

TABLE 1.1

Freud's Psychosexual Stages

PSYCHOSEXUAL STAGE	APPROXIMATE AGE	DESCRIPTION
Oral	Birth–1 year	The new ego directs the baby's sucking activities toward breast or bottle. If oral needs are not met appropriately, the individual may develop such habits as thumb sucking, fingernail biting, and pencil chewing in childhood and overeating and smoking later in life.
Anal	1–3 years	Young toddlers and preschoolers enjoy holding and releasing urine and feces. Toilet training becomes a major issue between parent and child. If parents insist that children be trained before they are ready or make too few demands, conflicts about anal control may appear in the form of extreme orderliness and cleanliness or messiness and disorder.
Phallic	3–6 years	Id impulses transfer to the genitals, and the child finds pleasure in genital stimulation. Freud's Oedipus conflict for boys and Electra conflict for girls arise, and young children feel a sexual desire for the other-sex parent. To avoid punishment, they give up this desire and, instead, adopt the same-sex parent's characteristics and values. As a result, the superego is formed. The relations between id, ego, and superego established at this time determine the individual's basic personality.
Latency	6–11 years	Sexual instincts die down, and the superego develops further. The child acquires new social values from adults outside the family and from play with same-sex peers.
Genital	Adolescence	Puberty causes the sexual impulses of the phallic stage to reappear. If development has been successful during earlier stages, it leads to mature sexuality, marriage, and the birth and rearing of children.

Between 3 and 6 years of age, the superego, or conscience, develops from interactions with parents, who insist that children conform to the values of society. Now the ego faces the increasingly complex task of reconciling the demands of the id, the external world, and conscience (Freud, 1923/1974). For example, when the ego is tempted to gratify an id impulse by hitting a playmate to get an attractive toy, the superego may warn that such behavior is wrong. The ego must decide which of the two forces (id or superego) will win this inner struggle, or it must work out a compromise, such as asking for a turn with the toy. According to Freud, the relations established between id, ego, and superego during the preschool years determine the individual's basic personality.

Psychosexual Development. Freud (1938/1973) believed that during childhood, sexual impulses shift their focus from the oral to the anal to the genital regions of the body. In each stage, parents walk a fine line between permitting too much or too little gratification of their child's basic needs. If parents strike an appropriate balance, then children grow into well-adjusted adults with the capacity for mature sexual behavior, investment in family life, and rearing of the next generation.

Freud's psychosexual theory highlighted the importance of family relationships and early experiences for children's development. But Freud's perspective was eventually criticized. First, the theory overemphasized the influence of sexual feelings in development. Second, because it was based on the problems of sexually repressed, well-to-do adults, it did not apply in cultures differing from nineteenth-century Victorian society. Finally, Freud had not studied children directly.

ERIKSON'S THEORY • Several of Freud's followers took what was useful from his theory and improved on his vision. The most important of these neo-Freudians is Erik Erikson (1902–1994).

Although Erikson (1950) accepted Freud's psychosexual framework, he expanded the picture of development at each stage. In his psychosocial theory, Erikson emphasized that the ego does not just mediate between id impulses and superego demands. It is also a positive force in development. At each stage, it acquires attitudes and skills that make the individual an active

In psychoanalytic theory, the ego redirects the id's impulses so the child's needs are satisfied in socially acceptable ways. Here a 3-year-old who wants to play with a puzzle and, instead, asks to help her classmate.



TABLE 1.2

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages, with Corresponding Psychosexual Stages Indicated

PSYCHOSEXUAL STAGE	PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT	DESCRIPTION
Basic trust versus mistrust (Oral)	Birth–1 year	From warm, responsive care, infants gain a sense of trust, or confidence, that the world is good. Mistrust occurs when infants have to wait too long for comfort and are handled harshly.
Autonomy versus shame and doubt (Anal)	1–3 years	Using new mental and motor skills, children want to choose and decide for themselves. Autonomy is fostered when parents permit reasonable free choice and do not force or shame the child.
Initiative versus guilt (Phallic)	3–6 years	Through make-believe play, children experiment with the kind of person they can become. Initiative—a sense of ambition and responsibility—develops when parents support their child's new sense of purpose. The danger is that parents will demand too much self-control, which leads to overcontrol, meaning too much guilt.
Industry versus inferiority (Latency)	6–11 years	At school, children develop the capacity to work and cooperate with others. Inferiority develops when negative experiences at home, at school, or with peers lead to feelings of incompetence.
Identity versus identity confusion (Genital)	Adolescence	The adolescent tries to answer the question, Who am I, and what is my place in society? Self-chosen values and goals lead to a lasting personal identity. The negative outcome is confusion about future adult roles.
Intimacy versus isolation	Emerging adulthood	As the quest for identity continues, young people also work on establishing intimate ties to others. Because of earlier disappointments, some individuals cannot form close relationships and remain isolated.
Generativity versus stagnation	Adulthood	Generativity means giving to the next generation through child rearing, caring for other people, or productive work. The person who fails in these ways feels an absence of meaningful accomplishment.
Integrity versus despair	Old age	In this final stage, individuals reflect on the kind of person they have been. Integrity results from feeling that life was worth living as it happened. Old people who are dissatisfied with their lives fear death.

contributing member of society. A basic psychological conflict, which is resolved along a continuum from positive to negative, determines whether healthy or maladaptive outcomes occur at each stage. As Table 1.2 shows, Erikson's first five stages parallel Freud's stages, but Erikson added three adult stages. He was one of the first to recognize the lifespan nature of development.

Finally, unlike Freud, Erikson pointed out that normal development must be understood in relation to each culture's life situation. For example, in the 1940s, he observed that Yurok Indians of the northwest coast of the United States deprived babies of breastfeeding for the first 10 days after birth and instead fed them a thin soup from a small shell. At age 6 months, infants were abruptly weaned—if necessary, by having the mother leave for a few days. These experiences, from our cultural vantage point, seem cruel. But Erikson explained that the Yurok lived in a world in which salmon fill the river just once a year, a circumstance that required the development of considerable self-restraint for survival. In this way, he showed that child rearing can be understood only by making reference to the competencies valued and needed by the child's society.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY • A special strength of the psychoanalytic perspective is its emphasis on the individual's unique life history as worthy of study and understanding (Emde, 1992). Consistent with this view, psychoanalytic



Erik Erikson



Social learning theory recognizes that children acquire many skills through modeling. By observing and imitating her mother's behavior, this Vietnamese preschooler is becoming a skilled user of chopsticks.

Several kinds of social learning theory emerged. The most influential, devised by Albert Bandura, emphasized *modeling*, otherwise known as *imitation* or *observational learning*, as a powerful source of development. Bandura (1977) recognized that children acquire many favorable and unfavorable responses by watching and listening to others around them. The baby who claps her hands after her mother does so, the child who angrily hits a playmate in the same way that he has been punished at home, and the teenager who wears the same clothes and hairstyle as her friends at school are all displaying observational learning.

Bandura's work continues to influence much research on children's social development. However, like the field of child development as a whole, today his theory stresses the importance of *cognition*, or thinking. Bandura has shown that children's ability to listen, remember, and abstract general rules from complex sets of observed behavior affects their imitation and learning. In fact, Bandura's (1992, 2001)

most recent revision of his theory places such strong emphasis on how children think about themselves and other people that he calls it a *social-cognitive* rather than a social learning approach.

According to this view, children gradually become more selective in what they imitate. From watching others engage in self-praise and self-blame and through feedback about the worth of their own actions, children develop *personal standards* for behavior and a *sense of self-efficacy*—the belief that their own abilities and characteristics will help them succeed. These cognitions guide responses in particular situations (Bandura, 1999, 2001). For example, imagine a parent who often remarks, "I'm glad I kept working on that task, even though it was hard," who explains the value of persistence, and who encourages it by saying, "I know you can do a good job on that homework!" Soon the child starts to view herself as hardworking and high achieving and selects people with these characteristics as models. In this way, as children acquire attitudes, values, and convictions about themselves, they control their own learning and behavior.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF BEHAVIORISM AND SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY • Behaviorism and social learning theory have had a major applied impact. Behavior modification consists of procedures that combine conditioning and modeling to eliminate undesirable behaviors and increase desirable responses. It has been used to relieve a wide range of serious developmental problems, such as persistent aggression, language delays, and extreme fears (Pierce & Epling, 1995; Wolpe & Plaud, 1997). But it is also effective in dealing with common, everyday difficulties, including poor time management; unwanted habits, such as nail biting and smoking; and anxiety over such recurrent events as test-taking, public speaking, and medical and dental treatments. In one study, preschoolers' anxious reactions during dental treatment were reduced by reinforcing them with small toys for answering questions about a story read to them while the dentist worked. Because the children could not listen to the story and kick and cry at the same time, their disruptive behaviors subsided (Stark et al., 1989).

Nevertheless, modeling and reinforcement do not provide a complete account of development. Many theorists believe that behaviorism and social learning theory offer too narrow a view of important environmental influences. These extend beyond immediate reinforcements and modeled behaviors to children's rich physical and social worlds. Finally, behaviorism and social learning theory have been criticized for underestimating children's contributions to their own development. However, in emphasizing cognition, Bandura is unique among theorists whose work grew out of the behaviorist tradition in granting children an active role in their own learning.

Piaget's Cognitive-Developmental Theory

If one individual has influenced the contemporary field of child development more than any other, it is Swiss cognitive theorist Jean Piaget (1896–1980). North American investigators had

theorists accept the *clinical method*, which synthesizes information from a variety of sources into a detailed picture of the personality of a single child. (We will discuss the clinical method further at the end of this chapter.) Psychoanalytic theory has also inspired a wealth of research on many aspects of emotional and social development, including infant-caregiver attachment, aggression, sibling relationships, child-rearing practices, morality, gender roles, and adolescent identity.

Despite its extensive contributions, the psychoanalytic perspective is no longer in the mainstream of child development research (Cairns, 1998). Psychoanalytic theorists may have become isolated from the rest of the field because they were so strongly committed to the clinical approach that they failed to consider other methods. In addition, many psychoanalytic ideas, such as psychosocial stages and ego functioning, are so vague that they are difficult or impossible to test empirically (Thomas, 2000; Westen & Gabbard, 1999). Nevertheless, Erikson's broad outline of psychosocial change captures the essence of personality development during childhood and adolescence. Consequently, we will return to it in later chapters.

Behaviorism and Social Learning Theory

As the psychoanalytic perspective gained prominence, child study was also influenced by a very different perspective. According to behaviorism, directly observable events—stimuli and responses—are the appropriate focus of study. American behaviorism began with the work of psychologist John Watson (1878–1958) in the early twentieth century. Watson wanted to create an objective science of psychology and rejected the psychoanalytic concern with the unseen workings of the mind (Horowitz, 1992).

TRADITIONAL BEHAVIORISM • Watson was inspired by Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov's studies of animal learning. Pavlov knew that dogs release saliva as an innate reflex when they are given food. But he noticed that his dogs were salivating before they tasted any food—when they saw the trainer who usually fed them. The dogs, Pavlov reasoned, must have learned to associate a neutral stimulus (the trainer) with another stimulus (food) that produces a reflexive response (salivation). As a result of this association, the neutral stimulus by itself could bring about a response resembling the reflex. Eager to test this idea, Pavlov successfully taught dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell by pairing it with the presentation of food. He had discovered *classical conditioning*.

Watson wanted to find out if classical conditioning could be applied to children's behavior. In a historic experiment, he taught Albert, an 11-month-old infant, to fear a neutral stimulus—a soft white rat—by presenting it several times with a sharp, loud sound, which naturally scared the baby. Little Albert, who at first had reached out eagerly to touch the furry rat, soon cried and turned his head away when he caught sight of it (Watson & Raynor, 1920). In fact, Albert's fear was so intense that researchers eventually challenged the ethics of studies like this one. Consistent with Locke's *tabula rasa*, Watson concluded that environment is the supreme force in development. Adults can mold children's behavior, he thought, by carefully controlling stimulus-response associations. And development is a continuous process, consisting of a gradual increase with age in the number and strength of these associations.

Another form of behaviorism was B. F. Skinner's (1904–1990) *operant conditioning theory*. According to Skinner, the frequency of a behavior can be increased by following it with a wide variety of *reinforcers*, such as food, praise, a friendly smile, or a new toy. It can also be decreased through *punishment*, such as disapproval or withdrawal of privileges. As a result of Skinner's work, operant conditioning became a broadly applied learning principle. We will consider these conditioning techniques further when we explore the infant's learning capacities in Chapter 5.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY • Psychologists quickly became interested in whether behaviorism might offer a more direct and effective explanation of the development of children's social behavior than the less precise concepts of psychoanalytic theory. This sparked the emergence of several approaches that built on the principles of conditioning, offering expanded views of how children and adults acquire new responses.

family members—"Eli," "Mama," and "Dada." As her second birthday approached, she pointed to photos of herself, exclaiming "Gwace!", and laid claim to treasured possessions. "Gwace's chicken!" she would announce at mealtimes, chewing the meat from the drumstick and then sucking out the marrow, a practice she brought with her from Cambodia.

Taken together, Caitlin's, Timmy's, and Grace's reactions reflect two related aspects of personality that develop during the first 2 years: close ties to others and a sense of self. Our discussion begins with Erikson's psychosocial theory, which provides an overview of personality development during infancy and toddlerhood. Then we chart the course of emotional development. As we do so, we will discover why fear and anger became more apparent in Caitlin's and Timmy's range of emotions by the end of the first year. Our attention then turns to individual differences in temperament. We will examine biological and environmental contributions to these differences and their consequences for future development.

Next, we take up attachment to the caregiver, the child's first affectionate tie. We will see how the feelings of security that grow out of this important bond support the child's exploration, sense of independence, and expanding social relationships.

Finally, we focus on early self-development. By the end of toddlerhood, Grace recognized herself in mirrors and photographs, labeled herself as a girl, and showed the beginnings of self-control. "Don't touch!" she instructed herself one day as she resisted the desire to pull a lamp cord out of its socket. Cognitive advances combine with social experiences to produce these changes during the second year.

Erikson's Theory of Infant and Toddler Personality

Our discussion of major theories in Chapter 1 revealed that psychoanalytic theory is no longer in the mainstream of child development research. But one of its lasting contributions is its ability to capture the essence of personality development during each phase of life. Recall that Sigmund Freud, founder of the psychoanalytic movement, believed that psychological health and maladjustment could be traced to the early years—in particular, to the quality of the child's relationships with parents. Although Freud's preoccupation with the channeling of biological drives and his neglect of important experiences beyond infancy and early childhood came to be heavily criticized, the basic outlines of his theory were accepted and elaborated in several subsequent theories of personality development. The leader of these neo-Freudian perspectives is Erik Erikson's *psychosocial theory*, also introduced in Chapter 1.

Basic Trust versus Mistrust

Freud called the first year the *oral stage* and regarded gratification of the infant's need for food and oral stimulation as vital. Erikson accepted Freud's emphasis on the importance of feeding, but he expanded and enriched Freud's view. A healthy outcome during infancy, Erikson believed, does not depend on the *amount* of food or oral stimulation offered but rather on the *quality* of the caregiver's behavior. A mother who supports her baby's development relieves discomfort promptly and sensitively. For example, she holds the infant gently during feedings, patiently waits until the baby has had enough milk, and weans when the infant shows less interest in the breast or bottle. Erikson recognized that no parent can be perfectly in tune with the baby's needs. Many factors affect parental responsiveness—feel-



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According to Erikson, basic trust grows out of the early caregiving relationship. A parent who relieves the baby's discomfort promptly and holds the baby tenderly promotes basic trust—the feeling that the world is good and gratifying. This mother and infant share the joy of tender closeness.



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This 2-year-old is intent on using a spoon to feed herself. Toddlers who are allowed to decide and do things for themselves in appropriate situations develop a sense of autonomy—the feeling that they can control their bodies and act competently on their own.

ings of personal happiness, momentary life conditions (for example, additional young children in the family), and culturally valued child-rearing practices. But when the *balance of care* is sympathetic and loving, then the psychological conflict of the first year—basic trust versus mistrust—is resolved on the positive side. The trusting infant expects the world to be good and gratifying, so he feels confident about venturing out and exploring it. The mistrustful baby cannot count on the kindness and compassion of others, so she protects herself by withdrawing from people and things around her.

Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt

In the second year, during Freud's *anal stage*, instinctual energies shift to the anal region of the body. Freud viewed toilet training, in which children must bring their impulses in line with social requirements, as crucial for personality development. (Return to Chapter 5, pages 192–193, to review how adults can best support toddlers' attainment of bladder and bowel control.)

Erikson agreed that the parent's manner of toilet training is essential for psychological health. But he regarded it as only one of many important experiences for newly walking, talking toddlers. Their familiar refrain—"No!" and "Do it myself!"—reveals that they have entered a period of budding selfhood. Toddlers want to decide for themselves—not just in toileting but in other situations as well. The great conflict of toddlerhood, autonomy versus shame and doubt, is resolved favorably when parents provide young children with suitable guidance and reasonable choices. A self-confident, secure 2-year-old has been encouraged not just to use the toilet but also to eat with a spoon and to help pick up his toys. His parents do not criticize or attack him when he fails at these new skills. And they meet his assertions of independence with tolerance and understanding. For example, they grant him an extra 5 minutes to finish his play before leaving for the grocery store and wait patiently while he tries to zip his jacket.

According to Erikson, the parent who is over- or undercontrolling in toileting is likely to be so in other aspects of the toddler's life. The outcome is a child who feels forced and ashamed and who doubts his ability to control his impulses and act competently on his own.

In sum, basic trust and autonomy grow out of warm, sensitive parenting and reasonable expectations for impulse control starting in the second year. If children emerge from the first few years without sufficient trust in caregivers and without a healthy sense of individuality, the seeds are sown for adjustment problems. Adults who have difficulty establishing intimate ties, who are overly dependent on a loved one, or who continually doubt their own ability to meet new challenges may not have fully mastered the tasks of trust and autonomy during infancy and toddlerhood.

Ask YOURSELF

APPLY

Derek's mother fed him in a warm and loving manner during the first year. But when he became a toddler, she kept him in a playpen for many hours because he got into too much mischief while exploring freely. Use Erikson's theory to evaluate Derek's early experiences.

CONNECT

Do Erikson's recommendations for fostering autonomy in toddlerhood fit with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, described on page 227 of Chapter 6? Explain.

Self-Understanding

During early childhood, new powers of representation permit children to reflect on themselves. Language enables them to talk about the *I-self*—their own subjective experience of being. In Chapter 9, we noted that preschoolers acquire a vocabulary for talking about their inner mental lives and refine their understanding of mental states. As the *I-self* becomes more firmly established, children focus more intently on the *me-self*—knowledge and evaluation of the self's characteristics (Harter, 2003). They develop a self-concept, the set of attributes, abilities, attitudes, and values that an individual believes defines who he or she is.

Foundations of Self-Concept

Ask a 3- to 5-year-old to tell you about him- or herself, and you are likely to hear something like this: "I'm Tommy. See, I got this new red T-shirt. I'm 4 years old. I can brush my teeth, and I can wash my hair all by myself. I have a new Tinkertoy set, and I made this big, big tower." As these statements indicate, preschoolers' self-concepts are very concrete. Usually they mention observable characteristics, such as their name, physical appearance, possessions, and everyday behaviors (Harter, 1998; Watson, 1990).

By age 3½, children also describe themselves in terms of typical emotions and attitudes, as in "I'm happy when I play with my friends" or "I don't like being with grown-ups." This suggests a beginning understanding of their unique psychological characteristics (Eder & Mangelsdorf, 1997). As further support for this budding grasp of personality, when given a trait label, such as "shy" or "mean," 4-year-olds infer appropriate motives and feelings. For example, they know that a shy person doesn't like to be with unfamiliar people (Heyman & Gelman, 1999). But preschoolers do not refer directly to traits, by making such statements as "I'm helpful" or "I'm shy." This capacity must wait for greater cognitive maturity.

In fact, very young preschoolers' concepts of themselves are so bound up with specific possessions and actions that they spend much time asserting their rights to objects, as Sammy did in the beanbag incident at the beginning of this chapter. The stronger children's self-definition, the more possessive they tend to be, claiming objects as "Mine!" (Fasig, 2000; Levine, 1983). Rather than a sign of selfishness, early struggles over objects seem to be a sign of developing selfhood, an effort to clarify boundaries between self and others.

A firmer sense of self also permits children to cooperate in resolving disputes over objects, playing games, and solving simple problems (Brownell & Carriger, 1990; Caplan et al., 1991). Accordingly, when trying to promote friendly peer interaction, parents and teachers can accept the young child's possessiveness as a sign of self-assertion ("Yes, that's your toy") and then encourage compromise ("but in a little while, would you give someone else a turn?"), rather than insisting on sharing.

Recall from Chapter 9 that adult-child conversations about the past contribute to the development of an autobiographical memory. Parents often use these discussions to impart evaluative information about the child, as when they say, "You were a big boy when you did that!" Consequently, these narratives serve as a rich source of early self-knowledge and, as the Cultural Influences box on page 360 reveals, as a major means to imbue the self-concept with cultural values. Furthermore, as children construct a life story, the self-concept becomes increasingly coherent. Gradually children come to view the self as a unique person embedded in a world of others and as existing continuously in time (Nelson, 2001).



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A firmer sense of self permits young children to cooperate in solving simple problems. These 3-year-olds work together to sweep up spilled sand in their preschool classroom.

The children's play highlighted their developing understanding of their social world. This was especially apparent in their attention to the dividing line between male and female. While Lynette and Karen cared for a sick baby doll in the housekeeping area, Sammy, Vance, and Mark transformed the block corner into a busy intersection. "Green light, go!" shouted police officer Sammy as Vance and Mark pushed large wooden cars and trucks across the floor. Already, the children preferred same-sex peers, and their play themes mirrored the gender stereotypes of their cultural community.

This chapter is devoted to the many facets of emotional and social development in early childhood. The theory of Erik Erikson provides an overview of personality change during the preschool years. Then we consider children's concepts of themselves, their insights into their social and moral worlds, their gender typing, and their increasing ability to manage their emotional and social behaviors. In the final sections of this chapter, we answer the question, What is effective child rearing? We also consider the complex conditions that support good parenting or lead it to break down, including the serious and widespread problems of child abuse and neglect.

Erikson's Theory: Initiative versus Guilt

These children of East India carry play bhujariyas—ceremonial wheat shoots that adults display in large processions during the Festival of Sawai, which celebrates the arrival of the monsoon rains that prepare the environment for dancing and growth. By acting out adult roles in their play, children acquire insight into their futures and develop a sense of initiative.

Erikson (1950) described early childhood as a period of "vigorous unfolding." Once children have a sense of autonomy and feel secure about separating from parents, they become more relaxed and less contrary than they were as toddlers. Their energies are freed for tackling the psychological conflict of the preschool years: initiative versus guilt. As the word *initiative* suggests, young children have a new sense of purposefulness. They are eager to tackle new tasks, join in activities with peers, and discover what they can do with the help of adults. And they also make strides in conscience development.

Erikson regarded play as a means through which young children find out about themselves and their social world. Play permits preschoolers to try new skills with little risk of criticism and failure. It also creates a small social organization of children who must cooperate to achieve common goals. Around the world, children act out family scenes and highly visible occupations—police officer, doctor, and nurse in Western societies, rabbit hunter and potter among the Hopi Indians, and hut builder and spear maker among the Baka of West Africa (Roopnarine et al., 1998).

Recall that Erikson's theory builds on Freud's psychosexual stages (see Chapter 1, pages 16–17, to review). In Freud's well-known Oedipus and Electra conflicts, to avoid punishment and maintain the affection of parents, children form a *superego*, or conscience, by identifying with the same-sex parent. As a result, they adopt the moral and gender-roles standards of their society. For Erikson, the negative outcome of early childhood is an overly strict superego, one that causes children to feel too much guilt because they have been threatened, criticized, and punished excessively by adults. When this happens, preschoolers' exuberant play and bold efforts to master new tasks break down.

Although Freud's Oedipus and Electra conflicts are no longer accepted as satisfactory explanations of conscience development, Erikson's image of initiative captures diverse changes in young children's emotional and social lives. The preschool years are, indeed, a time when children develop a confident self-image, more effective control over emotions, new social skills, the foundations of morality, and a clear sense of themselves as boy or girl. Now let's take a close look at each of these aspects of development.



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how, as children reason more effectively and spend more time in school and with peers, their views of themselves, others, and social relationships become more complex.

Although school-age children spend less time with parents than they did at earlier ages, the family remains powerfully influential. Joey and Lizzie are growing up in a home profoundly affected by social change. Rena, their mother, has been employed since her children were preschoolers. In addition, Joey's and Lizzie's lives have been disrupted by divorce. Although family lifestyles are more diverse than ever before, Joey's and Lizzie's experiences will help us appreciate that family functioning is far more important than family structure in ensuring children's well-being.

Finally, when stress is overwhelming and social support is lacking, school-age children experience serious adjustment difficulties. Our chapter concludes with some common emotional problems of middle childhood.

Erikson's Theory: Industry versus Inferiority

According to Erikson (1950), the personality changes of the school years build on Freud's *latency stage* (see Chapter 1, page 16). Although Freud's theory is no longer widely accepted, children whose experiences have been positive enter middle childhood with the calm confidence Freud intended by the term *latency*. Their energies are redirected from the make-believe of early childhood into realistic accomplishment.

Erikson believed that the combination of adult expectations and children's drive toward mastery sets the stage for the psychological conflict of middle childhood: industry versus inferiority, which is resolved positively when experiences lead children to develop a sense of competence at useful skills and tasks. In cultures everywhere, improved physical and cognitive capacities mean that adults impose new demands. Children, in turn, are ready to meet these challenges and benefit from them. Among the Baka hunters and gatherers of Cameroon, 5- to 7-year-olds fetch and carry water, bathe and mind younger siblings, and accompany adults on food-gathering missions. In a miniature village behind the main camp, children practice hut building, spear shaping, and fire making (Avis & Harris, 1991). The Ngoni of Malawi, Central Africa, believe that once children shed their first teeth, they are ready for intensive skill training. Six and 7-year-old boys move out of family huts into dormitories, where they enter a system of male domination and instruction. And all children of this age are expected to show independence and are held accountable for irresponsible and disrespectful behavior (Rogoff, 1996).

In industrialized nations, the transition to middle childhood is marked by the beginning of formal schooling. With it comes academic training, which prepares children for the vast array of specialized careers in complex societies. In school, children become aware of their own and others' unique capacities, learn the value of division of labor, and develop a sense of moral commitment and responsibility. The danger at this stage is *inferiority*, reflected in the sad pessimism of children who have little confidence in their ability to do things well. This sense of inadequacy can develop when family life has not prepared children for school life or when experiences with teachers and peers are so negative that they destroy children's feelings of competence and mastery.

Erikson's sense of industry combines several developments of middle childhood: a positive but realistic self-concept, pride in accomplishment, moral responsibility, and cooperative participation with age-mates. Let's see how these aspects of self and social relationships change over the school years.



The industriousness of middle childhood involves mastery of useful skills and tasks. As these second graders conduct an election, they become aware of one another's unique capacities and come to view themselves as responsible, capable, and helpful.

Self-Understanding

Several transformations in self-understanding take place in middle childhood. First, children can describe themselves in terms of psychological traits. Second, they start to compare their own characteristics to those of their peers. Finally, they speculate about the causes of their strengths and weaknesses. These ways of thinking about the self have a major impact on children's self-esteem.

Self-Concept

During the school years, children develop a much more refined *me-self*, or self-concept, organizing their observations of behaviors and internal states into general dispositions, with a major change taking place between ages 8 and 11. The following self-description from an 11-year-old reflects this change:

My name is A. I'm a human being. I'm a girl. I'm a truthful person. I'm not pretty. I do so-so in my studies. I'm a very good cellist. I'm a very good pianist. I'm a little bit tall for my age. I like several boys. I like several girls. I'm old-fashioned. I play tennis. I am a very good swimmer. I try to be helpful. I'm always ready to be friends with anybody. Mostly I'm good, but I lose my temper. I'm not well liked by some girls and boys. I don't know if I'm liked by boys or not. (Montemayor & Eisen, 1977, pp. 317-318)

Notice that instead of specific behaviors, this child emphasizes competencies, as in "I'm a very good cellist" (Damon & Hart, 1988). Also, she clearly describes her personality and mentions both positive and negative traits—"truthful" but "not pretty," a "good cellist [and] pianist" but "so-so in my studies." Older school-age children are far less likely than younger children to describe themselves in unrealistically positive, all-or-none ways (Harter, 2003).

Another change in self-concept takes place in middle childhood: Children make social comparisons, judging their appearance, abilities, and behavior in relation to those of others. In commenting on the spelling bee, Joey expressed some thoughts about how good he was compared with his peers—"better at spelling" but "not so good at social studies." Although 4- to 6-year-olds can compare their own performance to that of one peer, older children can compare multiple individuals, including themselves. Consequently, they conclude that they are "very good" at some things, "so-so" at others, and "not good" at still others (Butler, 1998).

Cognitive, Social, and Cultural Influences on Self-Concept

What factors are responsible for these revisions in self-concept? Cognitive development certainly affects the changing *structure* of the self. School-age children, as we saw in Chapter 12, can better coordinate several aspects of a situation when they reason about their physical world. Similarly, in the social realm, they combine typical experiences and behaviors into stable psychological dispositions, blend positive and negative characteristics, and compare their own characteristics with those of many peers (Harter, 1999, 2003). In middle childhood, children also gain a clearer understanding of traits as linked to specific desires (a "generous" person *wants* to share) and, therefore, as causes of behavior (Yuill & Pearson, 1998).

The changing *content* of self-concept is a product of both cognitive capacities and feedback from others. Sociologist George Herbert Mead (1934) described the self as a blend of what important people in our lives think of us. He proposed that a well-organized, psychological self emerges when the child's *I-self* adopts a view of the *me-self* that resembles others' attitudes toward the child. Mead's ideas indicate that *perspective-taking* skills—in particular, an improved ability to infer what other people are thinking—are crucial for developing a self-concept based on personality traits. During the school years, children become better at "reading" the messages they receive from others and incorporating these into their self-definitions. As school-age children