Adolescent and adult psychology, definition of personality, theories of personality development, factors influencing personality, attitudes, emotions and motivation, categories of personality, personality assessment.

**Teaching/learning methodologies**

Group discussions: lecturing, individual assignments, micro-teaching.

**Instructional materials and equipment**

Chalk board, overhead projectors.

**Course assessment**

Examination – 70%, continuous assessments (exercises and tests) – 30%; Total – 100%

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**COURSE OUTLINE**

**UNIT CODE: BEC 123**

**UNIT TITLE: CHILD GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT II**

**LESSON ONE: EARLY CHILDHOOD**

- Cognitive domain
- How personalities develop
- Socialization and play
- Moral development during childhood
- Gender identity
- Spiritual growth
- Action research in early childhood development
- Perspectives on child development

**LESSON TWO: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

- Physical and cognitive domains
- Socio-emotional domain
- Issues and challenges in childhood
- Looking through the eyes of the system of support
- Spiritual growth
- Research lessons and issues
- Perspectives on child development

**LESSON THREE: LATE CHILDHOOD (ADOLESCENCE)**

- Developmental changes during adolescence
- Looking through the eyes of an adolescent
- Physical development during adolescence
- Cognitive development during adolescence
- Socio-emotional development during adolescence
- Looking through the eyes of the systems of support
- Spiritual growth
- Action research in late childhood development

- Child development theories

#### **LESSON FOUR: CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT THEORIES**

- Sigmund Freud
- Erik Erikson
- Cognitive Child Development Theories
- Behavioral Child Development Theories
- Social Child Development Theories
- John Bowlby
- Albert Bandura
- Lev Vygotsky

#### **LESSON FIVE: ADULTHOOD**

- Development in middle and early adulthood
- Development in late adulthood
- Theories of successful ageing
- Physical changes
- Cognitive changes
- Death and dying
- Darling's spiritual growth paradigm

## **LESSON ONE: EARLY CHILDHOOD**

### **Lesson Overview**

We have termed this stage in the developmental process of humans, the “Play Years”, because this aspect, as much as any other, seems to characterize the most important context in which development occurs. While we examine the physical development during this stage that moves from an emphasis on the Gross and McIlveen to the fine motor skills, we consider in greater detail the cognitive aspect of development as the child begins to think about its world. We examine three perspectives on the cognitive development of children including representation of experiences, learning and language development. In addition, we also consider the emotional and personality development of children particularly in play situations, in contexts ranging from the home to daycare and pre-school.

### **Lesson Objectives**

#### **Knowledge**

- To understand biological changes during early childhood.
- To understand cognitive changes during early childhood.
- To understand socio-emotional changes during early childhood.

### **Teacher Information**

#### **The roles nature and nurture play in the development of a young child**

The template Nature/Nurture and Human Development depicts the interactions between heredity, the environment and the organism. Note how heredity and experience combine to influence the organism. The next level of interaction happens between the current organism and the current situation that results in the current behaviour. This behaviour, in turn, influences the genetic dispositions and preferences of the organism and the cycle or process is repeated.

## **How the various domains influence development during early childhood**

### *Physical development*

- The average child grows six centimeters in height and gains two to three kilograms a year during early childhood. Growth patterns vary individually though. By age five, the brain has reached nine-tenths of its adult size. Some of its size increase is due to the number and size of nerve endings. Gross motor skills increase dramatically during early childhood. Young children are more active than at any other period in the lifespan. Fine motor skills also increase substantially during early childhood (Santrock, 1999, p. 261).

### *Cognitive development*

- Piaget's stage of pre-operational thought is the beginning of the ability to reconstruct at the level of thought what has been established in behaviour and a transition from primitive to more sophisticated use of symbols. The child does yet think in an operational way. Pre-operational thought consists of two sub stages: symbolic function (two to four years) and intuitive thought (four to seven years). The child's attention improves dramatically during the early childhood years, as does short-term memory. Young children develop a curiosity about the nature of the human mind. Advances in language development also occur during early childhood. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the zone of proximal development, the merging of language and thought from three to seven years of age and the socio-cultural contexts of cognitive development. Child-centered kindergarten and developmentally appropriate education are important dimensions of early childhood development, as are quality Head Start programs. A current concern is that too many preschool and early childhood education programs place too much emphasis on academic achievement (Santrock, 1999, p. 261).

### *Socio-emotional development*

- Authoritative parenting is associated with children's social competence. Parents need to adapt their strategies as the child grows older using less physical manipulation and more reasoning. Cross-cultural and ethnic variations occur. In some cases, siblings are stronger socialization agents than parents. Children live in changing families; more children today grow up in working mother and divorced families. Depression in parents is associated with adjustment problems in children. Peers are powerful socializing agents who provide a source of information and social comparison outside the family. Play also is an important aspect of the young child's development. Parten year developed a number of categories of social play. Among the most important types of children's play is sensor motor practice play, pretence/symbolic play, social play, constructive play, and games. Television is another socializing influence in children's development. Children watch a huge amount of television; preschool children watch an average of four hours a day. A special concern is the television violence children see. Erikson believes that early childhood is a period when the self involves resolving the conflict between initiatives versus guilt. In early childhood, the physical and active self becomes a part of self-understanding. Gender identity is the sense of being male or female which most children acquire by three years of age. Identification, social learning, cognitive development and gender-schema theories have been proposed to explain children's gender development. Peers are especially adept at rewarding gender-appropriate behaviour. Piaget distinguished between the heteronomous morality of younger children and the autonomous morality of older children. In addition to moral thought, moral behaviour and moral feelings are important dimensions of children's moral development (Santrock, 1999, p. 261).

## **The socio-cultural influences on child development**

- Vygotsky's portrait of children's development suggests that children actively construct their knowledge, and that it is inseparable from social and cultural activities. In Vygotsky's theory, knowledge is situated and distributed among people and environments which include objects, artifacts, tools, books, and the communities in which people live, and collaborate, advanced through interaction with others in cooperative activities (Gross and McIlveen, 1998, p. 365).



## **Teacher Information**

### **How the brain develops during early childhood**

One of the most important physical developments during early childhood is the continuing development of the brain and nervous system. While the brain continues to grow in early childhood, it does not grow as rapidly as in infancy. By the time children have reached three years of age, the brain is three-quarters of its adult size. By age five the brain has reached about nine-tenths of its adult size. Part of the increase in brain weight is due to continued proliferation of communication pathways (via the growth of dendrites and axons) among the brain's various specialized areas in response to the child's specific experiences. Another part of brain growth is due to ongoing myelination - the insulating process that speeds up the transmission of neural impulses. Finally, several areas of the brain undergo notable expansion, in particular those areas dedicated to control and coordination of the body, the emotions, and thinking processes.

### **How important nutrition is to healthy and proper childhood development**

With their growth slowed, children need fewer calories per pound of body weight during the preschool years than they did from birth through toddler hood - especially if they are modern, sedentary children who spend most of their time indoors. As a result, their appetites become markedly smaller, a fact that causes many parents to fret, threaten, and cajole to get their children to eat more. A related problem is that many children like most adults, eat too few fruits and vegetables and consume too much fat. No more than 30 percent of daily calories should come from fat, but six out of seven preschoolers in the United States exceed that limit. Interestingly, one North American study found that both children whose family income is below the poverty level and children whose family income is three times above it are more likely to exceed the 30 percent fat limit, compared to those whose income lies somewhere in between.

## **Early Childhood Development: Cognitive domain**

Perhaps more so than at any other stage of development, early childhood is a time of phenomenal cognitive growth and development, highlighted in particular by language development. It may take several class periods to cover all the information presented on this LESSON

### **Lesson**

- The developmental changes in children's cognitive abilities

### **Objectives**

- The process of language development in early childhood
- The socio-cultural environment influence cognitive development
- How the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky compare
- The influence does culture have on cognitive development during early childhood

## **The process of language development in early childhood**

The social learning view suggests that speech is acquired through a combination of conditioning and imitation. Presumably, children are praised or otherwise rewarded by their parents for making sounds approximating those of their native language. In addition, parents often model sounds, words or sentences for them.

A sharply different view has been proposed by linguist Noam Chomsky (1968): the innate mechanism view. According to Chomsky, language acquisition is at least partly innate. Human beings, he contends, have a language acquisition device – a built-in neural system that provides them with an intuitive grasp of grammar.

Cognitive theory recognizes the importance of both innate mechanisms and learning. This theory suggests that children possess certain information-processing abilities or strategies that they use in acquiring language.

### **The method of discipline that works**

There are several forms of discipline for helping children as they grow into socially capable people:

- *Spanking*. While most parents have experienced the urge to spank children, and many have resorted to spanking their kids, there are problems with this form of discipline. Spanking may give children a clear message about the unacceptability of their behaviour and sometimes stops the behaviour in the short run. However, in the long run, it teaches children that it is all right to hit, and that it is all right to be hit. Even children are confused by the irony of the statement, “This spanking will teach you not to hit your brother.”
- *Time-outs*. Giving children a short time-out can give them the chance to reflect on their behaviour, and also a clear message that a certain behaviour would not be allowed. This can be an effective method of teaching. Time-outs can also give an angry, frustrated parent a chance to calm down and respond more rationally. It is suggested that a child be given a time-out equal in minutes to her age (a four-minute time out for a four-year-old child). It is not recommended to use time-outs with children under the age of three. The problem with time-outs is that they take a child away from a valuable learning experience. A child who hits another child can begin to

learn empathy from watching the other's child's response to being hurt, and if he stays around, he may also be able to participate in helping the other child feel better.

- *Talking with children.* Talking with children offers rich opportunities for learning alternatives to hitting. It is often necessary to give children some specific suggestions about what they can say when they have strong feelings. Sometimes the suggestion, “Use your words,” doesn't give children enough of an idea of what they could say.
- *Help children come up with alternative solutions.* What children usually want when they take toys from each other is a chance to play together. If you can offer them suggestions for other ways to play together, they may be able to let their conflict go. “It looks like Jeffy wants to play trucks with you. Can you find him a truck he could use?” Or, “Jeffy looks really interested in what you are doing with your truck. Could he help you make a road for the truck?”
- *Set limits and follow through.* It is important that children know that hitting is unacceptable. If your child is unable to stop himself from hitting his brothers after you have offered alternative ways for him to express his feelings and communicate his ideas, you can offer him a final choice. “Can you be safe with Jeffy or shall I help you move to the other room to play away from Jeffy until you can be safe with him?”
- *Remember that it takes time, repetition and modeling.* Children do not learn communication and problem-solving skills quickly. It takes time and repetition in many different circumstances before they really get it. If you stay focused on teaching your children these skills and gently model the ways you want them to interact, slowly they will begin to acquire the skills (Davis and Keyser, 1997, pp. 218-239).

## **The Self and Personality**

This lesson addresses how young children develop from a basic temperament, to an increasing self-awareness and self-concept, to the beginnings of personality.

## **Teacher Information**

### **How, and when, young children develop a sense of self**

Toward the end of the second year of life children develop a sense of self. During early childhood, some important developments in the self take place. Among these developments are facing the issue of initiative versus guilt and enhanced self-understanding (Alcock et al., 1998, p. 69).

### **How personalities develop**

The *psychodynamic approach* as advanced by Sigmund Freud, proposed that personality and behaviour are determined more by psychological factors than by biological conditions or current events. He suggested that people may not know why they think, feel or act the way they do because they are partly controlled by the unconscious portion of the personality - the part of which people are normally unaware (Bernstein and Nash, 1999, p. 408).

The *trait approach* to personality makes three main assumptions:

Personality traits remain relatively stable and therefore predictable over time.

Personality traits remain relatively stable across diverse situations, and they can explain why people act in predictable ways in many different settings.

People differ with regard to how much of a particular personality trait they possess; no two people are exactly alike on all traits. The result is an endless variety of unique personalities (Bernstein and Nash, 1999, p. 413).

A *cognitive-behavioural approach* views personality as a set of behaviours that people acquire through learning and then display in particular situations. It defines personality as the sum total of the behaviours and cognitive habits that develop as people learn through experience in the social world (Bernstein and Nash, 1999, p. 421).

The *phenomenological (humanistic) approach* maintains that the primary human motivator is an innate drive toward personal growth that prompts people to fulfill their unique and natural potential. Like the planted seed that naturally becomes a flower, people are inclined towards goodness, creativity, love and joy. Proponents of this theory emphasise that each individual perceives reality somewhat differently and that these differences, rather than traits, instincts or learning experiences, are central to creating personality differences (Bernstein and Nash, 1999, p. 424).

What aspects of a child's world influence personality development?

### *Biology*

- Every individual is born with a distinct, genetically-based set of psychological tendencies, or dispositions. These tendencies, which together are called temperament, affect and shape virtually every aspect of the individual's developing personality. Temperament, and therefore personality, is not merely genetic. It begins in the multitude of genetic instructions that guide the development of the brain and then is affected by the prenatal environment (Berger, 2000, p. 219).

### *Birth order*

- Refer to birth order chart, Lesson Objectives and Teacher Information, Lesson 3.5 Infancy Development: socio-emotional domain.

### *Temperament*

- Researchers who study personality have found what are called the "big five" dimensions of temperament:
  - *Extroversion*: the tendency to be outgoing, assertive, and active
  - *Agreeableness*: the tendency to be kind, helpful, and easygoing

- *Conscientiousness*: the tendency to be organized, deliberate, and conforming
- *Neuroticism*: the tendency to be anxious, moody, and self-punishing
- *Openness*: the tendency to be imaginative, curious, artistic and welcoming of new experiences (Baron et al., 1998, p. 336).

### *Culture*

- In every culture, preschool education not only includes but goes beyond cognitive preparation for later schooling. As an example, Japanese culture places great emphasis on social consensus and conformity. Therefore, Japan's preschools provide training in the behaviour and attitudes appropriate for group activity; children are encouraged to show concern for others and to contribute cooperatively in group activities. These social attitudes and habits prepare young children for both the formal school system and later work settings. In China, similarly, learning how to be part of the group is combined with creativity in self-expression, both drawn from the culture's Confucian ethic of disciplined study. In the United States, by contrast, preschools are often designed to foster self-confidence and self-reliance and to give children a good academic start through emphasis on language skills. Since most North American preschools are private, they vary a great deal in rules, curriculum and values (Berger, 2000, p. 296).

### *Parenting*

- Refer to Curriculum Support Materials, Memorandum from your child.

### *Family*

- Children's emotional health is closely related to the emotional relationship between their parents. When these relationships are warm and constructive, such that the husband and wife feel loved, admired, and encouraged to act in ways that they themselves admired, the children are happy and healthy. Couples who are emotionally close, meeting each other's needs and

encouraging positive self-images in each other, become good parents. Since they meet each other's needs, they do not use their children to live out their needs; since they are happy and satisfied, they can support and meet their children's needs; and since their own identities are clarified, they see their children as distinct from themselves. All this helps the children become emotionally healthy people (Schlesinger, 1998, p.8).

### *Economics*

- No matter how maltreatment is defined or counted, it occurs more frequently as family income falls. This particularly true for neglect and physical abuse, which fall most heavily on children under age six who live in families with an income below the poverty line, an unemployed father, and four or more children. In such families, children obviously add to the financial pressures and are likely to become victims because of it (Berger, 2000, p. 302).

### *Maltreatment*

- The more we learn about child maltreatment, the more we see that its causes are many and its consequences extend far beyond any immediate injury or deprivation. Compared to well-cared-for children, chronically abused and neglected children tend to be underweight, slower to talk, less able to concentrate, and delayed in academic growth. Deficits are even more apparent in social skills; maltreated children tend to regard other children and adults as hostile and exploitative, and hence they are less friendly, more aggressive, and more isolated than other children. The longer their abuse continues, and the earlier it started, the worse their relationships with peers are. As adolescents and adults, those who were severely maltreated in childhood (physically or emotionally) often use drugs or alcohol to numb their emotions, choose unsupportive relationships, sabotage their own careers, eat too much or too little, and generally engage in self-destructive behaviour (Berger, 2000, p. 258).



### *Self-concept*

- Infants are not “given” a self by their parents or the culture. Rather, they find and construct selves. It is generally believed that awareness of “the self” develops from early experience. Indeed, one of the first stages in the development of thinking in the child is the capacity to distinguish what is “me” and what is “not me” (Alcock et al., 1998, p. 69).

### *Emotional regulation*

- The most important emotional development during early childhood is not the emergence of new emotions such as pride or guilt, but the growing ability to inhibit, enhance, maintain and modulate emotional arousal to accomplish one’s goals. This ability, called emotional regulation, is developed in response to society's expectations that preschoolers manage frustration and modulate emotional expression (Berger, 2000, p. 308).

### *Attachment and care-giving*

- The results of past care-giving are clearly exhibited by children’s reactions when another child cries in pain. Children who have been well nurtured and have formed secure attachments are able to regulate their own emotions and can express empathy, comforting the hurting child, reassuring the frightened child, or getting help if need be. Longitudinal research finds that those with insecure attachments respond abnormally to other children's distress (Berger, 2000, p. 309).

### *Social behaviour*

- One of the most important functions of the peer group is to provide a source of information and comparison about the world outside. Children receive feedback about their abilities from their peer group. Good peer relations may be necessary for normal socio-emotional development.

Social isolation, or the inability to “plug in” to a social network, is linked with many problems and disorders ranging from delinquency and problem drinking to depression.

### *Media*

- According to Neilson Media Research, in 1996 children between the ages of two to five in the United States watched 23 hours and 21 minutes of television each week. This is more than three hours a day, and it is at least three hours more a week than the viewing time of any other age group. Among the criticisms of television are the time it takes away from active, interactive and imaginative play; the faulty nutritional messages it sends; and the sexist, racist, and ageist stereotypes it provides that are particularly harmful for inexperienced, vulnerable viewers. Pro-social behaviour depends on emotional regulation, which is best learned through active social relationships. Television, passive observation, undercuts the very attributes, skills and values that lead to pro-social activity. However, the most compelling and convincing criticism of television concerns the antisocial behaviour it encourages, especially in children. The effect is interactive and cumulative; children who watch a lot of television are likely to be more aggressive than children who do not, and children who are already inclined to be aggressive are likely to watch a lot of violence. Television desensitizes children to violence in real life, making physical aggression seem normal. For all these reasons, children who watch substantial quantities of violent television are more likely than others to be bullies, more likely to retaliate physically for any perceived attack, more likely to be passive victims, and more likely to be passive onlookers rather than mediators when other children fight (Berger, 2000, p. 313).

## **Socialization and Play**

Early childhood is often referred to as the “play years”. This stage of development establishes the foundation for all social behaviours and social interactions. It is, literally, the first step in determining, Who I Am.

### **Lesson**

- Why children play

### **Objectives**

- The different kinds of play behaviours
- How parents can encourage nonviolent play

## Why children play

Play is pleasurable activity that is engaged in for its own sake. Play is essential to the young child's health. Play increases affiliation with peers, releases tension, advances cognitive development, increases exploration and provides a safe haven in which to engage in potentially dangerous behaviour.

- For Freud and Erikson, play is an essential, useful form of human adjustment, helping the child master anxieties and conflicts. Because tensions are relieved in play, the child can cope with life's problems.
- Piaget believes that play advances children's cognitive development. Play permits children to practise their competencies and acquired skills in a relaxed, pleasurable way.
- Vygotsky also believes that play is an excellent setting for cognitive development, especially the symbolic and make-believe aspects of play, as when a child substitutes a stick for a horse and rides the stick as if it were a horse.
- Play encourages exploratory behaviour by offering children the possibilities of novelty, complexity, uncertainty, surprise and incongruity (Santrock, 1999, p. 240).

## The different kinds of play behaviours

Mildred Parten (1932) developed the following classification of children's play:

- *Unoccupied play* occurs when the child is not engaging in play as it is commonly understood. The child may stand in one spot, look around the room, or perform random movements that do not seem to have a goal.
- *Solitary play* occurs when the child plays alone and independently of others. Two- and three-year-olds engage more frequently in solitary play than older preschoolers do.
- *Onlooker play* occurs when the child watches other children play. The child's active interest in other children's play distinguishes onlooker play from unoccupied play.

- *Parallel play* occurs when the child plays separately from others, but with toys like those the others are using or in a manner that mimics their play.
- Associative play occurs when play involves social interaction with little or no organization. In this type of play children seem to be more interested in each other than in the tasks they are performing.
- Cooperative play involves social interaction in a group with a sense of group identity and organized activity. Little cooperative play is seen in the preschool years (Santrock, 1999, p. 241).

Parten's categories represent one way of thinking about the different types of play. However, other types of play are important in children's development. Whereas Parten's categories emphasize the role of play in the child's social world, the contemporary perspective on play emphasizes both the cognitive and social aspects of play.

- *Sensorimotor play* is behaviour engaged in by infants to derive pleasure from exercising their existing sensor motor schemas. Infants initially engage in exploratory and playful visual and motor transactions in the second quarter of the first year of life. By nine months of age, infants begin to select novel objects for exploration and play, especially objects that are responsive such as toys that make noise or bounce. By 12 months of age, infants enjoy making things work and exploring cause and effect. At this point in development, children like toys that perform when they act on them.
- *Pretense/Symbolic play*. Between nine- and 30 months of age, children increase their use of objects in symbolic play. They learn to transform objects - substituting them for other objects and acting toward them as if they were these other objects. Dramatic play or "make-believe" often appears at about 18 months of age and reaches a peak at about four- or five- years of age,

then gradually declines. In the second year, infants begin to understand the social meaning of objects. For example, two-year-olds may distinguish between exploratory play that is interesting but not humorous, and “playful” play which has incongruous and humorous dimensions.

- *Social play* is play that involves social interactions with peers. Parten's categories are oriented towards social play.
- *Constructive play* combines sensorimotor/practice repetitive play with symbolic representation of ideas. Constructive play occurs when children engage in self-regulated creation or construction of a product or a problem solution.
- *Games* are activities engaged in for pleasure. They include rules and often competition with one or more individuals (Santrock, 1999, p. 241).

### **How parents can encourage non-violent play**

Four-year-olds are busy trying to master their fears, understand mortality, and gain a sense of power in a big, often frightening world. These factors, which naturally converge in four- and five-year-olds, lead to a fascination with guns. The fact that your son is fascinated with guns right now does not mean that he will grow up to be a violent person. Rather, it means he is developmentally on target, trying to understand the power of guns, what makes people get hurt, and what makes them die, why everyone on TV is so obsessed with guns and killing, and why his parents get so upset when he points his finger at someone and pretends to shoot them.

Families have a wide range of responses to gun play. At one end of the spectrum, kids are equipped with realistic Uzi imitations, and at the other, gun play is banned altogether. Yet even in households where toy guns are not allowed, children still find ways to explore their interest in weapons; they build

guns out of Legos, pick up sticks and say, “bang! Bang!” or eat their peanut butter sandwiches in the shape of a gun.

Here are some guidelines for responding to your son's fascination with guns while encouraging nonviolence:

- Set parameters for the play. When we forbid a form of play, that play often goes underground and we lose an opportunity to help our children figure out answers to their questions. Make it clear to children that any play which intimidates hurts or frightens another child is unacceptable. Then clarify the rules about guns at your house: “In our family, you are not allowed to point guns at any people or pets without their permission.” Or, “I want you to keep your gun play outside.”
- Provide props for play that have multiple uses. Giving children open-ended props encourages flexibility and creativity. When a child makes a gun out of plastic blocks, ten minutes later, those plastic blocks can be transformed into a container ship. However, when children play with highly realistic guns, those guns can only shoot and kill.
- Make your values clear. Children care deeply about how we see the world. Share your perspective with your son, “When I see you playing with guns, it really upsets me because people can be hurt by real guns.”
- Help children deal with their fears. Often gun play increases when children are feeling fearful. Children look for symbols of power (such as guns and swords) to help them feel more secure. Helping children deal with their fears can take some of the intensity out of their gun play.
- Let your kids know that people are working to stop violence in the real world. Kids sometimes use gun play to cope with fears about violence in the real world. If your child seems scared of

real violence, talk about people who are working to stop fighting and end war. This can help kids feel safer and therefore, less driven to engage in gun play.

- Provide kids with alternatives to gun play that help them feel powerful. Four- and five-Year-olds love to be competent. Providing them with real work experiences such as carpentry, cooking and gardening can channel some of the energy being directed into gun play in a new, more creative direction (Davis and Keyser, 1997, p. 339).

### **Moral development during childhood**

Moral development begins in early childhood. This lesson describes the theories of moral development, knowing what is “right” and “wrong”, and the processes by which children learn basic values.

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|-------------------|--|
| <b>Lesson</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How children develop moral behaviour</li></ul> |
| <b>Objectives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How children learn values</li></ul>            |



## How children develop moral behaviour

### Theories of moral development:

- *Social learning* theorists argue that moral behaviors are acquired through classical and operant conditioning. We resist temptation because we have been reinforced for so doing and punished for transgressions. Social learning theorists also recognize the importance of modeling or observational learning. The development of self-control is strongly influenced by models and by patterns of direct reinforcement children encounter, that is, adults' disciplinary measures.
- *Cognitive developmental*
  - Kohlberg's theory states that the child is in the first level of moral development (pre-conventional morality) characterized by:
    - Stage 1: Punishment and obedience orientation, what is right or wrong is determined by what is punishable and what is not.
    - Stage 2: What is right and wrong is determined by what brings rewards and what people want.
  - Piaget's Theory
    - Heteronomous morality is the first stage of moral development in Piaget's theory, occurring from approximately four to seven years of age. Justice and rules are conceived of as unchangeable properties of the world, removed from the control of people. The heteronomous thinker judges the rightness or goodness of behaviour by considering the consequences of behaviour, not the intentions of the actor. For example, the heteronomous thinker says that breaking twelve cups accidentally is worse than breaking one cup intentionally while trying to steal a cookie (Gross and McIlveen, 1998, p. 382).

## How children learn values

Every interaction with children provides an opportunity to teach values. While no parent tries to make every kiss goodnight a lesson, it is useful to think about the opportune times for teaching in families.

- Children learn about our values through daily interactions with us. When we think about teaching values to kids, we often think about taking them to church or having a talk with them about lying, teaching them about sharing or encouraging them to give during the holiday season. Yet we teach values every day in our ordinary daily encounters.
- Children learn through our example.
- Children learn through the values we strive towards. While it is true that children learn through what we model, it is not true that you need to have mastered a value before you teach it to your children. All of us have some values that are woven into the very fabric of who we are. At the same time, most of us have values we are newly adopting, that we haven't practiced or integrated. Even if we move toward our values in tiny increments, children will pick up on our intention and commitment, and learn that they, too, can strive toward a vision they haven't yet attained.
- Children learn values through the way we do things as a family.
- Children learn values and beliefs through their exposure to the larger world. Through friends, extended family, books, TV and the experiences they have in their community, children absorb values and societal norms.
- Children learn values through our explanations of the world (Davis and Keyser, 1997, p. 6).

## **Gender Identity**

Gender, by definition, refers to the state of “femaleness” or “maleness”. This lesson addresses how young children develop a sense of gender identity and gender roles.

### **Lesson**

- How a gender identity develops

### **Objectives**

- The differences between the genders
- The socio-cultural influences on gender development

### **How a gender identity develops**

Even at age two, gender related preferences and play patterns are apparent. Children already know whether they are boys or girls, can identify adult strangers as mommies or daddies, and apply gender labels (Mrs., Mr., lady, man) consistently. That simple cognitive awareness becomes, by age three, a rudimentary understanding that male and female distinctions are life-long. By age four, children are convinced that certain toys are appropriate for one gender but not the other. Four year-olds criticize peers who choose toys that are not appropriate for their gender and are proud of themselves when they act in gender-typical ways. When given a choice, children play with other children of their own sex, a tendency apparent at age two and clear-cut by age five. By age six, children have well formed ideas (and prejudices) about sex differences and also know which sex is better (their own) and which sex is

stupid (the other). Stereotypes and taboos are also evident in fantasy play, where most of the other restrictions of daily life disappear (Berger, 2000, p. 326).

### **The differences between the genders**

Genuine behavioural differences do exist between the sexes and people's stereotypes are not entirely inaccurate. But the differences are fewer in number, smaller in size and far more complex than stereotypes suggest.

- *Social behaviour and personality*: Studies indicate that males tend to be more aggressive than females, both verbally and physically. This disparity shows up in early childhood.
- *Aggression*: One of the most consistent gender differences is that boys are more aggressive than girls. Another is that boys are more active than girls. The aggression difference is especially pronounced when children are provoked. These differences occur across cultures and appear very early in children's development. Biological factors include heredity and hormones. Environmental factors include cultural expectations, adult and peer models, and social agents who reward aggression in males and punish aggression in females
- *Emotional control*: An important skill is to be able to regulate and control your emotions and behaviour. Males usually show less self-regulation than females, and this low self-control can translate into behavioural problems. In one study, children's low self-regulation was linked with greater aggression, teasing others, overreaction to frustration, low cooperation and inability to delay gratification (Santrock, 1999, p. 318).

### **The socio-cultural influences on gender development**

Although parents do encourage “sex-appropriate” play, there is evidence that biological factors may play an initial role in children's preferences. Although fathers are less likely to give dolls to one-year-old boys than to one-year-old girls, the boys

who do receive the dolls are less likely to play with them (Snow, Jacklin and Maccoby, 1983). Perhaps adult expectations and encouragement build upon children's preferences, producing an amplifying effect. Then, because boys' toys provide more opportunity for developing motor skills, visuo-spatial skills, and inventiveness, and girls' toys provide more opportunity for nurturance and social exchange, some important differences in sex roles may become established.

Once children begin to play with other children outside the home, peers have a significant influence on the development of their gender roles. In fact, Stern and Karraker (1989) found that the behaviour of two- to six-year-old children was even more influenced by the knowledge of a baby's gender than was the behaviour of adults. By the time children are three years old, they reinforce gender-typed play by praising, imitating or joining in the behaviour. In contrast, they criticize gender-inappropriate behaviour (Langlois and Downs, 1980). Parents indirectly encourage gender-stereotyped play by seeking out children of the same sex as playmates for their own children (Buskist et al., 1997, p. 399).

### **Looking through the eyes of the system of supports**

This lesson addresses the various roles and functions of the support systems that nurture and promote healthy development of the young child. If students come from a different culture, inviting them or their parents to share their experiences of parenting and child rearing would be most valuable.

**Lesson**                      • How the socio-cultural context influence the development of a young child

### **Objectives**

### **Teacher Information**

**The influence does the media have on early childhood development**

According to Neilson Media Research, in 1996 children between the ages of two and five in the United States watched 23 hours and 21 minutes of television each week. This is more than three hours a day, and it is at least three hours more a week than the viewing time of any other age group. Among the criticisms of television are the time it takes away from active, interactive and imaginative play; the faulty nutritional messages it sends; and the sexist, racist, and ageist stereotypes it provides that are particularly harmful for inexperienced, vulnerable viewers. Pro-social behaviour depends on emotional regulation, which is best learned through active social relationships. Television, passive observation, undercuts the very attributes, skills and values that lead to pro-social activity. However, the most compelling and convincing criticism of television concerns the antisocial behaviour it encourages, especially in children. The effect is interactive and cumulative; children who watch a lot of television are likely to be more aggressive than children who do not, and children who are already inclined to be aggressive are likely to watch a lot of violence. Television desensitizes children to violence in real life, making physical aggression seem normal. For all these reasons, children who watch substantial quantities of violent television are more likely than others to be bullies, more likely to retaliate physically for any perceived attack, more likely to be passive victims, and more likely to be passive onlookers rather than mediators when other children fight (Berger, 2000, p. 313).

### **The influence does economic status and conditions have on early childhood development**

No matter how maltreatment is defined or counted, it occurs more frequently as family income falls. This particularly true for neglect and physical abuse, which fall most heavily on children under age six who live in families with an income below the poverty line, an unemployed father, and four or more children. In such families, children obviously add to the financial pressures and are likely to become victims because of it (Berger, 2000, p. 256).

## **The effects of social class on parenting and child rearing**

In most Western countries, social class differences in child rearing have been found. Working class and low-income parents often place a high value on external characteristics such as obedience and neatness. By contrast, middle-class families often place a high value on internal characteristics such as self-control and delay of gratification. There are social class differences not only in child rearing values but also in parenting behaviours. Middle-class parents are more likely to explain something, use verbal praise, use reasoning to accompany their discipline and ask their children questions. By contrast, parents in low-income and working class households are more likely to discipline their children with physical punishment and criticize their children more (Santrock, 1999, p. 232).

## **Spiritual Growth**

Children are more likely to become adults who identify with their cultural and spiritual heritage if they grow up feeling included in cultural and spiritual communities. Parents can take an active role in shaping children's cultural and spiritual life by providing them with frequent opportunities to interact with peers and adults of all ages (e.g., extended family members, friends, neighbors, and school staff) who share children's heritage or belief system, or who can otherwise function as cultural role models. Young children who see others practicing the same customs and rituals as they do themselves will feel a sense of belonging and pride.

Young children are very concrete. They learn through their direct experience and through observation of other's behavior, and not by way of abstract discussion. It is of little use to explain the philosophical, historical or religious basis for a given cultural or spiritual practice to young children. Instead, children will best learn particular practices by participating in them. Religious or traditional cultural festivals, holidays, and rituals are perfect teaching opportunities, as are opportunities to teach children about

traditional foods and dress. Children's participation in holidays and rituals and cultural activities teaches them that they are valued members of a particular community. Such memories form the ongoing basis of children's cultural and religious identity, and become the building blocks of tradition.

Besides immersing children in the ongoing practice of cultural and religious traditions, parents can also foster children's appreciation of their heritage through celebratory games and crafts. For instance, children may enjoy making books about historical family members or filling out a family tree so as to learn about grandma's mother and father. Children can also be encouraged to make scrapbooks documenting their participation in family occasions, and special cultural or religious celebrations. Filling the pages of homemade books with special photographs, drawings, labels, and short stories will help children create cherished keepsakes that reinforce their familial, cultural and religious identity. Making family movies or videos can achieve a similar effect.

Though learning about one's own culture is paramount, it is also important to teach children about other people's cultures. Neighbors, family friends, and school peers can be recruited to help teach small children about other cultural practices including music, language, food and dress (if applicable). Exposing children to other cultures at an early age helps develop their tolerance and appreciation of cultural differences and diversity; skills they will need to navigate the complex and culturally interdependent modern world.

According to Froebel, the end of education should not be reason, per se, but rather the unfolding of the divine essence within the child. He thus urged educators to respect the spontaneous and essentially creative nature of this unfolding (Miller, 1997). In his view, the role of education "is to build on the 'living core' of the child's intrinsic spiritual capacities" (Dillon, 2000, p. 11).



Pestalozzi also advocated respect for the unique nature of each child and felt that the end or purpose of education was to foster the holistic development of the students. Education, he said, was not intended to make children into people “such as we are” (Miller, 1997). Rather the role of the teacher was to guide children to become the humans their natures required them to be – including what was divine and sacred in their nature (Miller, 1997). Pestalozzi also believed in the innate goodness and wisdom of the human being and felt that the focus of education should not be so much to learn something as to be something. As expressed by Miller (1997), Pestalozzi “was more concerned with the needs and characteristics of the learner than with the requirements of the subject matter” (p. 94).

Montessori also believed in a spiritual force that guides human development (Miller, 1997). She referred to this force as “an individual spiritual embryo” (Montessori, 1972, p. 109). According to Montessori, children will seek growth and development because that is consistent with their nature. She urged educators to respect this spiritual force and to follow the inclinations or nature of the child. According to Montessori, the direction of a child’s life is contained within his own soul (Miller, 1997). In her writings for educators, Montessori once said, “Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire ‘to make him learn things,’ but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called the intelligence” (Montessori, 1965, p. 240). Montessori believed that the first six years are especially crucial to the holistic and spiritual development of the child. During this time, she said, “The young child literally ‘incarnates’ the world around him. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul” (Montessori, 1973, p. 63). The poet, Walt Whitman, expressed something similar when he said, “There was a child went forth every day; and the first object he looked upon, that object he became” (2001).

Rudolph Steiner also saw human development as an unfolding from within and believed that human nature is comprised of body (our physical being), soul (our personal inner life), and spirit (ultimate

being). Steiner believed that while the role of education is to foster growth in all areas of human development, its primary focus should be on the unfolding of the individual's spirit (Miller, 1997, p. 171). Steiner's views are exemplified in Waldorf Schools where education "is not a pedagogical system but an Art – the Art of awakening what is actually there within the human being. Fundamentally, the Waldorf School does not want to educate, but to awaken" (Steiner, 1967, p. 23).

### **Action research in early childhood development**

This summary lesson will integrate all of the concepts covered in this unit, by actively engaging students in the design and conduct of research in developmental psychology

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Lesson</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issues and LESSONs for research in early childhood development</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Objectives</b>    |   |
| <b>Suggested</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/Discussion: The scientific method of research</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Instructional</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to the template supplied in the Curriculum Support Materials.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Strategies</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and discuss the steps in the scientific method of research:- Develop a research question             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describe the hypothesis</li> <li>- Select a research method</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Direct             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describe the hypothesis</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Independent             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select a research method</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interactive             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation Experiment Interview Case Study Survey LESSON - Describe the process to be followed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Indirect</li> <li>• Experiential             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather the data</li> <li>- Analyze the data</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

- Report the findings, account for reliability and validity
- State conclusions in relation to the hypothesis
- Discussion: A comparison of research methods in the social sciences
  - Using the template supplied in the Curriculum Support Materials, complete the comparison chart of research methods.
  - Invite students, or groups, to defend its choice of the most appropriate research method based on its chosen LESSON.
  - Discuss the many formats for presentation of the data and research findings. Depending on the LESSON chosen and the research method selected, presentation formats may include written reports, oral presentations, portfolios, role plays and drama activities, three-panel displays, posters, brochures, bulletin board displays, Power Point or other computer-based presentation software, web pages, etc.
- Review/Discussion: Issues in social science research
  - Using the six templates supplied in the Curriculum Support Materials (Frequently Asked Questions about interviews, surveys, case studies, observation, experiments and LESSON research methods), review and discuss the issues and methods for each individual or group research project.
- Discussion: The research process
  - Ensure that each individual or group research project has completed all documentation (The Scientific Method of Research, Permission to Conduct Research) before commencing the research.

## **Resources**

- Curriculum Support Materials: Scientific Method of Research
- Curriculum Support Materials: Permission to Conduct Research Form

- Curriculum Support Materials: A Comparison Chart For Research Methods
- Curriculum Support Materials: Frequently Asked Questions: Interviews, Surveys, Case Studies, Naturalistic Observation, Experiments and LESSON

Lesson : Suggested issues and research methods

<b>Type of Research</b>	<b>Suggested Research LESSONs</b>
<p><b>Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting research using a survey involves going out and asking questions about the phenomenon of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should parents be legally permitted to spank their children?</li> <li>• Are you afraid that television values are replacing family values?</li> <li>• Should the government be launching a national daycare program paid for by taxpayers?</li> <li>• Should parents be held accountable in some way for the behaviour of their children?</li> <li>• Should parental discipline of young children include spanking?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Naturalistic Observation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In naturalistic research, the observer does not intervene at all. For all intents and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you find evidence of Piaget's pre-operational stage of development in young children?</li> <li>• Can you find evidence to support</li> </ul>

purposes, the researcher is invisible and works hard not to interrupt the natural dynamics of the situation being investigated.

Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding and the zone of proximal in young children's cognitive development?

- How is playground safety for young children demonstrated?
- What is the process of language development in young children?
- How are basic human values developed and promoted in young children?
- What is the process of language development in young children?
- How is self-awareness demonstrated by young children?

**LESSON**

- A LESSON research study involves the acquisition, synthesis, organization, and presentation of information. Typically, the LESSON research study will involve both paper based as well as web-based resources. Additional information may be gained through the other research methods and strategies.

- What is the nutritional value of fast food for young children?

<p><b>Interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview method of research, typically, involves a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asks an individual a series of questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there basic temperament and personality traits in young children?</li> <li>• Are there gender differences in aggressive behaviour?</li> <li>• How is moral behaviour developed and promoted in young children?</li> <li>• Is there an awareness of gender role differences in young children?</li> <li>• Are there gender differences in terms of aggression and emotional control in young children?</li> <li>• How are genders represented on television and in young children's books?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A case study is an intensive study of one individual. Typically, the case study is based on interviews with the subject regarding his or her background, present thinking or actions; it may also utilize interviews of others who know the individual. Additional case study material may be obtained through observation,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• values</li> <li>• impressions of media</li> <li>• mental schemas</li> <li>• play behaviours</li> <li>• toys</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>experiments and standardized tests, such as personality inventories and intelligence tests.</p>	
<p><b>Experimental research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimental researchers take care to create an environment in which they can make causal statements. They manipulate variables, randomly assign participants to various conditions, and seek to control other influences that could affect their research.</li> </ul>	<p>Research one of the following LESSONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piaget's pre-operational stage of development</li> <li>• Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding and the zone of proximal development</li> <li>• Language development</li> </ul>

### **Perspectives on child development**

In this summary lesson, we consider how the lifespan approach to human development can be used as a lens through which we can view early childhood development.

### **How child development is described from the perspective of the lifespan approach**

The lifespan perspective on human development has seven basic characteristics. Development is:

- Life-long
  - No age period dominates development.
- Multi-dimensional
  - Development consists of biological, cognitive, socio-emotional and spiritual dimensions.
- Multi-directional

- Some aspects of development increase, while others decrease.
- Plastic
  - Depending on the individual's life conditions, development may take many paths.
- Historically-embedded
  - Development is influenced by historical conditions.
- Multidisciplinary
  - Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists and medical researchers all study human development and share a concern for unlocking the mysteries of development throughout the lifespan.
- Contextual
  - The individual continually responds to and acts on contexts, which include a person's biological makeup, physical environment, and social, historical, and cultural contexts (Santrock, 1999, p. 10).

How do the key issues and questions in developmental psychology relate to child development?

From the time of its establishment, several key issues and questions have dominated the field of developmental psychology. Among these issues are the nature of developmental change, the importance of critical periods, lifespan approaches versus the more focused approaches, and the nature-nurture issue.

- Continuous change versus discontinuous change: In continuous change, developmental change is gradual, with achievements at one level building on those of previous levels. In contrast, discontinuous change occurs in distinct stages or steps. Each stage brings about behaviour that is assumed to be qualitatively different from behaviour at earlier stages.



- A critical period is a specific time during development when a particular event has its greatest consequences. Critical periods occur when the presence of certain kinds of environmental stimuli are necessary for development to proceed normally.
- Lifespan approaches versus a focus on a particular period: Developmentalists now believe the entire lifespan is important, for several reasons. One is the discovery that developmental growth and change continue during every part of life. Furthermore, to understand fully the social influences on people of a given age, we need to understand the people who are, in large measure, providing those influences. For instance, to understand development in infants, we need to unravel the effects of their parents' ages on the social environment.
- Nature versus nurture: One of the enduring questions of development involves how much of people's behaviour is due to their genetically-determined nature and how much is due to nurture, the physical and social environment in which a child is raised. In this context, nature refers to traits, abilities and capacities that are inherited from one's parents. Nature encompasses any factor that is produced by the predetermined unfolding of genetic information - a process known as maturation. These genetic, inherited influences are at work as we move from the one-celled organism that is created at the moment of conception to the billions of cells that make up a fully-formed human being. In contrast nurture refers to the environmental influences that shape behaviour. Some of these influences may be biological, such as the impact of a pregnant mother's substance abuse on the fetus, or the amount and kind of food available to children. Other environmental influences are more social, such as the ways parents discipline their children and the effects of peer pressure on adolescents (Feldman, 2000, p. 10).

## **LESSON TWO: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

### **Introduction**

In middle and late childhood, children are on a different plane, belonging to a generation and feeling all their own. It is the wisdom of the human lifespan that at no time are children more ready to learn than during the period of expansive imagination at the end of early childhood. Children develop a sense of wanting to make things, and not just to make them, but make them well and even perfectly. Their thirst is to know and to understand. They are remarkable for their intelligence and for their curiosity. Their parents continue to be important influences in their lives, but their growth is also shaped by successive cohorts of friends. They do not think much about the future or the past, but they enjoy the present moment.

### **Learning Objectives**

- To understand physical changes during childhood.
- To understand cognitive changes during childhood.
- To understand socio-emotional changes during childhood.

### **The roles do nature and nurture play in the development of a child**

Nature refers to the changes in development as a result of the influence of the genetic code humans inherit from their parents. Nurture refers to the influences of nutrition, culture, the mass media, peers, stressors, families and parenting, in effect, the socio-cultural context that surrounds the developing person.

### **The socio-cultural influences on child development**

At the Microsystems level, discuss with the students the relative influences of parents, peers and the classroom setting. In what ways do these aspects of the system of support influence our physical,

emotional, cognitive and spiritual development? Do parents, peers or the classroom, dominate during childhood?

At the ecosystem level, discuss the relative influences of the school, the mass media (refer to LESSON 6.5.7 for more information) and the community. What school policies are in place that promotes healthy development? How has changing technology influenced child development? What community resources are available to promote healthy child development?

At the macro system level, discuss the influence that economic status and culture, in particular, have on child development. Are children as sensitive to the pressures of status as adolescents? How do different cultures (individualistic, collectivist and Aboriginal) view childhood?

### **Looking through the eyes of a child.**

This overview lesson addresses the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of development during childhood.

### **The physical changes during childhood**

During the elementary school years, children grow an average of five or eight centimetres a year.

Muscle mass and strength gradually increase. Legs lengthen and trunks slim down. Growth is slow and consistent. Motor development becomes smoother and more coordinated. Boys are usually better at gross motor skills, girls at fine motor skills. Our nation's children are not getting enough exercise. Socio-cultural factors, such as poverty, can place considerable stress on children. One of children's important buffers against stress is the long-term presence of a basic trusting relationship with at least one adult. A readily available support network is also important. A special concern involves children with disabilities, including children with a learning disability or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

### **The cognitive changes during childhood**

According to Piaget, the seven- to 11-year-old child's cognitive development is characterized by concrete operational thought, which involves operations. Concrete operations are mental actions that are reversible. Children's long-term memory, metacognitive knowledge, and cognitive monitoring improve during childhood. It is important for children to engage in critical thinking. Children's creativity should be encouraged. During middle and late childhood, children become more analytical and logical in their approach to words and grammar. Reading is a more central aspect of language in the childhood years

### **The socio-emotional changes during childhood**

Parents spend less time with their children in childhood, but parents are still very important socializing agents in this period. New parent-child issues emerge, and discipline changes. In childhood, two major changes in many children's lives are movement into a stepfamily and becoming a latchkey child. Children spend considerably more time with peers in this period. In peer relations, children can be popular, average, rejected, neglected, or controversial. Friendships become more important. The internal self, the social self and the socially comparative self become more prominent in self-understanding during this period. Perspective-taking increases during this period. Self-concept and self-esteem are important dimensions of the child's socio-emotional development during this period. Gender is an important aspect of elementary school children's development, especially gender stereotypes, similarities and differences, gender-role classification, and ethnicity and gender.

## **Childhood Development: Physical and cognitive domains**

The lifespan period from ages six–12 is a time of slow, consistent physical growth before the onset of puberty.

### **Lesson Objectives**

- The physical developmental changes during childhood
- The process of cognitive development during childhood

### **The physical developmental changes during middle childhood**

During the elementary school years, children grow an average of five or eight centimetres a year.

Muscle mass and strength gradually increase. Legs lengthen and trunks slim down. Growth is slow and consistent. Motor development becomes smoother and more coordinated. Boys are usually better at gross motor skills, girls at fine motor skills. Our nation's children are not getting enough exercise. Socio-cultural factors, such as poverty, can place considerable stress on children. One of children's important buffers against stress is the long-term presence of a basic trusting relationship with at least one adult. A readily available support network is also important. A special concern involves children with disabilities, including children with a learning disability or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

*What is the process of cognitive development during childhood?*

A nine- or 10-year-old child is a very different kind of thinker than say, a four- or five-year-old preschooler. Not only do older children know more, they also use their minds much better when they must solve a problem or remember a piece of information. By middle childhood, most children have acquired a sense of “the game of thinking” and they begin to enjoy an intellectual challenge as much as an athletic one. They begin to realize that good thinking involves considerable evidence, planning ahead, thinking logically, formulating alternative hypotheses, and being consistent. This is the Piagetian stage of concrete operational thought. They try to incorporate these qualities into their own reasoning and use them to evaluate the thinking of others. A marked improvement in memory occurs between ages seven and 11, particularly apparent in older children’s ability to remember essential facts over a period of days or longer, with no forgetting. Selective attention, increases in processing speed and the development of thinking patterns are all factors behind the improvement.

### **Childhood Development: socio-emotional domain**

As children grow and mature, the nature of their social relationships, their concept of self, and their gender identity and awareness all increase profoundly. This lesson addresses all aspects of the socio-emotional domain.

### **Lesson Objectives**

- The process of socio-emotional development in childhood
- How children develop a sense of self
- How children develop a sense of moral and ethical behaviour
- The influence do friendships have on healthy socio-emotional development in

childhood

- How gender influences development during childhood

### **The process of socio-emotional development in childhood**

Erikson's fourth stage of the human lifespan, industry versus inferiority, appears during childhood. The term industry expresses a dominant theme of this period: Children become interested in how things are made and how they work. Children's social worlds beyond their families also contribute to a sense of industry. School becomes especially important in this regard.

Erikson agrees with Freud that childhood is a quiet period emotionally, a period in which 'the child becomes ready to apply himself to given skills and tasks.' During Erikson's crisis of industry versus inferiority, children busily try to master whatever their culture values. On the basis of their degree of success, they judge themselves as either industrious or inferior or, in other words, competent or incompetent, productive or failing, winners or losers.

### **How children develop a sense of self**

In childhood, self-understanding increasingly shifts from defining oneself through external characteristics to defining oneself through internal characteristics such as preferences, personality traits and qualities. In addition to the increase of psychological characteristics in self-definition, the social aspects of the self also increase at this point in development. Children's self-understanding also includes increasing reference to social comparisons. Many developmental psychologists believe that perspective-taking plays an important role in self-understanding. Perspective-taking is the ability to assume another person's perspective and understand his or her thoughts and feelings.

### **How children develop a sense of moral and ethical behaviour**

According to developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, people pass through a series of stages in the evolution of their sense of justice and in the kind of moral reasoning they use to make moral judgments. Kohlberg suggests that moral development can best be understood within the context of a three-level sequence, which is further subdivided into six stages. At the lowest level, pre-conventional morality, people follow unvarying rules based on rewards and punishments. In the next level, that of conventional morality, people approach moral problems in terms of their own position as good, responsible members of society. Finally, individuals use post-conventional morality to invoke universal moral principles that are considered broader than the rules of the particular society in which they live. Kohlberg's theory proposes that people move through the stages in a fixed order and that they are unable to reach the highest stage until adolescence.

Psychologist Carol Gilligan has suggested an alternative account of the development of moral behaviour in girls. She suggests that differences in the way boys and girls are raised in our society lead to basic distinctions in how men and women view moral behaviour. According to Gilligan, boys view morality primarily in terms of broad principles such as fairness and justice, whereas girls see it in terms



of the responsibility towards individuals and willingness to sacrifice themselves to help specific individuals within the context of particular relationships. Compassion for individuals, then, is a more prominent factor in moral behaviour for women than it is for men.

### **The influence do friendships have on healthy socio-emotional development in childhood**

Children's friendships are vitally important. They serve six functions: companionship, stimulation, physical support, ego support, social comparison and intimacy/affection. Two of friendships most common characteristics are intimacy and similarity. Intimacy in friendships refers to self-disclosure and the sharing of private thoughts. True intimate friendships may not appear until early adolescence. Also, through childhood, friends are more similar than dissimilar in terms of age, sex, race, and many other factors. Friends also play important roles in shaping children's and adolescents' well-being and development. In terms of well-being, all people have a number of basic social needs. These include the need for tenderness (secure attachment), playful companionship, social acceptance, intimacy, and sexual relations. If the need for social acceptance is not met, we suffer a lower sense of self-worth.

### **How gender influences development during childhood**

Gender is a pervasive aspect of an individual's identity. Three areas of socio-emotional development where gender similarities and differences have been studied extensively are communication styles, social relationships, and aggression.

Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen (1990) distinguishes between rapport talk and report talk. Rapport talk is the language of conversation and a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. Report talk is talk that gives information. Males hold centre stage through report talk with such verbal performances as storytelling, joking and lecturing with information. By contrast, females prefer private, rapport talk and conversation that is relationship-oriented. Tannen says that boys and girls

grow up in different worlds of talk – parents, siblings, peers, teachers and others talk to boys and girls differently.

The play of boys and girls is also different. Boys tend to play in large groups that are hierarchically structured, and their groups usually have a leader who tells the others what to do and how to do it.

Boys' games have winners and losers and often are the subject of arguments. Boys often boast of their skill and argue about who is best at what. By contrast, girls are more likely to play in small groups or pairs, and the centre of a girl's world is often a best friend. In girls' friendships and peer groups, intimacy is pervasive. Turn-taking is more characteristic of girls' games than of boys' games. And much of the time, girls simply like to sit and talk with each other, concerned more about being liked by others than jockeying for status in some obvious way.

One of the most consistent gender differences is that boys are more aggressive than girls. Another is that boys are more active than girls. The aggression difference is especially pronounced when children are provoked. These differences occur across cultures and appear very early in children's development. Both biological and environmental factors have been proposed to account for gender differences in aggression. Biological factors include hormones and heredity. Environmental factors include cultural expectations, adult and peer models, and social agents who reward aggression in boys and punish aggression in girls.

### **Issues and challenges in childhood**

This lesson addresses the issues of middle childhood using a research-oriented focus. Students are directed to analyze the research findings from a theoretical perspective to explain childhood issues.

**Lesson Objectives**

- How sports influence children

- The influence does exercise have on childhood development
- How learning disabilities influence childhood
- The effect Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has on children
- The role and nature of aggression in children
- How children become obese
- Who bullies are, and what effects they have on other people
- The effect does divorce have on children

### **How sports influence children**

Participation in sports can have both positive and negative consequences for children. Children's participation in sports can provide exercise, opportunities to learn how to compete, increased self-esteem, and a setting for developing peer relations and friendships. However, sports can also have negative outcomes for children: too much pressure to achieve and win physical injuries, a distraction from academic work, and unrealistic expectations for success as an athlete.

### **The influence does exercise has on childhood development**

Many of our patterns of health and illness are long-standing. Our experiences as children contribute to our health practices as adults. In summary, not only do children's school weeks not include adequate physical education classes, but the majority of children do not exercise vigorously even when they are

in such classes. Furthermore, most children's parents are poor role models for vigorous physical exercise.

### **How learning disabilities influence childhood**

Characteristics of children with mild, moderate and severe learning disabilities include:

- Mild learning difficulties: These children have some difficulties with normal school work, but can cope with the normal curriculum. If work is differentiated and support is available, their needs can be met.
- Moderate learning difficulties: These children make very limited progress in basic academic skills such as literacy and numeracy, despite support being given. As a result, they need additional help, achieved by a statement of their special educational needs.
- Severe learning difficulties: These children function at a low level in terms of basic skills. Communication skills and academic attainment are normally very limited.

### **The effect Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has on children**

It is estimated that from three to five percent of all school-age children in Canada – and elsewhere – suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Found in most cultures and in most countries, ADHD is four or five times more common among boys, and it is first noticed, usually, between three and four years of age.

Regardless of gender, ADHD produces the same effects: children are unable to concentrate on any task for more than a few minutes. Moreover, they charge through each day with excessive energy. They talk during quiet periods, ignore social rules, leave their seats, and create disturbances in the classroom.

Basic to all these behaviours, they are moody, and very impulsive.

ADHD children have normal intelligence, but they show deficits in their ability to focus their attention. They literally cannot seem to sit still, and are readily distracted by irrelevant information.

### **The role and nature of aggression in children**

The specifics regarding when aggression is appropriate, in what forms, and to what degree depend on the particular society in which children grow up. Variation in the norms for aggression occurs by age, by ethnic and socioeconomic group, by neighbourhood, by gender, and by the specific social situation. Customs vary about which kind of contact (being bumped up against, being shoved, having one's shoe stepped on) require retaliation, which types of insult (directed at one's relatives, one's physical appearance, one's intellect) should be ignored, and which children (friends, enemies, bystanders, the other sex, the physically impaired, smaller or younger ones) are fair targets and which are exempt. Generally, physical aggression declines with age – except for those children who are headed towards more serious violence and criminal activity. Relational aggression – verbal insults and social aggression – does not decline. In girls as well as boys, relational aggression becomes more hurtful, more isolating, and more important to deflect – with humour, a shrug, or a counter-attack when possible.

### **How children become obese**

Obesity usually results from the interaction of a number of factors. Here are the most important of them:

- Heredity. Body type, including height, bone structure, and the amount and distribution of fat on the body, is inherited. So are individual differences in metabolic rate and activity level. Certain combinations of body type and metabolism result in excessive storage of fat on the body.
- Exercise. Inactive people burn fewer calories and are more likely to be overweight than active people, especially in infancy and childhood, when many children seem to be on the move all

day. A child's activity level is influenced not only by heredity but also by a willingness to engage in strenuous play, the availability of safe play areas, the parents' example, and weight itself, which slows down precisely those children who need more exercise.

- **Television.** While watching television, children eat more and burn fewer calories than they would if they were actively playing. In fact, they burn fewer calories than they would if they were doing *nothing*. One study found that when children are “glued to the tube” they fall into a deeply relaxed state, akin to semi consciousness, that lowers their metabolism below their normal at-rest rate – on average, 12 percent lower in children of normal weight and 16 percent lower in obese children. Further, 60 percent of the commercials shown during Saturday morning cartoons on U.S. Television is for food products – almost all of them with high fat and sugar content.
- **Cultural attitudes towards food.** In some cultures, overeating is a sign of wealth and happiness, so parents urge their offspring to have a second helping. The implied message seems to be that a father's love is measured by how much food he can provide; a mother's love, by how well she can cook; and a child's love by how much she or he can eat.
- **Precipitating event.** For many children, the onset of obesity is associated with a crucial event or traumatic experience – a hospitalization, a parental divorce or death, or a move to a new neighbourhood. Generally such an event or experience creates a sense of loss or diminished self-esteem, along with a corresponding need for an alternative source of gratification.

### **Who bullies are, and effects they have on other people**

Researchers define bullying as repeated, systematic efforts to inflict harm through physical attack, verbal attack or social attack. Implicit in this definition is an imbalance of power. Boys who are bullies are often above average in size, whereas girls who are bullies are often above average in verbal assertiveness. Bullies' victims tend to be less assertive and physically weaker (boys) and more shy

(girls). Bullying during middle childhood seems to be pervasive. It occurs in every nation, is present in small rural schools and in large urban ones, and is as prevalent among well-to-do majority children as among poor immigrant children. Contrary to public belief, victims are no more likely to be fat or homely or to speak with an accent than non-victims are. But they usually are rejected, withdrawn children, anxious and insecure, unable or unwilling to defend themselves, without friends who will take their side.

Bullied children are anxious, depressed and underachieving during the months and years of their torment. Even years later, they still have damaged self-esteem as well as painful memories.

The picture is even more ominous for bullies. Contrary to the public perception that bullies are actually insecure and lonely, at the peak of their bullying they usually have friends who abet, fear and admire them. They seem brashly unapologetic about the pain they have inflicted. Bullies become more hostile, challenging everyone who tries to stop them, getting into trouble not only with peers but also with the police. International research confirms that children who regularly victimize other children often become violent criminals later on.

### **The effect divorce has on children**

The disruption and discord of divorce almost always adversely affect the children for at least a year or two. Immediately before and after a divorce, the children show signs of emotional pain, such as depression or rebellion, and symptoms of stress, such as having lower school achievement, poorer health and fewer friends. Whether this distress is relatively mild and short-lived, or serious and long-lasting, depends primarily on the stability of the child's life and the adequacy of care giving. Divorce may not harm the children if the family income remains stable, if the conflict between the parents decreases, and if care giving by both parents is as good as or better than it was before the divorce.

## **Looking through the eyes of the systems of support**

This lesson addresses the influence that the parents, family and peers have on middle childhood development.

**Lesson Objectives**

- How the socio-cultural environment influences child development

## **The importance is the family in child development**

As children move into the middle and late childhood years, parents spend considerably less time with them. In one study, parents spent less than half as much time with their children aged five to 12 in care-giving, instruction, reading, talking, and playing as when their children were younger. Parent-child interactions during childhood include whether children should be made to perform chores, and if so, whether they should be paid for them; how to help children learn to entertain themselves rather than relying on parents for everything; and how to monitor children's lives outside the family in school and peer settings.

## **The roles and influence do peers have on child development**

During middle and late childhood, children spend an increasing amount of time in peer interaction. In one study, children interacted with peers 10 percent of their day at the age of two, 20 percent at age four, and more than 40 percent between the ages of seven and 11. Episodes with peers totalled 299 per typical school day. Researchers have devised five peer status categories to describe peer interactions:



- Popular children are frequently liked by their peers and are frequently nominated as a best friend. They show high rates of positive behaviours and low rates of negative behaviours.
- Average children are moderately liked by their peers and moderately often nominated as a best friend. They show moderate levels of positive behaviours and negative behaviours.
- Rejected children are actively disliked by their peers and infrequently nominated as a best friend. They show high rates of negative behaviours and low rates of positive behaviours.
- Neglected children are not disliked by their peers and are infrequently nominated as a best friend. They show low levels of positive and negative behaviours.
- Controversial children are frequently disliked by their peers but are often nominated as a best friend. They show high rates of both positive and negative behaviours.

### **Why are children's friendships important?**

According to Hartup and Stevens (1997) there are some important developmental consequences to having friends. Those children and adolescents who have friends tend to be more socially competent than those who do not. Having friends provides someone to confide in, to be afraid with, and to grow with. Having friends sets the stage for intimacy with adults.

### **How to resist peer pressure**

Realize that you are being manipulated. Others are deliberately trying to get you to change your mind.

If you are the only holdout, you are more likely to give in. Try to get just one other person on your side, and you will feel much stronger about your position.

People want their behaviour and attitudes to be in harmony. Consequently, even if they know of some negative effects of what they are doing, they probably would not own up to them, because to do so

would cause cognitive dissonance. Thus, you should be aware that you are probably not getting the whole story from the group.

For all age groups, peers are more persuasive than other people. The more prestige particular peers have, the greater their influence. Use this tendency to your advantage by finding peers who have had a bad experience with whatever you are being urged to do and listen to what they have to say.

Minority opinions can have an effect on the majority. One way to increase this effect is to give consistent and repeated statements of your position. Often, this technique has a private effect on others - one that is not publicly expressed.

If all the members of a group are on one side, doesn't that mean that they are more likely to be right than a single, lone individual? Actually, a group's decision making is usually not as accurate as an individual's, particularly if the individual is well informed and highly rational.

When attempting to persuade someone, group members often try to make that person feel embarrassed for not going along. Embarrassing people is an age-old tool for making them conform. If you know that ahead of time, perhaps it will have less impact on you.

One of the best ways to resist conformity is to be exposed to all the arguments in favour of some risky behaviour and then learn to refute these arguments, one by one.

### **How parents influence moral development**

Parental discipline does contribute to children's moral development, but there are other aspects of parenting that also play an important role as well. These include providing opportunities for perspective-taking and modeling appropriate moral behaviour and thinking. Eisenberg and Murphy (1995) summarized the research on ways that parenting can influence children's moral development.

They concluded that in general, moral children tend to have parents who:

- are warm and supportive rather than punitive
- use inductive reasoning
- provide opportunities for children to learn about others' perspectives and feelings
- involve children in family decision making and in the process of thinking about moral decisions
- Model moral behaviours and thinking themselves and provide opportunities for their children to model such moral behaviours and thinking.

### **How parents influence pro-social behaviours**

What can parents and teachers do to promote children's altruism and prosocial behaviour? Honig and Wittmer (1996) provided the following recommendations that focus on promoting children's prosocial behaviours:

- Value and emphasize consideration of others' needs. This results in children engaging in more helping activities. The morality of caring is one of teaching children to feel for others, which leads to empathy and concern.
- Model prosocial behaviours. Children imitate what adults do.
- Label and identify prosocial and antisocial behaviours. Be specific in identifying prosocial behaviours.
  - Attribute positive social behaviours to each child.
  - Notice and positively encourage pro social behaviours but do not overuse external rewards.
  - Facilitate perspective-taking and understanding others' feelings.
  - Use positive discipline strategies. Reason with children when they do something wrong. Redirect antisocial actions to more acceptable actions.
  - Actively lead discussions on pro-social interactions.

- Develop school and class projects that foster altruism.
- Use technology to promote pro-social behaviours.
- Invite moral mentors to visit the class.

### **The role the school plays in the healthy development of children**

Schooling of some sort during childhood is available in every nation. But the specifics – who receives instruction, in what subjects, and how – vary enormously. In the past boys and wealthier children were much more likely to receive formal education than girls and poorer children, and some of that inequality is still evident today. In developing countries, more boys than girls attend elementary school. Indeed, girls are more likely to drop out of school before sixth grade, with the percent of boys and girls ages six - 11 in school ranging from 99 percent to 90 percent in Algeria to 42 percent to 14 percent in Afghanistan. In developed countries, less is generally demanded of girls and poor children, particularly in science and mathematics. Teaching techniques also vary widely, from the strict lecture method in which students are forbidden to talk, whisper or even move during class, to open education, in which students are encouraged to interact and make use of classroom resources – with the teacher serving as an adviser, guide, and friend more than as a subject-matter authority and disciplinarian.

### **The role that economics play in the healthy development of children**

One of the major advantages of two married parents is financial. Married couples are generally better able to provide for their children, for reasons that predate the child's arrival:

- Individuals who are financially secure are more desirable marriage partners.

- Couples who have good economic prospects are more likely to decide to marry and to have children.
- Couples who are financially secure are more likely to avoid divorce.
- Most contemporary two-parent families have two wage earners, so they tend to be more financially secure than other families.

Once a child is born, two-parent households in which only one parent works save money on childcare and household services for which a single parent might have to pay, and so two-parent households – even those with only one wage earner – have more money for housing, food, health care and education. Thus the general stability of their home and work situations tends to enhance the financial security of nuclear families.

### **Action research in middle childhood development**

This summary lesson will integrate all of the concepts covered in this unit, by actively engaging students in the design and conduct of research in developmental psychology.

### **Spiritual Growth**

Part of the child's development as an individual includes an emerging understanding of the lifecycle—of birth, growth, aging, and death. There is an increasing awareness that life fits into a larger scheme of relationships among individuals, groups of people, other living creatures, and the earth itself. School-age children become keenly interested in these topics, especially when confronted with personal experiences such as the birth of a sibling or the death of a grandparent. As children experience these events and learn to view their personal encounters as part of a larger whole, families and communities provide important structure. They define value systems that provide children with basic principles and encourage them to examine their personal actions in light of their impact on those around them. Children's ability to understand their place in the larger world leads to greater self-esteem and competence. The close link between competence and self-esteem is strengthened

when a child is recognized for working hard in school; successfully completing chores and special projects; and participating in school, church, or community activities.

The relationship between values, competence, self-esteem, and personal responsibility needs to be modeled and affirmed by the child's parents, teachers, and community. Parents also need to support maintaining a balance between responsibilities at school and home, time spent with family and friends, extracurricular and community activities, and personal leisure.

Achieving this balance is essential for healthy development.

Middle childhood is also a time of moral development and spiritual growth. Feldman states that children are now beginning to understand the moral principles behind behavior. Moral decisions are no longer based simply on rewards or punishments. An internal code of ethics begins to emerge, based in large part upon parental guidance. According to a 2009 article titled "The Role of Parents in the Spiritual Development of Children" by Leon Blanchette, parents have a unique opportunity to be spiritual mentors to their children. Parents help to develop a worldview in their children (either healthy or unhealthy), which will guide them in moral and spiritual decisions.

## Research Lessons and Issues

Type of Research	Suggested Research LESSONs
<p><b>Survey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting research using a survey involves going out and asking questions about the phenomenon of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are your heroes?</li> <li>• What qualities do you admire in a friend?</li> <li>• What are your leisure activities?</li> <li>• Moral dilemmas:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it right to steal life-saving medicines that could save the life of a family member?</li> <li>• Is it right to tell the police if you know that a friend has committed a crime?</li> <li>• If you found a large sum of money in an unmarked envelope, should you keep it?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What jobs are men (women) most suited for?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Observation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In naturalistic research, the observer does not intervene at all. For all intents and purposes, the researcher is invisible and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the eating habits of school-aged children?</li> <li>• How is Erikson’s stage of Industry versus Inferiority demonstrated in children?</li> </ul>

works hard not to interrupt the natural dynamics of the situation being investigated.

- What are the different types of group behaviours in children?
- How do the play behaviours of school-age children compare to the play behaviours of young children?
- When and how do children develop a sense of gender roles?
- What are the most common forms of leisure activities in children?
- Are there gender differences in aggression in school-aged children?
- How are school-aged children represented on television and in the movies?
- Are there gender differences in watching television?

**LESSON**

- A LESSON research study involves the acquisition, synthesis, organization, and presentation of information. Typically, the LESSON research study will involve both paper based as well as web-based resources. Additional information may be

- What is Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)?



<p>gained through the other research methods and strategies.</p>	
<p><b>Interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview method of research, typically, involves a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asks an individual a series of questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was your parent’s childhood like?</li> <li>• What are the parenting styles and strategies of your parents?</li> <li>• How does self-awareness develop in children?</li> <li>• What have been the changes in families and parenting since your grandparents were raising their children?</li> <li>• What is it like to teach?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Experimental research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimental researchers take care to create an environment in which they can make causal statements. They manipulate variables, randomly assign participants to various conditions, and seek to control other influences that could affect their research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you find evidence of Piaget’s stages of cognitive development in children?</li> <li>• What is the process of morality development in children?</li> </ul>

## **Perspectives on child development**

This summary lesson considers how the lifespan approach to human development can be used as a lens through which we can view child development.

- Lesson Objectives**
- How is child development described from the perspective of the lifespan approach?
  - How do the key issues and questions in developmental psychology relate to child development?
  - How would each of the six theoretical perspectives on human development explain child development?

## **How child development described from the perspective of the lifespan approach**

The lifespan perspective on human development has seven basic characteristics. Development is:

- Life-long
  - No age period dominates development.
- Multi-dimensional
  - Development consists of biological, cognitive, socio-emotional and spiritual dimensions.
- Multidirectional
  - Some aspects of development increase, while others decrease.
- Plastic
  - Depending on the individual's life conditions, development may take many paths.
- Historically-embedded
  - Development is influenced by historical conditions.

- Multidisciplinary
  - Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists and medical researchers all study human development and share a concern for unlocking the mysteries of development throughout the lifespan
  - Contextual
  - The individual continually responds to and acts on contexts, which include a person's biological makeup, physical environment, and social, historical, and cultural contexts.

### **How the key issues and questions in developmental psychology relate to child development**

From the time of its establishment, several key issues and questions have dominated the field of developmental psychology. Among these issues are the nature of developmental change, the importance of critical periods, lifespan approaches versus the more focused approaches, and the nature-nurture issue.

- **Continuous change versus discontinuous change:** In continuous change, developmental change is gradual, with achievements at one level building on those of previous levels. In contrast, discontinuous change occurs in distinct stages or steps. Each stage brings about behaviour that is assumed to be qualitatively different from behaviour at earlier stages.
- A **critical period** is a specific time during development when a particular event has its greatest consequences. Critical periods occur when the presence of certain kinds of environmental stimuli are necessary for development to proceed normally.
- **Lifespan approaches versus a focus on a particular period:** Developmentalists now believe the entire lifespan is important, for several reasons. One is the discovery that developmental growth and change continue during every part of life. Furthermore, to understand fully the social influences on people of a given age, we need to understand the people who are in large

measure providing those influences. For instance, to understand development in infants, we need to unravel the effects of their parents' ages on the social environment.

- **Nature versus nurture:** One of the enduring questions of development involves how much of people's behaviour is due to their genetically-determined nature and how much is due to nurture, the physical and social environment in which a child is raised. In this context, **nature** refers to traits, abilities and capacities that are inherited from one's parents. Nature encompasses any factor that is produced by the predetermined unfolding of genetic information - a process known as maturation. These genetic, inherited influences are at work as we move from the one-celled organism that is created at the moment of conception to the billions of cells that make up a fully-formed human being. In contrast **nurture** refers to the environmental influences that shape behaviour. Some of these influences may be biological, such as the impact of a pregnant mother's substance abuse on the fetus, or the amount and kind of food available to children. Other environmental influences are more social, such as the ways parents discipline their children and the effects of peer pressure on adolescents.

### **How each of the six theoretical perspectives on human development explains child development**

Lifespan development has produced a number of broad conceptual perspectives representing different approaches to development. Each broad perspective encompasses a number of theories, explanations and predictions concerning phenomena of interest. A theory provides a framework for understanding the relationships among an organized set of principles or facts. The six major theoretical perspectives include:

- **Psychodynamic Perspective: Focusing on the inner person.** Rooted in Freud's theory, the psychodynamic approach maintains that all behaviour and mental processes reflect the constant and mostly unconscious psychological struggles that rage silently within each person. Usually,

these struggles involve conflict between the impulse to satisfy instincts or wishes and the need to play by the rules in society. Anxiety, depression and other disorders are outward signs of this inner turmoil.

- **The Behavioural Perspective: Considering the outer person.** As founded by John Watson, the behavioural approach views behaviour and mental processes as primarily the result of learning. Psychologists who take this approach see rewards and punishment acting on the raw materials provided by genes, evolution and biology to shape each individual. So, whether considering a person's aggression or drug abuse, behaviourists would look at that person's learning history. Since people learn problem behaviours, they can also learn to change or even prevent them by unlearning old habits and developing new ones.
- **The Cognitive Perspective: Examining the roots of understanding.** The cognitive perspective focuses on how people take in, mentally represent and store information. Cognitive psychologists then relate perception and information processing to patterns of behaviour. They study such areas as decision-making, problem-solving, interpersonal attraction and intelligence. Aggression, for instance, might be viewed as a result of poor problem solving.
- **The Humanistic Perspective: Concentrating on the unique qualities of human beings.** According to the humanistic approach, our capacity to choose how to think and act determines our behaviour. Each person's unique perceptions – not instincts, cognitive processes, or rewards and punishments – dictate the choices made. Humanistic psychologists believe that people are essentially good, that they are in control of themselves, and that they seek to grow toward their highest potential.
  - **The Evolutionary Perspective: Focusing on biology as the determinant of development.** Darwin's ideas on evolution and adaptation of species laid the foundation for the evolutionary approach. The evolutionary approach to psychology holds that the

behaviour of animals and humans today is the result of evolution through natural selection. Psychologists who follow this approach are concerned with the adaptive value of behaviour, the anatomy and biology that make it possible and the environmental conditions that encourage or discourage it.

- **The socio-cultural Perspective: Emphasizing the systems of support.** Calling attention to the external influences on human behaviour such as the physical surroundings and social interactions that provide incentives, opportunities and pathways for growth, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) began to emphasize the ecological approach to the study of human development. In Bronfenbrenner's application of this concept, human ecosystems include both the physical environment (the climate, the space per person, that arrangement of the dwelling) and the social environment (the people, the culture, and the economy).

## **LESSON THREE: LATE CHILDHOOD (ADOLESCENCE)**

### **Introduction**

The word “adolescence” comes from the Latin *adolescere* meaning “to grow into maturity”. As well as being a time of enormous physiological change, adolescence is also marked by changes in behaviour and expectations. Traditionally, adolescence has been regarded as a prelude to and preparation for adulthood, a transitional period of life between immaturity and maturity. As well as having to deal with the question ‘Who Am I?’, the adolescent must also deal with the question, ‘Who will I be?’ .

This unit considers the physical, emotional, cognitive and social changes during adolescence from the perspectives of the developing young person, and the micro-, exo- and macrosystems of support as described by Urie Bronfenbrenner.

### **Learning Objectives**

- To understand physical changes during adolescence.
- To understand cognitive changes during adolescence.
- To understand socio-emotional changes during adolescence.
- To apply those concepts and understandings in a variety of practical, pertinent and contemporary issues.

### **Values**

- To appreciate the complex, dynamic, reciprocal and personal aspects of human development.

## **Lesson Overview: Developmental changes during adolescence**

This introductory lesson examines the biological, cognitive and socio-emotional aspects of adolescence.

### **The roles nature and nurture play in the development of an adolescent**

Brainstorm with the students examples of both genetic inheritance and environmental influences on adolescent development. Some examples for nature might include height, weight, temperament and personality traits, intelligence, multiple intelligences and so on. Some examples for the nurture side of the equation might include parenting, family, peers, socioeconomic status, schooling, nutrition, and self-concept and so on.

### **The socio-cultural influences on adolescent development**

At the **microsystem** level, discuss with the students the relative influences of parents, peers and the classroom setting. In what ways do these aspects of the system of support influence our physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development? Do parents, peers or the classroom dominate during adolescence?

At the **exosystem** level, discuss the relative influences of the school, the mass media (refer to LESSON 6.5.7 for more information) and the community. What school policies are in place that promote healthy development? How has changing technology influenced adolescent development? What community resources are available to promote healthy adolescent development?

At the **macrosystem** level, discuss the influence that culture has on adolescent development. Is there such a thing as an “adolescent culture”? If so, how would you describe an adolescent culture? Has that culture changed? Why or why not? In terms of the influence that economics has on adolescent development, discuss LESSONs such as the cost of clothing, transportation and entertainment. How



many students have a part-time job? How many hours a week does that job involve? Why do you need to work? What skills are you learning?

### **Looking through the eyes of an adolescent**

This overview lesson addresses the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of development during adolescence.

#### **Lesson**

- What are the developmental changes during adolescence?

#### **Objectives**

- How do adolescents deal with change in their lives?

## **What are the developmental changes during adolescence?**

Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is probably the most challenging and complicated period of life to describe, to study, or to experience. The biological changes of puberty, which is considered to begin adolescence, are universal, but their expression, timing and extent show enormous variety, depending on gender, genes, and nutrition. Cognitive development varies as well; many adolescents are egocentric, while others think logically, hypothetically and theoretically. Psychosocial changes during this second decade of life show even greater diversity, as adolescents develop their own identities - choosing from a vast number of sexual, moral, political and educational paths. Most of this diversity simply reflects differences in social and cultural contexts. But for about one adolescent in four, fateful choices are made that handicap, and sometimes destroy the future.

Yet there is also a commonality to the adolescent experience. All adolescents are confronted with the same developmental tasks: they must adjust to their changing body sizes and shapes, to their awakening sexuality, and to new ways of thinking. They all strive for the emotional maturity and economic independence that characterize adulthood.

## **How adolescents deal with change in their lives**

Researchers have looked at how and why people change either on their own or with help. Prochaska, Norcross and Diclemente (1992) have proposed a wheel concept that illustrates the six stages of change:

- **Precontemplation:** At this point a person is not even thinking that there is a problem or that there is a need to make a change. A person requires information and feedback to raise their awareness that they can make changes. This is the entry point into change.

- Contemplation: At this point the person swings between considering a change and rejecting it repeatedly.
- Determination or preparation: The person determines that they have to do something about the problem and questions what they can do and explores options.
- Action: A person engages in actions in order to bring a change.
- Maintenance: A person continues previous action and perhaps tries new skills.
- Relapse: There is a return to old behaviour and the task is to get on the wheel again.

### **Adolescent Development: Physical domain**

This lesson addresses the most profound stage of physical change since the prenatal stage.

#### **Lesson**

- What are the physical changes during adolescence?

#### **Objectives**

- How important is body image to adolescents?
- What are the general theories about eating disorders?
- How can self-appraisal influence adolescent development?

### **The physical changes during adolescence**

During adolescence, the body is moving upward and outward rapidly in what is called the growth spurt. When growth spurts occur, development is not orderly. Arms and hands may grow at different rates from legs, for instance, while other parts of the body develop at yet another rate. Although they may look gangly, teenagers have exceptionally good coordination.

Growth spurts occur earlier for girls than boys, but for both sexes, early adolescence is the time of maximum physical development. Between the ages of nine and 12, girls may grow as much as eight centimetres taller in one year. For boys, this growth occurs between 11 and 15, when they may gain as much as 10 centimetres in height in a year.

### **How important body image to adolescents**

Concern about weight is a common problem for adolescents. Weight and body image are more often problems for females than for males. Society places more importance on physical appearance for women than for men.

### **The general theories about eating disorders**

Why would individuals torture themselves with such a destructive means of relieving emotional distress? Each theory offers an explanation:

- One psychoanalytic hypothesis is that women develop eating disorders because of a conflict with their mothers who provided their first nourishment and from whom the daughters cannot psychically separate.
- Learning theory notes that both anorexia and bulimia are typically associated with psychological problems, including low self-esteem and depression. These psychological disorders precipitate extreme dieting and then perpetuate the destructive pattern, thus becoming

part of a stimulus-response chain. Fasting, bingeing and purging have “powerful effects as immediate reinforcers - that is, as a means of relieving states of emotional distress and tension.”

- One cognitive explanation is that as women compete with men in business and industry, they want to project a strong, self-controlled, masculine image antithetical to the buxom, fleshy body of the ideal woman of the past.
- socio-cultural explanations include the contemporary cultural pressure to be slim and trim and model-like - a pressure that seems to be particularly felt by unmarried young women seeking autonomy from their parents. This would help explain why these eating disorders were once rare; society expected women to be dependent, first on parents and then on a husband, with no need to prove one's selfhood.
- An ethological explanation notes that girls who are overwhelmed with the stresses of puberty may discover that self-starvation makes their menstrual periods cease, their sexual hormones decrease, and their curves disappear - all of which remove the sexual pressures that normal maturation compels adolescent girls to experience.

#### How self-appraisal can influence adolescent development

Negative self-appraisal can have a major impact on self-esteem. Although self-esteem is obviously influenced by success in athletics, academics, friendship or other areas that the adolescent considers significant, a teenager's assessment of his or her appearance is the most important determinant. At one time or another, almost every American girl under eats, sometimes drastically, to be thinner. In one study, girls age 14 to 18 typically wanted to be about 12 pounds (five kilograms) lighter than they were. Boys are also vulnerable. Roughly five percent of high school seniors use steroids to build up their muscles. Boys who do not take drugs are nonetheless concerned, lifting weights, doing push-ups, and so on, in an attempt to change their physiques. The concern with physique dominates the peer

culture, particularly during adolescence. Unattractive teenagers tend to have fewer friends - of either sex. And attractiveness is a sexual lure, especially during adolescence. Adolescents also receive powerful messages from the broader social environment. Media images of handsome faces and beautiful bodies are used to sell almost everything, from clothes and cosmetics to luncheon meats and auto parts. These images reinforce the cultural stereotype that men should be tall and muscular, and that women should be thin and shapely.

### **Adolescent Development: Cognitive domain**

This lesson addresses the rapid and complex growth in cognitive abilities during adolescence.

#### **Lesson**

- What is the process of cognitive development during adolescence?

#### **Objectives**

- What is meant by “adolescent egocentrism”, and what role does it play in cognitive and social development?
- What is intelligence?
- What are the different types of intelligence?

## **The process of cognitive development during adolescence**

Since adolescents must deal with a staggering number of issues, it is fortunate that their thought processes and moral reasoning have reached their highest level. In Piaget's theory of cognitive development, the formal operations stage includes the ability to reason in abstract ways – to consider the possibilities instead of thinking only in terms of concrete realities. The ability to think abstractly helps the future become more real. This high level of reasoning ability helps adolescents consider how the world could be a better place and why personal principles are sometimes more important than external rules and laws (McMahon and Romano, 2000, p. 335).

## **“Adolescent egocentrism”, and the role it plays in cognitive and social development**

Adolescents frequently practise their new thinking skills on themselves, a process that makes them lose some of their detachment. They worry about how they are regarded by others; they try to sort out their own conflicting feelings about parents, school and close friends; they think deeply but not always realistically about their future possibilities; they reflect, at length, on each day's experiences. Analyzing their private thoughts and feelings, forecasting their future, and reflecting on their experiences underlie the greater reflection and self-awareness - and enhanced capacity for self-centeredness - that distinguishes adolescence. However, these new ventures in introspection are often distorted by adolescent egocentrism, a self-view in which adolescents regard themselves as much more socially significant as they actually are. Adolescent egocentrism can lead to false conclusions:

- One is the invincibility fable, by which young people feel that they will never fall victim, as others do, to dangerous behaviour.
- Another false conclusion resulting from adolescent egocentrism is the personal fable, through which adolescents imagine their own lives as unique, heroic, or even mythical. They perceive

themselves as different from others, distinguished by unusual experiences, perspectives, and values.

- A third false conclusion stemming from egocentrism is called the imaginary audience. This arises from many adolescents' assumption that other people are as intensely interested in them as they themselves are. This results in acute self-consciousness.

### **Social Cognition**

This overview lesson describes the general concept of social cognition, or the ways in which we make sense of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of other people through analysis and interpretation.

#### **Lesson**

- How do we make sense of the behaviour of other people?

#### **Objectives**

- How do we form impressions about people?
- What are some biases on how we form impressions of other people?
- How do we make judgments and decisions about other people?



## **How we make sense of the behaviour of other people**

Social cognition is the thought process of making sense of events, people, oneself, and the world in general through analyzing and interpreting them. Social cognition focuses on social information in memory, which affects judgments, choices, evaluations, and ultimately, behaviour .

Social cognition focuses on the way in which our thoughts are affected by the immediate social context, and in turn, how our thoughts affect social behaviour. The approach can be summarized as follows:

- People have a limited capacity to process information about the social world and will take cognitive shortcuts (such as stereotyping) in order to minimize the load.
- We develop schemata that represent our knowledge about ourselves, others, and our roles within the social world. These schemata, once formed, bias our judgements about ourselves and others.
- Schemata become more complex and organized over time, and also harder to change.

Often, to save time, people use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world, developing rules of thumb. Some of these rules of thumb include:

- Representativeness, (individuals or events that appear to be representative of other members of a group are quickly classified as such)
- Availability (ease of association with existing knowledge)
- False consensus effect ( people tend to believe that others agree with them)
- Framing (the way in which information is organized and presented helps determine whether it is will be accepted, rejected or ignored).

## **How we form impressions of people**

The evidence indicates that we follow a weighted averaging model in combining information about people. That is, we keep a rough “running average” of our trait ratings in our heads, as we discover more characteristics about people.

Of course, we know that every person is unique, and that no two classes, no two hockey matches are exactly alike. Yet there are similarities among certain types of people or events. Thus, we tend to organize our view of the world in terms of categories. People are generally categorized in terms of easily observable characteristics, such as gender, ethnic group, occupation or age. Similarly, we construct categories of events, activities, objects and even ideas.

Cantor and Mischel (1979) suggest that we often use prototypes - mental images of a typical example of that category - for example a dog as a prototype of the category, mammal. The extent to which a particular object resembles the prototype, and the extent to which you allow for variations, will determine how readily you identify the object with the category.

Each of us uses a particular organizing schema to make sense of the information about others. We do this by using constructs:

- Physical constructs classify people according to their appearance: male or female, beautiful or ugly, fat or thin, young or old, and so on.
- Role constructs use social position: student, lawyer, wife, and so on.
- Interaction constructs focus on social behaviour: Friendly, helpful, aloof, and sarcastic.
- Psychological constructs: curious, nervous, insecure and so on.
- Membership constructs help us to identify others according to the group in which they belong: teacher, Liberal, Environmentalist, and so on (Adler, Towne and Rolls, 2001, p. 91).

### **Some errors in forming impressions**

Researchers have noticed two interesting biases in how first impressions of people are formed. First, people tend to form impressions of others which are positive rather than negative, a positivity bias. But while we have this bias towards being positive in our impressions of others, those impressions will be influenced more by negative than by positive information. This is called the negativity effect.

### **How we make judgments and decisions about other people**

In addition to schemas, people use judgmental heuristics to help us deal with the large amount of social information with which we are faced. Heuristics are rules of thumb people follow in order to make judgments quickly and efficiently. The *availability* heuristic refers to the ease with which we can think of something, which has a strong effect on how we view the world. The *representative* heuristic helps us decide how similar one thing is to another; we use it to classify people or situations on the basis of their similarity to a typical case. When using this heuristic we have a tendency to ignore base rate information - that is, the prior probability that someone or something belongs in that classification. People also rely on the anchoring/*adjustment* heuristic, wherein an initial piece of information acts as an anchor, or starting point, for subsequent thoughts on the subject.

### **Social Perception**

This lesson introduces the second of the three major aspects of this unit, social perception, or the ways in which we infer other people's motives and intentions from observing their behaviour and deciding whether the causes of the behaviour are internal or situational.

**Lesson**

- What social perception is

**Objectives**

- How social perceptions are formed and changed
- How we select information about others
- What some problems and issues in forming impressions of people and situations
- What the relationship between attribution, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination is
- Who some prominent social rights activists are, and what they achieved

**Social perception**

Social perception is the process by which someone infers other people's motives and intentions from observing their behaviour and deciding whether the causes of the behaviour are internal or situational. Social perception helps people make sense of the world, organize their thoughts quickly, and maintain a sense of control over the environment. It helps people feel competent and masterful, maintain a sense of balance, because it helps them predict similar events in the future.

**How social perceptions are formed and changed**

Research has shown that people form impressions of each other in two ways. Sometimes people make quick and effortless judgments based on others' physical appearance, facial expressions, or body language. Studies have shown, for example, that people who are physically attractive are perceived to be happy, warm, friendly, successful, confident, and well-adjusted. At other times, however, people form impressions based on a careful observation of a person's behaviour. According to this latter view, people act like amateur scientists, gathering and analyzing behavioural evidence before evaluating others. The explanations for behaviour that people come up with are called attributions, and the theory that describes the process is called *attribution theory*.

## **How we select information about others**

Because we are exposed to more input than we could possibly manage, the first step in perception is the selection of which data we will attend to. There are several factors that cause us to notice some messages and ignore others.

- Stimuli that are intense often attract our attention.
- Repetitious stimuli also attract our attention. Just as a quiet but steadily dripping faucet can come to dominate our awareness, people to whom we are frequently exposed become noticeable.
- Attention is also frequently related to contrast or change in stimulation. Put differently, unchanging people or things become less noticeable.
- Motives determine not only what information we select from our environment but also how we perceive people. For example, someone looking for a romantic adventure will be especially aware of attractive potential partners.

## **What some problems and issues in forming impressions of people and situations are**

Over the years, research into attribution has shown that when we explain the behaviour of others, we tend to overestimate the role of personal factors and underestimate the influence of situations. This bias is so universal that it has been called the *fundamental attribution error*. In one demonstration of the fundamental attribution error, experimenters randomly assigned subjects to participate in a quiz show in the role of either questioner or contestant. Then in front of the contestant and an observer, the experimenters told the questioner to devise a set of difficult questions to ask the contestant. Not surprisingly, many of the questions—created from the questioner's own store of esoteric knowledge—stumped the contestant. Yet when asked to rate the general knowledge of both participants, observers consistently saw the questioners as more knowledgeable than the contestants. The observers failed to

take the situational roles into account and attributed the behaviour they witnessed to each person's level of knowledge.

In forming impressions of others, people are subject to other biases as well. For example, a great deal of research shows that people are often slow to revise their first impressions of others even when those views are not supported by the evidence. Part of the problem is that once we form an impression of someone, we tend to interpret that person's later behaviour in ways that seem to fit our impression. Another problem is that our first impression of someone may shape the way we treat that person—which, in turn, may influence his or her actual behaviour. This process is known as a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.

### **What the relationship between attribution, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination is**

The various components that make up an attitude may not always be in agreement. Prejudice is no exception. A crucial factor in prejudice appears to be the affective component. Thus, an individual may intellectually accept that native people are not inherently less capable or lazier than whites, but may nevertheless avoid them. However, attitude components are more likely to be highly correlated in extreme bigots. This type of person will not only have strong negative feelings, but will usually have an extensive set of negative stereotypes, some of which may be quite bizarre.

### **Adolescent Development: socio-emotional domain**

This lesson addresses the multitude of social roles, gender roles, relationships and social behaviours that characterize adolescence as a unique stage of development.

### **What the process of socio-emotional development in adolescence is**

Adolescence is often painted as a time of great difficulty and confusion. While the trials of this period vary from one culture to another, there is little indication that it is actually that bad for most adolescents. One of the hardest issues to deal with is trying to find an identity. Until adolescence, there is no pressure to find out about yourself. Now it becomes necessary to try out different roles to see which ones fit. Other societies, especially in non-industrialized nations, handle the transition from childhood to adulthood more simply. This transition is made through some kind of initiation, or rite of passage, meaning that a change of status is recognized by a formal ritual. We have no such ceremonies, so adolescents need to form their own subculture in order to avoid complete isolation. Forming groups and achieving a sense of identity are two crucial psychological issues during adolescence.

### **How we explain our social behaviour**

Problem behaviour theory (Jessor, 1993) represents a comprehensive approach to understanding adolescent behaviour. In it, adolescent behaviour is viewed as being consistent with what the adolescent is like as a person (a “personality system”), how the adolescent is reacting to his or her home life and peer group (a “perceived environment system”), and what the adolescent tends to be doing (a “behaviour system”). Personality variables relevant to problem behaviour include low expectancies for success in school, high values for independence, and an absence of constraints against such behaviour, such as religious beliefs or concern about deviance. Predisposing characteristics of the social environment include opportunities to engage in problem behaviour and the influence of peer groups. Problem drinking also tends to be part of a more general pattern of behaviour, including the use of marijuana and other drug use, deviant/delinquent acts such as lying and stealing, and precocious sexual involvement, along with less participation in school and church activities

## **Self-understanding**

This lesson speaks to the central theme of, Who Am I? by guiding the students to a better understanding of themselves as active participants in the social world.

### **Lesson**

- What self-concept is

### **Objectives**

- How we develop a self-concept
- How we change a self-concept
- The cultural influences on self-concept
- How gender influence self-concept



## **What self-concept is**

The self-concept has four components: self-image, self-esteem (or self-regard), ideal-self and self-efficacy.

- Self-image is the sort of person we think we are. One way of assessing self-image is to ask people to answer the question ‘Who Am I?’ 20 times. This typically produces two main categories of answers relating to social roles and personality traits. Self-image also includes body image.
- While self-image is essentially descriptive, self-esteem is essentially evaluative. Self-esteem is the extent to which we like or approve of ourselves, and how worthwhile we think we are.
- The ideal-self is the kind of person we would like to be. In general, the greater the gap between self-image and ideal-self, the lower the self-esteem.
- According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy, or one's expectations of success in a given situation, is an important determinant of whether one will attempt to make changes in one's environment. Each day, we make many decisions based on our perceptions of the extent to which our actions will produce reinforcement. Our actions are based on our evaluations of our competency. Moreover, self-efficacy not only determines whether we will engage in a particular behaviour, it also determines the extent to which we will maintain that behaviour in the face of adversity.

## **How we develop a self-concept**

According to Carl Rogers (1980), self-concept or identity is shaped partly by self-actualizing tendencies and partly by others' evaluations. In this way, people come to like what they are “supposed” to like and to behave as they are “supposed” to behave. Although this socialization process is adaptive, allowing people to get along in society, it often requires that they stifle the self-actualizing tendency and distort experience.

## **How we change a self-concept**

Four ways self-esteem can be improved are through:

- Identifying the causes of low self-esteem and the domains of competence important to the self.  
People have the highest self-esteem when they perform competently in domains important to the self.
- Emotional support and social approval, including both adult and peer approval.
- Achievement, which has much in common with Bandura's cognitive social learning concept of self-efficacy, which refers to individuals' beliefs that he or she can master a situation and produce positive outcomes.
- Coping with a problem rather than avoiding it. If coping rather than avoidance prevails, people often face problems realistically, honestly and nondefensively. This produces favourable self-evaluative thoughts, which lead to the self-generated approval that raises self-esteem.

## **How gender influences self-concept**

In the 1970s, as both males and females became dissatisfied with the burdens imposed by their stereotypical roles, alternatives to masculinity and femininity were proposed. Instead of describing masculinity and femininity as a continuum in which more of one means less of the other, it was proposed that individuals could have both masculine and feminine traits. This thinking led to the development of androgyny, which refers to the presence of desirable masculine and feminine characteristics in the same person. The androgynous male might be assertive (masculine) and nurturant (feminine). The androgynous female might be powerful (masculine) and sensitive to the feelings of others (feminine).

## What the cultural influences on self-concept are

<b>Individualistic cultures</b>	<b>Collectivist cultures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self is separate, unique, individual; should be independent, self-sufficient</li><li>• Individuals should take care of themselves and immediate family</li><li>• Many flexible group memberships; friends based on shared interests and activities</li><li>• Reward for individual achievement and initiative; individual decisions encouraged; individual credit and blame assigned</li><li>• High value on autonomy, change, youth, individual security, equality</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People belong to extended families or in-groups; “we” or group orientation</li><li>• Person should take care of extended family before self</li><li>• Emphasis on belonging to a very few permanent in-groups which have a strong influence over the person</li><li>• Reward for contribution to group goals and well-being; co-operation with in-group members; group decisions valued; credit and blame shared</li><li>• High value on duty, order, tradition, age, group security, status and hierarchy</li></ul>

## Self-concept

Central to our self-understanding is our self-concept. This lesson introduces the four aspects that together comprise our self-concept: self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy and the ideal-self.

**Lesson**

- What a self-concept is

**Objectives**

- How the self-concept develops
- What influences the development of a self-concept
- How important your self-concept is
- What we do when our self-concept is threatened

## **What a self-concept is**

The self-concept is defined as the sum of feelings, beliefs and impressions that individuals have of themselves - the self perceiving the self.

According to Carl Rogers (1980), the self is the part of experience that a person identifies with “I” or “me”. Those who accurately experience the self - with all the preferences, abilities, fantasies, shortcomings and desires - are on the road to self-actualization.

## **How the self-concept develops**

Identity formation is the central task of adolescents according to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. According to Erikson (1968) issues in late adolescence - graduating from high school, going to college and forging relationships - challenge the adolescent's self-concept, precipitating an identity crisis. In this crisis, the adolescent must develop an integrated self-image as a unique person by pulling together self-knowledge acquired during childhood. If infancy and childhood brought trust, autonomy and initiative, according to Erikson, the adolescent will resolve the identity crisis positively, feeling self-confident and competent. If, however, infancy and childhood resulted in feelings of mistrust, shame, guilt and inferiority, the adolescent will be confused about his or her identity and goals.

Cooley (1902) argued that we construct our self-concepts from how we appear to others, which is then reflected back to us - what he called the looking-glass self. There are several processes by which “reflection” enables us to construct our ideas and impressions of ourselves:

- Social Identity refers to those aspects of a person's self-image that depend upon the social categories and groups to which he or she belongs. Turner (1982) describes social identification as a three-part process. First, there is social categorization: individuals perceive themselves

and others in terms of membership in distinct categories or groups. Second, the typical norms, attitudes and behaviours that distinguish the groups determine behaviour to a large degree.

Third, individuals conform to the stereotypes associated with the group.

- Perhaps most central to your social identity is your gender - male or female. What does “masculinity” and “femininity” mean? What is called masculinity has been described as instrumentality or agency, a concern with achieving goals and being active in the world, while femininity is described as expressiveness or communion, being other-centered and concerned with interpersonal relationships.
- Self-perception theory suggests that people become aware of their own attitudes, feelings, values, dispositions and other internal characteristics in the same way that they form impressions of the characteristics of others - through observation of their own behaviour. The notion of self-knowledge through self-perception implies that, rather than thinking about what we really believe in, and then acting on those beliefs, we first act and then discover our beliefs and values from our own actions.
- Social comparison is based on three premises:
  - Humans have a drive to evaluate their own opinions, feelings and abilities, and want to feel confident that they are accurate.
  - In the absence of objective or nonsocial bases of assessment, individuals will evaluate themselves in comparison with others.
  - People tend to compare themselves with someone similar to themselves in opinion, background or ability. In general, people compare themselves to someone equal when the goal is self-assessment, to someone better when the goal is self-improvement, and to someone inferior when the goal is self-enhancement.

## **What influences the development of a self-concept**

The society in which we live, or the ethnic group to which we belong, shapes many of our beliefs, values and behaviours - and these play important roles in shaping the character of the personality. Dion and Dion (1993) argue that members of collectivist and individualistic cultures think differently about love and marriage. Their thesis is that romantic conceptualizations of love flourish only in individualistic cultures. Why? Because romantic notions of love and marriage focus narrowly on the specific needs of the individual. Romantic love is “selfish” in the dictionary sense of “seeking or concentrating on one’s own welfare or advantage.” Each individual has an idealized notion of a relationship with another that will bring him or her great gratification. Members of individualistic societies assume they have the right to enter into such self-satisfying relationships and tend to display only marginal concern about the possible reactions of others.

In a collectivist society, on the other hand, the individual has a deep interactive dependency with his or her family and reference group, and a more extended self-concept. In such societies, the individual must carefully consider the degree to which a prospective partner will fit into this relationship. In short, the self-concept that characterizes collectivist societies does not allow love and marriage to be considered exclusively in terms of the narrow interests of the individual.

The Ashanti people of West Africa name children according to the day of the week on which they are born because they believe they have different personalities. Police records indicated that a very high proportion of juvenile delinquents were born on a Wednesday (the day of the “naturally aggressive” personality), whilst a very low proportion were born on a Monday (the day of the “quiet and calm” personality). If Ashanti boys were treated in a way consistent with their names, they may consequently become what their names indicate they are really like (a self-fulfilling prophecy).

In Maori culture, a person is invested with a certain kind of power (mana), given by the gods in accordance with family status and birth circumstances. This enables a person to be effective, whether in battle or everyday dealings with others. However, this power is not a stable resource but can be increased or decreased by the person's day-to-day conduct. A person who forgot a ritual observance or committed some misdemeanor would have his or her power decreased. A person's social standing, successes and failures, and so on are seen as dependent on external sources rather than internal states (such as personality or motivation). Indeed, mana is only one of the external forces which inhabit a person. Instead of representing themselves as the centre and origin of their actions (which is crucial to the Western concept of the self), the individual Maori do not own experiences such as fear, anger, love and grief. Rather, these experiences are visitations governed by the unseen world of powers and forces

### **How important your self-concept is**

#### **Persons with high self-esteem**

Are likely to think well of others.

- Expect to be accepted by others.
- Evaluate their own performance more favourably than people with low self-esteem.
- Perform well when being watched: not afraid of the reaction of others.
- Work harder for people who demand high standards of performance.
- Are inclined to feel comfortable with



others they view as superior in some way.

- Are able to defend themselves against negative comments of others.

### **Persons with low self-esteem**

Are likely to disapprove of others.

- Expect to be rejected by others.
- Evaluate their own performance less favourably than people with high self-esteem.
- Perform poorly when being watched: are sensitive to possible negative reaction.
- Work harder for undemanding, less critical people.
- Feel threatened by people they view as superior in some way.
- Have difficulty defending themselves against other people's negative comments; more easily influenced.

## **What we do when our self-concept is threatened**

When threatened, we all do our best to keep some kind of balance. We protect our inner selves from too much attack by using defense mechanisms:

- When we use repression we do not allow ourselves to remain aware of painful material; we push it out of consciousness. Repression is usually unhealthy.
- When we engage in denial, we refuse to admit that anything bad has happened. In some ways, denial is similar to repression. With repression, though, we are at least partly aware of the problem, and then we push it out of consciousness. With denial, we do not let the problem into consciousness in the first place.
- Sometimes we have trouble directly expressing what we feel because of the threat (real or imagined) that something terrible will happen as a result. So we vent our feelings elsewhere or on someone else, engaging in displacement.
- In reaction formation, what we express is the opposite of what we really feel. Reaction formation is sometimes a little hard to see in operation, since we can not read people's minds.
- When the emotions we feel are too overwhelming, we may try to eliminate them altogether. Talking coolly and rationally about a tragedy as if it were simply an event that we had observed is called intellectualization. We have taken all of the feelings out of our description.
- Identification with the aggressor occurs when we are mistreated for a long time by someone much more powerful than we are, and begin to take on that person's characteristics. We begin to identify with him or her, or try to gain favour.
- With regression we defend ourselves by “moving backward” and behaving like children. This defense is an extreme reaction to the frustration of having to be an adult and take responsibility. We regress to a time when we were helpless children and someone had to take care of us.

- With rationalization we explain what we do in such a way that we avoid any responsibility for a bad outcome.
- Projection refers to the process of mentally giving to someone else our own thoughts or feelings. A continued pattern of such behaviour is self-destructive, since it does not help us face up to how we might be causing the problem.
- Sublimation occurs when we channel our emotional energy into a constructive or creative activity. It is the only defense mechanism that is truly healthy and adaptive.

### **Culture and the Self**

The predominant culture, or indeed sub-culture, has a profound influence on the development and maintenance of the self-concept. This lesson addresses the nature of being “Western” or “Eastern” in cultural background.

#### **Lesson**

- What culture means

#### **Objectives**

- The influence does culture have on self-concept
- How cultural background influence your general health and outlook on life

## **What culture means**

Culture has been defined as the accumulation of values, rules of behaviour, forms of expression, religious beliefs, occupational choices, and the like for a group of people who share a common language and environment. As such, culture is an organizing and stabilizing influence. It encourages or discourages particular behaviours and mental processes. It also allows people to understand others and anticipate their behaviour. It is a kind of group adaptation passed by tradition and example rather than by genes, from one generation to the next. Culture determines, for example, whether children's education is concerned with hunting or reading, how close people stand when they talk to each other, and whether or not they form lines in public places.

## **The influence does culture have on self-concept**

<b>Individualistic cultures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self is separate, unique individual; should be independent, self-sufficient.</li><li>• Individuals should take care of themselves and immediate family.</li><li>• Many flexible group memberships; friends based on shared interests and activities.</li><li>• Reward for individual achievement and initiative; individual decisions encouraged; individual credit and blame assigned.</li><li>• High value on autonomy, change, youth,</li></ul>

individual security, equality.

### **Collectivist cultures**

- People belong to extended families or in-groups; "we" or group orientation.
- Person should take care of extended family before Self.
- Emphasis on belonging to a very few permanent in-groups which have a strong influence over the person.
- Reward for contribution to group goals and well-being; co-operation with in-group members; group decisions valued; credit and blame shared.
- High value on duty, order, tradition, age, group security, status and hierarchy

### **How your cultural background influences your general health and outlook on life**

Cultures differ in their degree of fatalism and in their beliefs about whether it is possible to take control over their health. For example, in Germany, which has a highly structured social welfare system, people feel they have more psychological control over their health and work than Americans do. Might these cultural attitudes be related to mortality rates? The answer, remarkably, seems to be yes. In traditional Chinese astrology, certain birth years are considered unlucky, and people born in those years

often fatalistically expect bad fortune. This expectation can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a study of many thousands of people matched by age and cause of death, Chinese-Americans who had been born in a year traditionally considered to be ill-fated died significantly earlier - one to five years earlier! - than whites who had been born in the same year and who had the same disease. The more strongly traditional the Chinese were, the more years of life they lost. These results held for nearly all causes of death studied, even when the researchers controlled for how well the patients took care of themselves and which treatments they were given.

### **Gender and the Self**

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#### **Lesson**

- What culture means

#### **Objectives**

- What influence culture has on self-concept
- How cultural background influences your general health and outlook on life

## **What gender means**

Gender identity is our classification of ourselves (and others) as male or female, boy or girl, and so on.

Gender role refers to the behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and so on which a particular society either expects from, or considers appropriate to, males and females on the basis of their biological sex. To be masculine or feminine, therefore, requires males and females to conform to their respective gender roles.

## **How a gender identity develops**

- *Biological*: Supporters of a biological approach to gender development argue that males and females are biologically programmed for certain kinds of activities compatible with male and female roles.
- *Humanistic theory* (Rogers): Rogers assumes that each person responds as an organized whole to reality as he or she perceives it. Rogers emphasized self-actualization, which he described as an innate tendency towards growth that motivates all human behaviour. To Rogers, personality is the expression of each individual's self-actualizing tendency as it unfolds in that individual's unique, perceived reality. Central to Rogers' theory is the self, the part of experience that a person identifies as "I" or "Me".
- *Socio-biological theory*: Socio-biologists (evolutionary theorists) argue that gender has gradually evolved over the course of human development as part of our broader adaptation to the environment. The relatively greater physical strength and lung capacity of males make them better suited to hunting and defending territory and family. The child-bearing and milk-producing capacities of females, however, make them ideally suited to child care and other nurturant roles.

- *Psychoanalytic theory*: Freud's theory is related to his explanation of moral development. Up until the resolution of the Oedipus complex, gender identity is assumed to be flexible. Resolution of the Oedipus complex occurs through identification with the same-sex parent, and results in the acquisition of both a superego and gender identity. As well as a weaker conscience, Freud also saw the development of gender identity as being weaker in girls than boys.
- *Social learning theory*: According to social learning theory, one reason girls and boys learn to behave differently is that they are *treated differently* by their parents. Social learning theory emphasizes the roles of observational learning and reinforcement. By observing others behaving in particular ways and then imitating that behaviour, children receive reinforcement from significant others for behaviours considered to be sex-appropriate.
- *Cognitive-developmental*: The cognitive-developmental approach emphasizes the child's participation in developing both an understanding of gender and gender-appropriate behaviour. Children's discovery of the fact that they are male or female causes them to identify with members of the same sex (not the other way around as psychoanalytic and social learning theories suggest). According to cognitive-developmental psychologists, young children acquire an understanding of the concepts male and female in three stages:
  - Gender labeling or basic gender identity: This occurs somewhere around age three and refers to the child's recognition that it is male or female.
  - Gender stability: By age four or five, most children recognize that people retain their gender for a lifetime. However, there are limitations, in that children rely on superficial signs such as the hair length to determine the gender.



- **Gender constancy:** At around age six or seven, children realize that gender is immutable. Gender constancy represents a kind of conservation and, significantly, appears shortly after the child has mastered conservation of quantity.

### **What the differences between the genders are**

Santrock (1999) states that genuine behavioural differences do exist between the sexes and people's stereotypes are not entirely inaccurate. But the differences are fewer in number, smaller in size and far more complex than stereotypes suggest.

- *Physical/Biological:* From conception on, females are less likely to die than males. Females also are less likely than males to develop physical or mental disorders. Estrogen strengthens the immune system, making females more resistant to infection. Males have twice the risk of coronary disease as females. On average, males grow to be about 10 percent taller than females.
- *Cognitive abilities:* In the cognitive domain, it appears that there are three genuine gender differences. First, on the average, females tend to exhibit slightly better verbal skills than males. Second, starting in high school, males show a slight advantage on tests of mathematical ability. Third, starting in the grade school years, males tend to score higher than females on various measures of visual-spatial ability.
- *Social behaviour and personality:* First, studies indicate that males tend to be more aggressive than females, both verbally and physically. This disparity shows up in early childhood. Second, there are gender differences in nonverbal communication. The evidence indicates that females are more sensitive than males to subtle nonverbal cues. Females also smile and gaze at others more than males. Third, females appear to be slightly more susceptible to persuasion and conforming to group pressure than males are. Fourth, males are more sexually active than

females are, and they have more permissive attitudes about causal, premarital and extramarital sex. Finally, males score higher on assertiveness scales, whereas females score higher on measures of anxiety, trust, empathy and nurturance. Sixth, females are more relationship-oriented than males, and that this relationship-orientation should be prized as a more important skill in our culture than it is currently held to be.

- *Communication*: Sociologist Deborah Tannen (1990) distinguishes between rapport talk and report talk. Rapport talk is the language of conversation and a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. Report talk is talk that gives information. Males hold centre stage through report talk, while females prefer private, rapport talk and conversation that is relationship-oriented.
- *Aggression*: One of the most consistent gender differences is that boys are more aggressive than girls. Another is that boys are more active than girls. The aggression difference is especially pronounced when children are provoked. These differences occur across cultures and appear very early in children's development. Biological factors include heredity and hormones. Environmental factors include cultural expectations, adult and peer models, and social agents who reward aggression in males and punish aggression in females.
- *Emotional control*: An important skill is to be able to regulate and control your emotions and behaviour. Males usually show less self-regulation than females, and this low self-control can translate into behavioural problems. In one study, children's low self-regulation was linked with greater aggression, teasing others, overreaction to frustration, low cooperation and inability to delay gratification.

Males value power, competency, efficiency and achievement. They are always doing things to prove themselves and develop their power and skills. Their sense of self is defined through their ability to achieve results. Males are solution-oriented. They experience fulfillment primarily through success

and accomplishment. Males are more concerned with outdoor activities, like hunting, fishing and racing cars. They are interested in the news, weather and sports and couldn't care less about romance novels and self-help books. Males are more interested in “objects” and “things” rather than people and feelings. While women fantasize about romance, men fantasize about powerful cars, faster computers, gadgets, gizmos, and new more powerful technology. Men are preoccupied with the “things” that can help them express power by creating results and achieving their goals. Achieving their goals is very important to a male because it is a way for him to prove his competence and thus feel good about himself. For males to feel good about themselves, they must achieve these goals by themselves. Males pride themselves in doing things all by themselves. Autonomy is a symbol of efficiency, power and competence.

Females value love, communication, beauty and relationships. They spend a lot of time supporting, helping and nurturing one another. Their sense of self is defined through their feelings and the quality of their relationships. They experience fulfillment through sharing and relating. Rather than building highways and tall buildings, females are more concerned with living together in harmony, community and loving cooperation. Relationships are more important than work and technology. Personal expression, especially of feelings, is very important. Communication is of primary importance. To share their personal feelings is much more important than achieving goals and success. Talking and relating to one another is a source of tremendous fulfillment.

Instead of being goal oriented, women are relationship oriented; they are more concerned with expressing their goodness, love and caring. Females are very involved in personal growth, spirituality, and everything that can nurture life, healing and growth. Females are very intuitive. They have developed this ability through centuries of anticipating the needs of others. They pride themselves on being considerate of the needs and feelings of others (Gray, 1992, pp. 16-20).

## **What the socio-cultural influences on gender development are**

Although parents do encourage sex-appropriate play, there is evidence that biological factors may play an initial role in children's preferences. Although fathers are less likely to give dolls to one-year-old boys than to one-year-old girls, the boys who do receive the dolls are less likely to play with them (Snow et al., 1983). Perhaps adult expectations and encouragement build upon children's preferences, producing an amplifying effect. Then, because boys' toys provide more opportunity for developing motor skills, visuospatial skills, and inventiveness, and girls' toys provide more opportunity for nurturance and social exchange, some important differences in sex roles may become established.

Once children begin to play with other children outside the home, peers have a significant influence on the development of their gender roles. In fact, Stern and Karraker (1989) found that the behaviour of two- to six-year-old children was even more influenced by the knowledge of a baby's gender than was the behaviour of adults. By the time children are three years old, they reinforce gender-typed play by praising, imitating or joining in the behaviour. In contrast, they criticize gender-inappropriate behaviour (Langlois and Downs, 1980). Parents indirectly encourage gender-stereotyped play by seeking out children of the same sex as playmates for their own children.

## **Self-schemas and Identity**

This lesson looks at self-identity in preparation for the lesson on identity management, or the ways in which we present ourselves both privately and publicly.

**Lesson**                      • How we represent knowledge about ourselves

**Objectives**                • How self-identity develops

- What influences the family has on identity
- How gender influence identity development

## **How we represent knowledge about ourselves**

We not only represent and store information about other people, but also about ourselves, although in a more complex and varied way. Most people have a complex self-concept with many self-schemata.

These include an array of “possible selves”, or future-oriented schemata of what we would like to be (our ideal-self). Visions of future possible selves may influence some of the decisions we make, such as career choices

We learn about ourselves through introspection and observations of our behaviour, and then organize this information into self-schemas. We also interpret our past using schemas and theories about how our attitudes and behaviours are likely to change. As important as these sources of self-knowledge are, though, there is still something missing. These views portray people as solitary seekers of self-knowledge, with no consultation with or comparison to other people. The two ways in which we gain self-knowledge that are entirely social, in that we rely on other people to learn about who we are, are the “looking glass self” and social comparison theory.

## **How self-identity develops**

Contemporary views of identity development suggest several important considerations.

- First, identity development is a lengthy process. Identity formation begins with the appearance of attachment, the development of a sense of self, and the emergence of independence in infancy, and reaches its final phase with a life review and integration in old age.
- Second, identity development is extraordinarily complex. At the bare minimum, it involves commitment to a vocational direction, an ideological stance, and a sexual orientation. Canadian psychologist James Marcia (1980) analyzed Erikson’s theory of identity development and

concluded that four identity statuses, or modes of resolution, appear in the theory: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, and identity moratorium and identity achievement.

- Identity diffusion is Marcia's term for the status of adolescents who have not yet experienced a crisis (that is, they have not yet explored meaningful alternatives) or made any commitments.
- Identity foreclosure is Marcia's term for adolescents who have made a commitment but have not experienced a crisis.
- Identity moratorium is Marcia's term for the status of adolescents who are in the midst of a crisis, but their commitments are either absent or only vaguely defined.
- Identity achievement is Marcia's term for the status of adolescents who have undergone a crisis and have made a commitment.

### **The process of identity development**

As they try to sort through their possible (and multiple) selves, adolescents frequently take on a false self, acting in ways that they know are contrary to the core of their being - even if they are not sure what that core being is. According to one group of researchers (Harter, Marold, Whitesell and Cobbs, 1996), adolescents display three distinct types of false selves:

- *The acceptable false self.* This false self arises from the adolescent's perception that the real self is rejected by parents and peers - a perception often coloured by the adolescent's own self-hate. Adolescents who adopt a false self in order to be accepted tend to feel worthless, depressed, and hopeless; they engage in self-betrayal to hide their true nature. They also report low levels of real self-understanding.
- *The pleasing false self.* This second type of false self arises from a wish to impress or please others. It is quite common among adolescents. Those who adopt it appear to be less debilitated

psychologically, and to have a greater self-understanding, than those whose false selves arise from a sense of rejection.

- *The experimental false self.* This type of false self is one that adolescents try out “just to see how it feels”. Compared with adolescents who engage in the first two types of false behaviour, these adolescents report the highest levels of self-esteem and self-knowledge, partly because although they acknowledge that their experimentation is not their usual, expected behaviour, they do not feel it is false.

### **What influences the family have on identity**

Parents are important figures in the adolescent’s development of identity. In studies that relate identity development to parenting styles, democratic parents, who encourage adolescents to participate in family decision making, foster identity achievement. Authoritarian parents, who control the adolescent's behaviour without giving the adolescent an opportunity to express opinions, encourage identity foreclosure. Permissive parents, who provide little guidance to adolescents and allow them to make their own decisions, promote identity diffusion.

In addition to studies on parenting styles, researchers have also examined the role of individuality and connectedness in the development of identity. The presence of a family atmosphere that promotes both individuality and connectedness is important in the adolescent's identity development. Individuality consists of two dimensions: self-assertion, the ability to have and communicate a point of view; and separateness, the use of communication patterns to express how one is different from others.

Connectedness also consists of two dimensions: mutuality, sensitivity to and respect for others' views; and permeability, openness to others' views.

### **What the socio-cultural influences on identity development are**

The surrounding culture can aid identity formation in two major ways: by providing values that have stood the test of time and continue to serve their function, and by providing social structures and customs that ease the transition from childhood to adulthood. Whether a given culture actually provides these values and social structures depends primarily on how much the members of the culture agree regarding basic principles and on how stable life circumstances are from one generation to the next.

In a culture where virtually everyone holds the same moral, political, religious and sexual values, and where social change is slow, identity is easy to achieve. Most young people in such traditional cultures simply accept the roles and values they grew up with. In modern industrial and post-industrial societies, by contrast, cultural consensus is rare and continuity is rarer still. Everything is open to question by almost everyone. When anything is possible, nothing is easy.

### **How gender influences identity development**

Erikson described two primary developmental crises in early and middle adulthood. The first is the establishment of intimacy, which is a criterion of having attained the psychosocial state of adulthood.

By intimacy, Erikson means the ability to form close, meaningful relationships with others without 'the fear of losing oneself in the process' (Elkind, 1970). Erikson believed that a prerequisite for intimacy was the attainment of identity, or the reconciliation of all our various roles into one enduring and stable personality. Identity is necessary because we cannot know what it means to love someone and seek to share our life with them until we know who we are and what we want to do with our lives. Thus, genuine intimacy requires us to give up some of our sense of separateness, and we must each have a firm identity to do this. Intimacy does not involve sexuality. Since intimacy refers to the essential



ability to relate our deepest hopes and fears to another person, and in turn accept another's need for intimacy, it describes the relationship between friends just as much as that between sexual partners .

Some researchers believe that the order of stages proposed by Erikson are different for females and males. One view is that for males identity formation precedes the stage of intimacy, while for females intimacy precedes identity. These ideas are consistent with the belief that relationships and emotional attachments are more important concerns of females, while autonomy and achievement are more important concerns of males

### **Identity Management**

How does our behaviour change according to the situation? What techniques or process do we employ in order to maintain, or possibly change, our identity? We do, indeed, have two sides to our identities, public and private. This lesson addresses the management of our uniqueness.

**Lesson**                      • How our behaviour change in social situations

**Objectives**                • How, and why, we disclose private and personal information about ourselves to others

## **How our behaviour change in social situations**

Impression management can take one of three forms: manner, appearance and setting. Manner consists of a person's words and nonverbal actions. The second dimension of identity management is appearance - the personal items people use to shape an image. Along with clothing, other aspects of appearance such as jewelry, tanned or light skin, hairstyle and colour, all play a major role in identity management. A final way to manage identities is through the choice of setting - physical items we use to influence how others view us. In modern Western society the automobile is a major part of identity management.

People high in self-monitoring are social chameleons - they can skillfully alter their behaviour to match the current situation. They adjust what they say and what they do to the current situation in order to make a positive impression on others. In contrast, low self-monitors, tend to show a higher degree of consistency. They act much the same across a wide range of situations on the basis of their particular beliefs and attitudes.

Self-monitoring involves more than differences in consistency, however. Persons high in self-monitoring are generally better than low self-monitors at both reading others' emotional reactions and managing their own nonverbal cues. Thus they are generally more successful at making a good first impression. As a result, high self-monitors tend to be more successful in their careers than low self-monitors. High self-monitors approach new situations by asking themselves: "How can I best please the people I have to deal with?" In contrast, low self-monitors ask themselves: "How can I best be me in this situation?" .

Jones and Pittman (1982) have described several strategic self-presentational techniques that people use in everyday life:

- First is *ingratiation*, where you flatter, praise and generally make yourself likeable to another, often higher-status person.
- Second is *self-promotion* - actively “blowing your own horn” by describing your talents, exhibiting your knowledge and generally setting out to impress people.
- The flip side of self-promotion is *basking in reflected glory*. You cannot be good at everything, and so you cannot self-promote successfully in all areas - but you can become close to talented or successful people and bask in their glory and fame. In other words, you can appear impressive to others because you know or associate with impressive people.
- A final self-presentational strategy, and the one that has attracted the most research attention, is *self-handicapping*. Using this strategy, you set up reasons, before the fact, for your failure. That is, before you even engage in a task, you can make sure that you have a ready-made excuse to explain your (potentially) poor performance. There are two major ways people self-handicap:
  - In its most extreme form, people create obstacles that reduce the likelihood they will succeed on a task, so that if they do fail, they can blame it on those obstacles rather than on their lack of ability. The obstacles people have been found to use include drugs, alcohol, reduced effort on the task and failure to practise.
  - The second kind of self-handicapping is less extreme. People do not create obstacles to success, but do devise ready-made excuses in case they fail.

## **How, and why, we disclose private and personal information about ourselves to others**

There are several characteristics of self-disclosure:

- Usually happens in dyads.
- Occurs incrementally.
- Occurs in relatively few relationships.
- Is relatively scarce.
- Usually occurs in the context of positive relationships.
- There are reasons for self-disclosure.
- Improves and expands interpersonal relationships.
- Acts as catharsis, getting it “off your chest”.
- Self-clarification of your beliefs, opinions, attitudes and feelings by “talking it out”.
- Self-validation by seeking confirmation of important parts of your self-concept.
- Reciprocity or disclosing information about yourself to encourage another person to do so also.
- Identity management or revealing personal information to make ourselves more attractive.
- Relationship maintenance and enhancement.
- Impression formation.
- Social control.
- Manipulation calculated to achieve a desired result.

## **Mass Media**

This lesson addresses the pervasive and profound influence that television, movies, newspapers, radio and magazines have on all aspects of our lives, both personal and social.

**Lesson**

- What defines the mass media?

**Objectives**

- How viewing violence on television or in movies - and now in video games - affect the way we behave
- The influence does the media have on developing aggression and violence, especially in adolescents
- The influence does the Internet have social relations and behaviour
- The influence does the media have on society and our culture
- The relationship between cultural values, the media and censorship

**What defines the mass media**

The mass media includes television, movies, radio, music, newspapers, magazines, journals, video games, and the Internet.

**How viewing violence on television or in movies - and now in video games - affect the way we behave**

In many Canadian cities and in more remote communities as well, television is a common bond. In Igloolik, Nunavut, for example, of 139 households, 134 have television sets. Studies show that one in five Canadian teens watches more than five hours a day, two out of five watch three or four hours, and two out of five watch one or two hours. By the time they enter junior high, these teens have already

seen 100 000 violent acts and 8 000 murders on television or in the movies. Many of the most popular video games involve players in gruesome acts of violence, such as decapitation (“Mortal Kombat”) and hanging from a meat hook by a hole drilled in the neck by a vampire (“Night Moves”).

- Aggression may be learned through observation. Moreover, when adults and children are exposed to new ways of aggressing against others - techniques they have not previously seen - they may add these new behaviours to their repertoire. Later, when angry, irritated or frustrated, they may put these behaviours to actual use in assaults against others.
- Media violence conveys the message that violence is an acceptable means of handling interpersonal difficulties. It may elicit additional aggressive ideas and thoughts - convincing viewers that violence is even more common in real life than it is. It may also lessen emotional reactions to aggression and the harm it produces, so that such outcomes seem less upsetting or objectionable. This process is known as desensitization.

The fact that television portrays so much aggressive behaviour concerns parents and educators, as well as social psychologists. Half of all prime time TV characters are involved in violent activity of some kind; about one-tenth kill or are killed; the perpetrators of these crimes go unpunished in nearly three-quarters of violent scenes. Sixty-one percent of television programs contain violence - and that violence is often glamorized. Moreover, about 20 percent of males appearing on TV shows are engaged in law enforcement, whereas less than one percent are in law enforcement in the real world. Although the overall amount of violence on television is staggering, some programs account for a disproportionate number of violent acts overall.

Research generally supports the contention that viewers who regularly watch violent programs on television are more likely to be aggressive than are viewers who see less television violence. Further, one study found that children exposed to large doses of TV violence are less likely to help a real-life

victim of violence; another found that viewers of violence were less sympathetic to real-life victims than were non-viewers Children who play violent video games also seem to act more aggressively at later ages. Some of the key effects of viewing violence on television are:

- It weakens viewers' inhibitions.
- It may suggest new ideas and techniques to the uninitiated.
- It may activate or stimulate existing aggressive ideas and behaviours.
- It reduces a person's overall emotional sensitivity to violence - it desensitizes people.
- It introduces a fear of becoming a victim of violence.

### **Influence the media has on developing aggression and violence, especially in children**

Surveys indicate that news coverage of violence against women and children was not used to educate the public but rather to fascinate and entertain. Television violence, in particular, has a significant effect on the frequency and type of aggressive behaviour expressed by adults and children. Aggressive children watch more media violence, identify more with violent characters, and believe more that the violence they observe reflects real life than non-aggressive children

### **Issues and challenges in adolescence**

This lesson addresses the issues of adolescence using a research-oriented focus. Students can then analyze the research findings in terms of a theoretical perspective to connect theory with practice.

**Lesson**                      • The role does nutrition play in healthy adolescent development

**Objectives**

- The two main types of eating disorders
- Roles do genetics and the environment play in eating disorders
- The issues and challenges involved with teen suicide

- The trends and issues with juvenile violence and crime

### **Role nutrition play in healthy adolescent development**

A sizable minority of adolescents have one of four serious problems that interfere with normal, healthy eating. Any of these can make a teenager become a shorter and less well-proportioned adult:

- Childhood habits of overeating and under-exercising often worsen in adolescence, especially if the overweight young person experiences increased social rejection. For this reason, many chubby children become obese adolescents.
- Drug use (including cigarettes and alcohol) often begins in adolescence, affecting eating patterns, altering appetites and digestive processes, and depriving young people of energy and growth.
- Food fads and strange diets are particularly attractive, and particularly harmful, during the rapid growth of adolescence.
- Severe undernourishment slows or even halts the all the changes of puberty, including growth and sexual maturation, and it is sometimes undertaken for precisely that reason.

### **The two main types of eating disorders**

Although there are several types of eating disorders, two broad categories are anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa:

- Anorexia nervosa occurs primarily in females, and female anorectics outnumber males by a factor of 15:1. The disorder usually has its onset in adolescence, the period between 14 and 16 being the most common. For a diagnosis of anorexia to be considered, the individual must weigh less than 85 percent of normal or expected weight for height, age and sex. One important



characteristic of anorectics is a distorted body image in which the individual does not recognize the body's thinness. Estimates of anorexia incidence vary. American data suggest that one in 250 females may experience the disorder. In Britain, the figure is somewhat higher, ranging from one in 100 to four in 100.

- Bulimia nervosa is characterized by periodic episodes of “compulsive” or “binge” eating, the rapid and seemingly uncontrolled consumption of food, especially food rich in carbohydrates. The binge is terminated either by abdominal pain or, in the case of the purging type, by the expulsion of food using diuretics, laxatives or self-induced vomiting. In bulimia nervosa, the frequency of binge eating typically averages at least two or three times a week, and sometimes as often as 30 times a week. Most bulimics are women, with fewer than five percent of the cases presenting for treatment being men. Bulimics recognize that their eating behaviour is abnormal and feel frustrated by it, but they are unable to control the urge voluntarily. Like anorectics, bulimics are unduly concerned with their body weight/shape. Although able to maintain a normal body weight, they tend to fluctuate between weight gain and loss.

### **Roles genetics and the environment play in eating disorders**

Anorexia may have a genetic basis. There is a tendency for the disorder to run in families, with first- and second-degree relatives of anorectic individuals being significantly more likely to develop the disorder compared with first- and second-degree relatives of a control group of non-anorectics. The behavioural interpretation sees anorexia as a phobia concerning the possibility of gaining weight. socio-cultural explanations focus on societal norms and the cultural idealization of the slender female as possible causes for fears of being fat.

Noradrenaline, serotonin, hormones and endorphins may all play mediating roles in bulimia nervosa. Anorectics and bulimics share many psychological traits, along with the goal of maintaining a suboptimal body weight. The same person may also alternate between the same disorder.

### **The issues and challenges involved with teen suicide**

Adolescents under the age of 20 are much less likely to kill themselves than adults are. However, adolescents think about suicide often - one of the many signs that depression is prevalent during these years. A review of studies from many nations finds that suicidal ideation, that is, thinking about committing suicide, is so common among high school students that it might be considered normal.

Suicide is commonly thought of as a response to a specific and immediate psychological blow.

However, it usually is the final result of diffuse and long-standing problems within the individual, as well as within the family and social environment. Some of these problems are:

- Being temperamentally inclined toward fits of rage or bouts of depression
- Having depressed, suicidal or alcoholic parents
- Experiencing the early loss of an important care-giving parent, grandparent or older sibling through divorce, abandonment, imprisonment or death
- Growing up with few steady friends, either because of one's personal traits or because of external circumstances, such as moving frequently
- Experiencing educational pressures.

### **Predictors of juvenile delinquency include:**

- negative identity
- a low degree of self-control
- early initiation into violence and antisocial behaviour

- low expectations for education and little commitment towards education
- low school achievement in the early grades
- heavy peer influence and low resistance to peer pressure
- low socioeconomic status
- a lack of parental monitoring, low parental support and ineffective discipline
- Living in an urban, high crime and high mobility neighborhood.

### **Looking through the eyes of the systems of supports**

This lesson addresses the influence that the parents, family and peers have on adolescent development.

**Lesson** • How does the socio-cultural environment influence adolescent development?

**Objectives**

## **What importance the family is in adolescent development**

In adolescence, when the winds of change blow particularly strong, parents and peers become especially powerful influences, for good or ill. Indeed, virtually every aspect of adolescent behaviour is directly affected by the family.

What roles and influence do peers have on adolescent development?

Adolescents help each other negotiate the tasks and trials of growing up in many ways. Among the special functions performed by peer relationships and close friendships, Brown (1990) finds the following four most noteworthy:

- *Self-help.* Physical changes confront the young person with new feelings, experiences and challenges to self-esteem. Peers provide both information and the companionship of those who are going through the same changes. Peers are able to listen to concerns and provide specific advice as few adults can.
- *Social support.* Friends provide social protection against the turmoil of adolescence, such as the transition to larger, more impersonal high schools.
- *Identity formation.* The peer group aids the search for self-understanding and identity by functioning as a mirror that reflects dispositions, interests and capabilities.
- *Values clarification.* Friends are a sounding board for exploring and defining values and aspirations. By experimenting with viewpoints, philosophies and attitudes towards themselves and the world, with others who are willing to listen, argue and agree, adolescents begin to discover which values are truest to them.

## **How to resist peer pressure**

Realize that you are being manipulated. Others are deliberately trying to get you to change your mind.

If you are the only holdout, you are more likely to give in. Try to get just one other person on your side, and you will feel much stronger about your position.

- People want their behaviour and attitudes to be in harmony. Consequently, even if they know of some negative effects of what they are doing, they probably would not own up to them, because to do so would cause cognitive dissonance. Thus, you should be aware that you are probably not getting the whole story from the group.
- For all age groups, peers are more persuasive than other people are. The more prestige particular peers have, the greater their influence. Use this tendency to your advantage by finding peers who have had a bad experience with whatever you are being urged to do and listen to what they have to say.
- Minority opinions can have an effect on the majority. One way to increase this effect is to give consistent and repeated statements of your position. Often, this technique has a private effect on others - one that is not publicly expressed.
- If all the members of a group are on one side, doesn't that mean that they are more likely to be right than a single, lone individual? Actually, a group's decision making is usually not as accurate as an individual's, particularly if the individual is well informed and highly rational.
- When attempting to persuade someone, group members often try to make that person feel embarrassed for not going along. Embarrassing people is an age-old tool for making them conform. If you know that ahead of time, perhaps it will have less impact on you.
- One of the best ways to resist conformity is to be exposed to all the arguments in favour of some risky behaviour and then learn to refute these arguments, one by one.

### **The educational issues and challenges to be addressed in adolescence**

Instead of an appropriate person-environment fit, a volatile mismatch forms between many adolescents and their schools. Compared to elementary schools, most secondary schools have rigid behavioural demands, intensified competition, and more punitive grading practices, as well as less individualized attention and procedures. The impersonal and bureaucratic nature of many high schools is particularly destructive for proper person-environment fit. Many secondary schools attempt to educate more than a thousand students at a time, each of whom is scheduled to travel from teacher to teacher, room to room, LESSON to LESSON on a regular schedule. Some teachers do not even know the names of the hundred or more students they teach, much less their personality traits, intellectual interests and aspirations.

### **The influence culture has on interpersonal relationships**

One of the main dimensions on which cultures differ is individualism-collectivism. Individualism places greater emphasis on personal achievement and self-reliance. Collectivism, by contrast, places priority on the welfare and unity of the group. Goodwin (1995) argues that "love, at least in its passionate stomach-churning Hollywood manifestation, is largely a Western and individualistic phenomenon and that in Western cultures, marriage is seen as the culmination of a loving relationship". In cultures where arranged marriages occur, the relationship between love and marriage is the other way around, and marriage is seen as the basis on which to explore a loving relationship. The cultural background in which people have learned about love is important in shaping their concept of it

## **Spiritual Growth**

In his summary of the literature, Kenneth Hyde (1991) describes many religious aspects of adolescence, such as their behavior, attitudes, influences, and understandings of religion. While most Christian schools and churches have emphasized learning about the Bible, God, and beliefs, the last few years have produced a new emphasis upon the experiential aspects of faith, often termed “spirituality.” This is in part because one can know a great deal about God, and even make an initial commitment to the Christian faith, yet not have an active, ongoing relationship with God that includes religious experiences. “Spirituality” emphasizes awe, wonder, and other experiences that are beyond mundane, everyday life, and that connect the individual to something transcendent and/or of ultimate importance. While spirituality includes experiences with God, it can also include awe and wonder from experiences such as viewing a beautiful sunset that overwhelms the person emotionally and even perceptually. Spiritual experience can be either positive and constructive, or negative and counterproductive (Hay & Nye, 1998). A Few Negative Spiritualities

[this designation is similar to what Berryman (1991) terms “pseudo-play”]

1. Violence
2. Suicide
3. Bullying
4. Illegal Drug Use
5. Risk-Taking
6. Controlling with Detachment and Disguise (by “spirituality sponges” who are parasites, says Berryman)
7. Lack of Moral Impulse/Corruption
8. Lack of Concern for Others
9. Meaninglessness

10. Prejudice

11. Materialism

12. Evil Personality (M. Scott Peck)

For some people, the progression is not as uniform as Darling's model may suggest. Some mistakenly confuse moods with spirituality, and thus their perception of their walk of faith may be cyclical—hills and valleys which reflect positive and negative emotions that can change from day to day. These are not to be confused with times of struggle and victory which are normal aspects of the Christian life, sometimes described as “mountain top experiences” and “valleys” or “dry times in the wilderness.” Others live out a crisis-based faith, marked by occasional moments of spiritual experience during revival services or retreats; sudden shifts from a normally mundane spiritual existence. Perhaps a combination of Darling's loops, and occasional valleys and “mountain top experiences” are the most common components of healthy Christian living, loops and cycles that are part of a long-term incline marking spiritual growth and development. Spiritual adolescence may or may not be part of that progression.

In sum, healthy Christian living is marked by growth in understanding and a deepening relationship with God. Spiritual development involves confessing and turning from sin, experiencing difficult times when God seems remote, contrasted with moments of spiritual vitality—times of worship and felt love—when God is experienced as being “closer than a brother.” Spiritual formation activities can assist this process, including prayer, retreats, meditation, fasting, and the like.



## **Action research in adolescent development**

This summary lesson will integrate all of the concepts covered in this unit, by actively engaging students in the design and conduct of research in developmental psychology.

**Lesson**                      • issues and LESSONs for research in adolescence

**Objectives**

**Suggested Research LESSONs and Issues**

<b>Type of Research</b>	<b>Suggested Research LESSONs</b>

## Survey

- Conducting research using a survey involves going out and asking questions about the phenomenon of interest.

- What should the age to drive a vehicle be?
- What should be the legal age to consume alcohol?
- What qualities do you admire most in a friend?
- What attracts you to the opposite sex?
- Moral dilemmas:
  - Is it right to steal life-saving medicines that could save the life of a family member?
  - Is it right to tell the police if you know that a friend has committed a crime?
  - If you found a large sum of money in an unmarked envelope, should you keep it?
- Adolescent lifestyles: Smoking and drinking
- Do you believe in God? Heaven? Hell? Life after death?
- Stereotypes and biases: Complete this sentence.
  - Professional athletes are ....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men are ....</li> <li>• Women are ....</li> <li>• Parents are ....</li> </ul>
<p><b>Naturalistic Observation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In naturalistic research, the observer does not intervene at all. For all intents and purposes, the researcher is invisible and works hard not to interrupt the natural dynamics of the situation being investigated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the media influence adolescent perceptions of body image?</li> <li>• What are the eating habits of adolescents?</li> <li>• What different types of group behaviours are demonstrated by adolescents?</li> <li>• Are there differences in gender roles demonstrated by adolescents?</li> <li>• In what ways are bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination against adolescents demonstrated?</li> <li>• How does culture influence adolescent development?</li> <li>• How does the media represent adolescents?</li> </ul>
<p><b>LESSON</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A LESSON research study involves the acquisition, synthesis, organization, and presentation of information. Typically, the LESSON research study will involve both</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is anorexia nervosa?</li> <li>• What is bulimia nervosa?</li> <li>• What are the issues surrounding teen suicide?</li> <li>• What are the issues and challenges faced by teen mothers?</li> </ul>

<p>paper based as well as web-based resources. Additional information may be gained through the other research methods and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the cultural industries (beauty, fashion, music) influence adolescent development?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Case Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A case study is an intensive study of one individual Typically, the case study is based on interviews with the subject regarding his or her background, present thinking or actions; it may also utilize interviews of others who know the individual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who was Rosa Parks?</li> <li>• Who was the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.?</li> <li>• Who was Mahatma Gandhi?</li> <li>• Who was Mother Theresa?</li> <li>• Who is Nelson Mandela?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interview method of research, typically, involves a face-to-face meeting in which a researcher (interviewer) asks an individual a series of questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was it like to be a teenager when your parents were adolescents?</li> <li>• How have the parenting styles and strategies of your parents changed as you became an adolescent?</li> <li>• How have families changed since your parents were teenagers?</li> </ul>

## **Perspectives on adolescent development**

This summary lesson considers how the lifespan approach to human development can be used as a lens through which we can view adolescent development.

- Lesson**
- How adolescent development described from the perspective of the lifespan approach
- Objectives**
- How the key issues and questions in developmental psychology relate to adolescent development
  - How each of the six theoretical perspectives on human development explain adolescent development

### **How adolescent development described from the perspective of the lifespan approach.**

The lifespan perspective on human development has seven basic characteristics. Development is:

- Life-long
  - No age period dominates development.
- Multi-dimensional
  - Development consists of biological, cognitive, socio-emotional and spiritual dimensions.
- Multi-directional
  - Some aspects of development increase, while others decrease.
- Plastic
  - Depending on the individual's life conditions, development may take many paths.
- Historically-embedded
  - Development is influenced by historical conditions.

- Multidisciplinary
  - Psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists and medical researchers all study human development and share a concern for unlocking the mysteries of development throughout the lifespan.
- Contextual
  - The individual continually responds to and acts on contexts, which include a person's biological makeup, physical environment, and social, historical, and cultural contexts.

### **Key issues and questions in developmental psychology related to adolescent development**

From the time of its establishment, several key issues and questions have dominated the field of developmental psychology. Among the issues are the nature of developmental change, the importance of critical periods, lifespan approaches versus the more focused approaches, and the nature-nurture issue.

- **Continuous change versus discontinuous change:** In continuous change, developmental change is gradual, with achievements at one level building on those of previous levels. In contrast, discontinuous change occurs in distinct stages or steps. Each stage brings about behaviour that is assumed to be qualitatively different from behaviour at earlier stages.
- A **critical period** is a specific time during development when a particular event has its greatest consequences. Critical periods occur when the presence of certain kinds of environmental stimuli are necessary for development to proceed normally.
- **Lifespan approaches versus a focus on a particular period:** Developmentalists now believe the entire lifespan is important, for several reasons. One is the discovery that developmental growth and change continue during every part of life. Furthermore, to understand fully the

social influences on people of a given age, we need to understand the people who are in large measure providing those influences. For instance, to understand development in infants, we need to unravel the effects of their parents' ages on the social environment.

- **Nature versus Nurture:** One of the enduring questions of development involves how much of people's behaviour is due to their genetically-determined nature and how much is due to nurture, the physical and social environment in which a child is raised. In this context, **nature** refers to traits, abilities and capacities that are inherited from one's parents. Nature encompasses any factor that is produced by the predetermined unfolding of genetic information - a process known as maturation. These genetic, inherited influences are at work as we move from the one-celled organism that is created at the moment of conception to the billions of cells that make up a fully-formed human being. In contrast **nurture** refers to the environmental influences that shape behaviour. Some of these influences may be biological, such as the impact of a pregnant mother's substance abuse on the fetus, or the amount and kind of food available to children. Other environmental influences are more social, such as the ways parents discipline their children and the effects of peer pressure on adolescents.

### **How each of the six theoretical perspectives on human development explains adolescent development**

Lifespan development has produced a number of broad conceptual perspectives representing different approaches to development. Each broad perspective encompasses a number of theories, explanations and predictions concerning phenomena of interest. A theory provides a framework for understanding the relationships among an organized set of principles or facts. The six major theoretical perspectives include:



- **Psychodynamic Perspective: Focusing on the inner person.** Rooted in Freud's theory, the psychodynamic approach maintains that all behaviour and mental processes reflect the constant and mostly unconscious psychological struggles that rage silently within each person. Usually, these struggles involve conflict between the impulse to satisfy instincts or wishes and the need to play by the rules in society. Anxiety, depression and other disorders are outward signs of this inner turmoil.
- **The Behavioural Perspective: Considering the outer person.** As founded by John Watson, the behavioural approach views behaviour and mental processes as primarily the result of learning. Psychologists who take this approach see rewards and punishment acting on the raw materials provided by genes, evolution and biology to shape each individual. So, whether considering a person's aggression or drug abuse, behaviourists would look at that person's learning history. Since people learn problem behaviours, they can also learn to change or even prevent them by unlearning old habits and developing new ones.
- **The Cognitive Perspective: Examining the roots of understanding.** The cognitive perspective focuses on how people take in, mentally represent and store information. Cognitive psychologists then relate perception and information processing to patterns of behaviour. They study such areas as decision-making, problem-solving, interpersonal attraction and intelligence. Aggression, for instance, might be viewed as a result of poor problem solving.
- **The Humanistic Perspective: Concentrating on the unique qualities of human beings.** According to the humanistic approach, our capacity to choose how to think and act determines our behaviour. Each person's unique perceptions – not instincts, cognitive processes, or rewards and punishments – dictate the choices made. Humanistic psychologists believe that people are essentially good, that they are in control of themselves, and that they seek to grow toward their highest potential.

- **The Evolutionary Perspective: Focusing on biology as the determinant of development.**

Darwin's ideas on evolution and adaptation of species laid the foundation for the evolutionary approach. The evolutionary approach to psychology holds that the behaviour of animals and humans today is the result of evolution through natural selection. Psychologists who follow this approach are concerned with the adaptive value of behaviour, the anatomy and biology that make it possible and the environmental conditions that encourage or discourage it.

- **The socio-cultural Perspective: Emphasizing the systems of support. Calling** attention to

the external influences on human behaviour such as the physical surroundings and social interactions that provide incentives, opportunities and pathways for growth, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) began to emphasize the ecological approach to the study of human development. In Bronfenbrenner's application of this concept, human ecosystems include both the physical environment (the climate, the space per person, that arrangement of the dwelling) and the social environment (the people, the culture, the economy)

## LESSON FOUR CHILD DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

### **Sigmund Freud**

The theories proposed by Sigmund Freud stressed the importance of childhood events and experiences, but almost exclusively focused on mental disorders rather than normal functioning.

According to Freud, child development is described as a series of 'psychosexual stages.' In "Three Essays on Sexuality" (1915), Freud outlined these stages as oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital. Each stage involves the satisfaction of a libidinal desire and can later play a role in adult personality. If a child does not successfully complete a stage, Freud suggested that he or she would develop a fixation that would later influence adult personality and behavior. Learn more in this article on [Freud's stages of psychosexual development](#).

### **Erik Erikson**

Theorist Erik Erikson also proposed a stage theory of development, but his theory encompassed development throughout the entire human lifespan. Erikson believed that each stage of development was focused on overcoming a conflict. For example, the primary conflict during the adolescent period involves establishing a sense of personal identity. Success or failure in dealing with the conflicts at

each stage can impact overall functioning. During the adolescent stage, for example, failure to develop an identity results in role confusion. Learn more about this theory in this article on [Erikson's stages of psychosocial development](#).

### **Cognitive Child Development Theories**

Theorist Jean Piaget suggested that children think differently than adults and proposed a stage theory of cognitive development. He was the first to note that children play an active role in gaining knowledge of the world. According to his theory, children can be thought of as "little scientists" who actively construct their knowledge and understanding of the world. Learn more in this article on [Piaget's stages of cognitive development](#).

### **Behavioral Child Development Theories**

Behavioral theories of child development focus on how environmental interaction influences behavior and are based upon the theories of theorists such as John B. Watson, Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner.

These theories deal only with observable behaviors. Development is considered a reaction to rewards, punishments, stimuli and reinforcement. This theory differs considerably from other child development theories because it gives no consideration to internal thoughts or feelings. Instead, it focuses purely on how experience shapes who we are. Learn more about these behavioral theories in these articles on

classical conditioning and operant conditioning.

## **Social Child Development Theories**

### **John Bowlby**

There is a great deal of research on the social development of children. John Bowlby proposed one of the earliest theories of social development. Bowlby believed that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life.

Learn more in this [overview of attachment theory](#).

### **Albert Bandura**

Psychologist Albert Bandura proposed what is known as social learning theory. According to this theory of child development, children learn new behaviors from observing other people. Unlike behavioral theories, Bandura believed that external reinforcement was not the only way that people learned new things. Instead, intrinsic reinforcements such as a sense of pride, satisfaction and accomplishment could also lead to learning. By observing the actions of others, including parents and peers, children develop new skills and acquire new information.

## **Lev Vygotsky**

Another psychologist named Lev Vygotsky proposed a seminal learning theory that has gone on to become very influential, especially in the field of education. Like Piaget, Vygotsky believed that children learn actively and through hands-on experiences. His sociocultural theory also suggested that parents, caregivers, peers and the culture at large were responsible for the development of higher order functions.

## LESSON FOUR: ADULTHOOD

### Development in Early & Middle Adulthood

**Adulthood** has no signpost to announce its onset (as adolescence is announced by puberty). In technologically advanced nations, the life span is more than 70 years. Developmental psychologists usually consider early adulthood to cover approximately age 20 to age 40 and middle adulthood approximately 40 to 65.

**Early adulthood.** In **early adulthood**, an individual is concerned with developing the ability to share intimacy, seeking to form relationships and find intimate love. Long-term relationships are formed, and often marriage and children result. The young adult is also faced with career decisions.

- Choices concerning **marriage** and **family** are often made during this period. Research shows that divorce is more likely among people who marry during adolescence, those whose parents were divorced, and those who are dissimilar in age, intelligence, personality, or attractiveness. Separation is also more frequent among those who do not have children. Most people who have divorced remarry; consequently, children may experience more than one set of parents.
- Such alternatives to marriage as “living together” ( **cohabitation**) have become more common. In 1997, the Census Bureau estimated that 4.13 million unwed couples lived in the United States.
- **Work/career choice** affects not only socioeconomic status but also friends, political values, residence location, child care, job stress, and many other aspects of life. And while income is important in both career selection and career longevity, so are achievement, recognition, satisfaction, security, and challenge. In the modern cultures of many nations, the careers of both spouses or partners frequently must be considered in making job choices.

**Middle adulthood.** In **middle adulthood**, an important challenge is to develop a genuine concern for the welfare of future generations and to contribute to the world through family and work. Erik Erikson refers to the problem posed at this stage as **generativity vs. self-absorption**.

Robert Havighurst lists seven **major tasks** in the middle years.

- accepting and adjusting to physiological changes, such as menopause
- reaching and maintaining satisfaction in one's occupation
- adjusting to and possibly caring for aging parents
- helping teenage children to become responsible adults
- achieving adult social and civic responsibility
- relating to one's spouse as a person
- developing leisure-time activities

While a **midlife crisis** is not regarded as a universal phenomenon, during one's 40s and 50s comes the recognition that more than half of one's life is gone. That recognition may prompt some to feel that the clock is ticking and that they must make sudden, drastic changes in order to achieve their goals, while others focus on finding satisfaction with the present course of their lives.

### **Development in Late Adulthood**

**Late adulthood** (old age) is generally considered to begin at about age 65. Erik Erikson suggests that at this time it is important to find meaning and satisfaction in life rather than to become bitter and disillusioned, that is, to resolve the conflict of **integrity vs. despair**. It has been estimated that by the year 2030, Americans over 65 will make up 20% of the population. Despite the problems associated



with longevity, studies of people in their 70s have shown that growing old is not necessarily synonymous with substantial mental or physical deterioration. Many older people are happy and engaged in a variety of activities. **Gerontology**, an interdisciplinary field that studies the process of aging and the aging population, involves psychology, biology, sociology, and other fields.

**Theories of successful ageing.** Theories of successful aging include the following:

- The **disengagement theory** states that as people age, their withdrawal from society is normal and desirable as it relieves them of responsibilities and roles that have become difficult. This process also opens up opportunities for younger people; society benefits as more-energetic young people fill the vacated positions.
- The **activity theory** contends that activity is necessary to maintain a “life of quality,” that is, that one must “use it or lose it” no matter what one's age and that people who remain active in all respects—physically, mentally, and socially—adjust better to the aging process. Proponents of this theory believe that activities of earlier years should be maintained as long as possible.

**Ageism.** **Ageism** may be defined as the prejudice or discrimination that occurs on the basis of age.

Although it can be used against people of all ages, older people are most frequently its target and it may often result in forced retirement. Stereotyping of the elderly is also an aspect of ageism, as seen in such a statement as “He drives like a little old lady.”

**Physical changes.** People typically reach the peak of their physical strength and endurance during their twenties and then gradually decline. In later adulthood, a variety of physiological changes may occur, including some degree of atrophy of the brain and a decrease in the rate of neural processes. The respiratory and circulatory systems are less efficient, and changes in the gastrointestinal tract may lead to increased constipation. Bone mass diminishes, especially among women, leading to bone density disorders such as osteoporosis. Muscles become weaker unless exercise programs are followed. The

skin dries and becomes less flexible. Hair loss occurs in both sexes. There is also decreased sensitivity in all of the sensory modalities, including olfaction, taste, touch, hearing, and vision.

**Cognitive changes.** The study of cognitive changes in the older population is complex. Response speeds (neural and motor) have been reported to decline; some researchers believe that age-related decrease in working memory is the crucial factor underlying poorer performance by the elderly on cognitive tasks.

- **Intellectual changes** in late adulthood do not always result in reduction of ability. While **fluid intelligence** (the ability to see and to use patterns and relationships to solve problems) does decline in later years, **crystallized intelligence** (the ability to use accumulated information to solve problems and make decisions) has been shown to rise slightly over the entire life span. K. Warner Schaie and Sherry Willis reported that a decline in cognitive performance could be reversed in 40% to 60% of elderly people who were given remedial training.
- **Dementias** are usually responsible for cognitive defects seen in older people. These disorders, however, occur only in about 15% of people over 65. The leading cause of dementia in the United States is **Alzheimer's disease**, a progressive, eventually fatal disease that begins with confusion and memory lapses and ends with the loss of ability to care for oneself.

**Retirement.** Retirement at age 65 is the conventional choice for many people, although some work until much later. People have been found to be happier in retirement if they are not forced to retire before they are ready and if they have enough income to maintain an adequate living standard. Chronic health problems such as arthritis, rheumatism, and hypertension increasingly interfere with the quality of life of most individuals as they age.

**Widowhood.** Women tend to marry men older than they are and, on average, live 5 to 7 years longer than men. One study found ten times as many widows as widowers. Widowhood is particularly

stressful if the death of the spouse occurs early in life; close support of friends, particularly other widows, can be very helpful.

**Death and dying.** Death and dying has been studied extensively by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, who suggested that terminally ill patients display the following five basic reactions.

- **Denial**, an attempt to deny the reality and to isolate oneself from the event, is frequently the first reaction.
- **Anger** frequently follows, as the person envies the living and asks, “Why should I be the one to die?”
- **Bargaining** may occur; the person pleads to God or others for more time.
- As the end nears, recognition that death is inevitable and that separation from family will occur leads to feelings of exhaustion, futility, and deep **depression**.
- **Acceptance** often follows if death is not sudden, and the person finds peace with the inevitable.

People who are dying are sometimes placed in a **hospice**, a hospital for the terminally ill that attempts to maintain a good quality of life for the patient and the family during the final days. In a predictable pattern after a loved one's death, initial shock is followed by grief, followed by apathy and depression, which may continue for weeks. Support groups and counselling can help in successfully working through this process.

## **Darling's Spiritual Growth Paradigm**

Harold Darling (1969) has suggested a four-stage model of spiritual development based upon the stages of physical and emotional development. Just as individuals develop through Birth, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, likewise these terms may be used to describe Spiritual development.

Darling's first spiritual stage is "birth." The initial crisis in physical and social Development is when the newborn first sees the light of the outside World. Darling writes:

Life in Christ begins with a birth experience. This "new birth" is Attended by pain and suffering; it comes about by confession of our Sins, commitment of our total being to God, and faith that God Honors that commitment (pp. 142-143).

The Bible repeatedly describes conversion as birth. Christ's conversation with Nicodemus is perhaps the most vivid comparison of physical and spiritual birth (John 3). This analogy for conversion is also mentioned in John 1:13; Galatians 4:29; 1 Peter 1:23; and I John 2—5. The "born again" experience is a thoroughly biblical concept.

Human birth is preceded by a period of preparation in which the embryo and later the fetus develops through stages. Engel and Norton (1975) have suggested a process of development prior to spiritual birth in which God brings an individual to salvation. This development process includes:

1. awareness of a supreme being through general revelation;
2. initial awareness of the Gospel;
3. grasping the implications of the Gospel;
4. a positive attitude toward the Gospel;

5. personal problem recognition;
- 6, a decision to act;
7. repentance and faith in Christ,

Engel and Norton state that successful evangelism will stimulate movement through these stages until spiritual birth occur.

Subsequent to birth, one enters the stage of childhood. Says Darling:

The childhood stage of Christian living is characterized by growth, security, spontaneity, and conformity. We accept the teachings of authority (specifically parents and church) without questions. We are living in the “awe” stage of our relationship to God, and our obedience follows a rather easy, natural course (pp. 143-144).

Biblical analogies to such a spiritual stage are abundant. Jesus stated that one must become like a child to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 18:4). He also stated that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children (Mark 10:14). Christ compares His disciples to youngsters (Matthew 11:25). Likewise, Peter compared young Christians to children: “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2, NIV)

Eventually most Christians begin to outgrow spiritual childhood. Doubts and questioning begin to characterize a new stage of spiritual development—adolescence. Darling states:

We become vaguely discontented with the spiritual status quo... our Christian living is too ordinary; our God is too small...such an awareness produces a crisis: something must be done (p. 145).

Spiritual adolescence has been further explored as a necessary transition by Berry (1980).

Citing a number of case histories from his counseling practice, he emphasizes the commonness of such an experience. Often persons going through this turbulent period of spiritual growth will seek out a counselor or pastor to assist them. Berry suggests that these individuals should be instructed to see the present situation as a “Jordan-crossing” experience and to direct the counselee’s attention to Canaan on the other side (spiritual adulthood). In the process of this change the “narcissism of childhood” becomes less prominent.

Such a period of spiritual turbulence has often preceded vibrant ministries, both among those espousing Wesleyan theology and those who hold to Reformed doctrines. Edman (no date) describes such experiences in the lives of J. Hudson Taylor, Walter Wilson, D.L. Moody, Richard Halverson and others prior to being greatly used by God.

Borrowing heavily from psychodynamic theory, Darling suggests seven possible means of resolving the conflicts of spiritual adolescence. Six of the seven are spiritually dysfunctional, with the seventh being the key to spiritual adulthood. Spiritual “neurosis” is one means used to reduce the conflicts of this third stage; the individual becomes a “spiritual hypochondriac” in which there is abnormal concern about the spiritual condition? A second alternative is spiritual “psychosis” in which minor issues and doctrines are elevated, and a fanaticism develops which lacks depth and power.

A third possibility is re-enslavement in which the person is overcome with defeat and life becomes much like that which existed prior to salvation. A fourth path, is regression; returning to the narrow conformity of childish immaturity in which others are allowed to do the thinking.

Fixation can be a fifth way of attempting to resolve the crisis. This involves a perpetual adolescence with turmoil, and faultfinding a permanent way of life. Darling writes:

There is however, another alternative, and that is surrender. We embrace the way of faith, commitment, and abandonment; the Holy

Spirit takes control. We appropriate the power that has motivated the great souls of all the ages, enabling them to overcome their self-centeredness and unholy fear. . . . This is the life, we confidently assent, that Christ promised us in John 10:10, “I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly” (p. 146).

This surrender introduces a fourth stage, that of adult maturity. Again, a number of Scriptures describe maturity in contrast to earlier spiritual immaturity, using the human growth analogy. Elementary truths are considered to be milk for infants, while mature Christians are to eat “solid foods” (i.e., advanced teaching) as an adult would (Hebrews 5:13-14). Rather than students, as children would be, individuals become teachers as spiritual adults (Hebrews 5:12). Paul says, “Then we will no longer be infants . . . blown here and there by every wind of teaching. [but] instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him..,” (Ephesians 4:14-15, NIV).

Spiritual adulthood possesses at least some of the characteristics of self-actualization.

Oakland (1974) suggests that the Wesleyan view of sanctification may be equated with self actualization,

including Maslow’s peak experiences. Elsewhere in his book, Darling describes the abundant Christian life in terms not uncommon in actualization psychology: confident surrender, transparent spontaneity, adjusting tension, purposeful integration, and wholehearted affirmation.

During both childhood and adulthood, Darling suggests that there are “loops” in spiritual growth. These are periods of struggle, which include confrontation with “sins, glaring imperfections, moods, destructive tensions, and ever-present proneness to wander from the path of faith and obedience” (pp. 146-147). Rather than succumbing to these, however, the adult

practices confession, affirmation, and appropriation through prayer and acting upon the insight received. Such experiences are integral to the growth process, regardless of the spiritual stage. These spiritual loops are not unlike Bright's (1966) concept of spiritual breathing. Bright suggests that when a problem is found in one's life which is displeasing to God, one should first confess and repent (exhaling) and then surrender and appropriate (inhaling). Darling's spiritual "loops" also remind one of Wesley's account of growth prior to, and subsequent to, a second crisis experience.



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