

Ch. 7: Physical Development in Early Childhood

10/08/2013

Ages 2-5 (early childhood) are sometimes called the “play” or “preschool” years.

- Early childhood is a period of transformation for all children

The Sensitive Period* - introduce things during this time

Physical Growth and Development

- Rapid growth of infancy slows down in early childhood.
- Noticeable changes are in proportions- torso, legs and arms grow longer, the stomach flattens

Patterns of Normative Growth

- **Normative Development:** the pattern of development that is typical or average
- **Norms-** standards of what is “typical” at different ages
 - o Average - how do we figure the average out for children? → lot of data and research
 - Growth curves - curve isn't smooth, each year varies
 - Created by research on a large number of children, says that growth is slow and steady during early childhoods
 - Average child grows 2.5 inches and 6 pounds each year
 - Episodic growth - like steps, not a curve, not predictable → gain weight then level off?
 - Brief periods of 24 hour growth is seen individual kids and then no growth occurs for a few weeks after
 - Charts that are given at the doctors = growth curve tables
- **Individual differences** in early childhood - the variation among individuals on a characteristic as well as what is typical
 - o Don't compare to your own children or other kids
 - Siblings that are significantly different sizes
 - o What does the 50th percentile mean?

- Means that you're average - 50% above him, 50% below
- 40% percentile - 40% below, 60% above
- could cause parents to worry sometimes, children grow differently each year
- its normal for a kid to lose weight

Health

- **Body Mass Index** - helps us judge whether a child's weight is appropriate for his or her height
- BMI shows whether child's weight is appropriate for height
 - o $\text{Weight/height}^2 = \text{BMI}$
 - o 80% of children are within normal range
 - o Lower or higher than at any other point?
 - o Who has more body fat?
 - Virtual Child BMI?
 - o BMI is widely accepted but not embraced by everyone
- A 6 year old should
 - o Wight 40-50 pounds
 - o Be 3.5 feet tall
 - o Look lean
 - o Adult like proportions → look like a mini adult
- 2/3 of height and weight are determined by heredity
 - o other 1/3 comes from diet, health and nutrition

Diet and Nutrition

- Two changes in eating patterns happen in Early Childhood
 - 1. Decrease in appetite → due to slowing down of growth
 - 2. Graduate from baby to adult food
- What has slowed down?
 - Growth
- Need less calories and are less hungry
 - Picky eaters- just right phase and food preference
 - 18-29% of children are picky eaters
 - eat less of a variety of foods, accept less new foods, and express strong dislikes
 - parents use many strategies to get kids to eat- unnecessary, small introductions of food without pressure leads to children eating it
 - “clean plate club” is associated with obesity - causes kids to not focus on the internal cues of hunger and fullness
 - how many kids? → 9 million, 17% of this are 2-5 years old - reached epidemic levels
 - what is “overweight” in kids? → need to consider both weight and body composition
 - 60% of children who were overweight at anytime were found to be over weight at age 12.
 - American children 2-19, the following are overweight/obese, using 95th percentile or higher of BMI
 - 3x since the 1960s
 - why? → prevalence of fast food
 - non Hispanic whites - 30.1% of males and 25.6% of females
 - non Hispanic blacks - 36.9% if males and 41.3% of females
 - Mexicans - 40.5% of males and 38.2% of females
 - Scary because adult illnesses like heart disease and diabetes are now found in young children