

Chapter 9: Socioemotional Development in Early Childhood

- Children become more themselves in early childhood
- They have their own ideas including gender ideas
- Socialization: the process of developing cultural values and rules for behavior
- Children begin spending more time with peers
- The Development of the Self
 - The self is both a cognitive construction that reflects the child's level of mental development as well as a social construction that reflects the child's interactions and experiences with other people, especially parents
 - Self-Conceptions and Self-Esteem
 - Self-conceptions: a cognitive construction that reflects the child's level of mental development and a social construction that reflects the child's interactions and experiences with other people
 - Self-esteem: a global assessment of self worth
 - Sets the tone for inner experiences and outward behavior
 - Young children's self conceptions are composed primarily of concrete, observable characteristics
 - Conceptions tend to be unrealistically positive
 - Young child's self image is a bit disjointed, with separate bits of information pasted together
 - Young children's self esteem reveals itself in behavior
 - High self esteem- confident, curious, independent
 - Low self esteem- lack confidence, curiosity, independence
 - Self esteem is not related to actual competence
 - Initiative Versus Guilt
 - Erik Erikson identified the development of children's feelings of initiative vs. guilt
 - The third stage in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development during which mastery of new skills becomes the primary goal
 - Physical and brain maturation enable the young child to attempt activities that were previously beyond their capabilities
 - Children with accepting and encouraging parents eagerly try new activities
 - Children with strict and critical parents easily give up and blame themselves for failure
 - Internal Working Models
 - A child's evaluation of his or her worth as a person, growing out of attachment relationships
 - Warm, sensitive, supportive parents lead to secure attachments
 - Also lead to a view of self who is worthy of love
 - Rejecting, interfering parents lead to insecure attachments
 - Model of self unworthy of love
 - Children's model of self can and do change
 - Family Stories
 - Construction of autobiographical memories is a collaborative process, with adults providing the scaffolding

- Memories anchor and enrich a child's self concept
- When parents ignore or dismiss children's expressions, the result can be an "impoverished self" with no grounding in the past and few hopes for the future
- Gender Development
 - Virtually all cultures expects males and females to differ in many ways, like appearance, mannerisms, temperament, dreams, and values
 - Gender Awareness, Identity, and Constancy
 - Gender awareness develops early
 - Before infants can walk and talk, they discriminate between males and females
 - Gender identity: a person's sense of self as male or female
 - Develops around age 2 ½
 - Gender constancy: the concept that gender is permanent and immutable
 - Small proportion (2-5%) of young children display gender identity disorders of childhood
 - Express strong wishes to be another sex
 - Behavioral Differences
 - By age 3, most boys and girls are moving in different directions toward gender typical, often stereotypical, behaviors
 - Boys and girls style of play also differ
 - Boys are more physically active, engage in more rough-and-tumble play; enjoy fantasy play with superheroes, play with trucks, Legos, action figures
 - Girls are more likely to play indoors, quietly; cooperative play; dress up, house
 - Sources of Gender Differences
 - Parents who don't adapt stereotypes themselves often find that their children pick up on gender stereotypes
 - Biological differences
 - Androgens: hormones that control the development of masculine characteristics, generally found in higher levels in males than females
 - Testosterone: an androgen secreted by the testicles or the ovaries
 - Hormones contribute to sexual differentiation of the brain and behavior
 - Congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH): a condition cause by fetal exposure to androgens early in pregnancy
 - In early childhood, girls with CAH prefer typically male toys
 - Sex differences may lie in "his" or "her" brains
 - At 5, boy's brains have more white matter in the cerebral cortex
 - Girls have greater neuron density and a relatively larger corpus callosum
 - Gender socialization
 - Mothers talk more to their daughters and provide more input when they are playing
 - Parents allow and expect boys to be more independent
 - Parents emphasize sharing with girls and competition with boys
 - Girls given more appeal to dancing and gymnastics; boys to sports

- Gender socialization: social norms conveyed to children that concern characteristics associated with being male or female
 - Interactions with peers contribute
 - Rough and tumble play: physically vigorous behaviors such as chasing, jumping, and play fighting that are accompanied by shared smiles and laughter
 - Gender schema
 - A mental network of beliefs and expectations about males versus females
 - Children first become aware of stereotypic differences in appearance, and then possessions, then behavior
 - Knowledge of activities typically associated with gender increase rapidly between ages 3 and 5
 - Tend to see deviations from gender stereotypes as “bad”
 - Gender stereotyping peaks between 5 and 6
 - Once children accept constancy, they can more easily accept that males and females can share traits and activities
- Emotional Development
 - Emotional development in early childhood is marked by advances in children’s awareness of their own and others’ emotional states and in children’s ability to regulate their emotional expressions
 - Understand Emotions
 - Between ages 2 and 3, children begin to label their and other people’s emotions
 - Begin to identify the object or target the feeling
 - Begin to develop a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the causes and consequences of emotion
 - Secondary/Self-conscious emotions: an emotion that involved evaluation of oneself; such as embarrassment, pride, guilt, and shame
 - Require an objective sense of self as distinct from others, awareness of standards for behavior, an evaluation of one’s own performance in terms of these standards, and a sense of responsibility for success or failure
 - Lewis and Ramsay identified two types of embarrassment
 - When a child is the object of positive attention
 - When a child fails a task
 - Individual Difference in Emotional Understanding
 - Emotional intelligence: the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and to use that information to guide thinking and action
 - Children who exhibit emotional intelligence are rated as more likeable by their peers
 - Some evidence indicated that girls are better than boys at reading emotions
 - Mothers spend more time talking with girls about emotions
 - Possible subtle differences in brain functioning
 - Family conversations play a key role in emotional socialization
 - Talking with parents also introduces children to cultural expectations
 - Regulating Emotions