Ch. 7: Physical Development in Early Childhood

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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
  - 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 childhoos
      - 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 grown 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
  - Don't compare to your own children or other kids
    - Siblings that are significantly different sizes
  - 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
    - Weight/height^2 = BMI
    - 80% of children are within normal range
    - Lower or higher than at any other point?
    - Who has more body fat?
        - Virtual Child BMI?
    - BMI is widely accepted but not embraced by everyone
- A 6 year old should
    - Wight 40-50 pounds
    - Be 3.5 feet tall
    - Look lean
    - Adult like proportions → look like a mini adult
- 2/3 of height and weight are determined by heredity
    - 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 overwight/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