

Typical Child and Adolescent Behavior: *When a Kid is Just Being a Kid*

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Historical Perspective

In the past, children were considered property and viewed as miniature adults

Historical Perspective

- 1855 - First Children's Hospital
- 1874 - Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children founded
- 1881 - Abolition of Child Labor becomes top priority
- 1912 - Federal Children's Bureau established



Historical Perspective

These events in our history mark the beginning of the American vision and goal to have children reach their optimal health and development



Increased Interest in Children

There has been a relatively recent interest in childhood and awareness that it is a distinct period of life



Increased Interest in Children

- better health (less infectious disease, etc.)
- improved perinatal conditions
- smaller families
- decrease in extended family support structure
- growing awareness of the impact of psychological factors on the future of children



Neuroscience of Childhood

Discoveries in neuroscience have also brought about a new view of child development



Neuroscience of Childhood

- Studies have shown that the brain grows and matures at an amazing rate throughout childhood
- Correlations of brain maturation and behavior



Factors Impacting Development

Human development is shaped by a dynamic and continuous interaction between biology and experience



Nature AND Nurture

The longstanding debate about Nature **versus** Nurture is obsolete

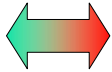
- they are no longer considered independent influences
- genetic and environmental influences work together in dynamic ways over the course of development



Nature AND Nurture

Child

Genetics
Temperament
Neurodevelopmental profile



Environment

Care-taking style
Home / community
Stresses



Nature - Temperament

The study of temperament has broadened our view of the range of differences between children



Temperament

- Temperament is a stable behavioral pattern reflecting the way an individual responds to the world and the quality of their dominant mood
- Temperament is the foundation for personality



Temperament

Temperament refers to the "HOW" of behavior

It differs from:

- ability (the "WHAT")
- quality (the "HOW WELL")
- motivation (the "WHY")



Dimensions of Temperament

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ Activity level | ■ Intensity of reaction |
| ■ Rhythmicity | ■ Distractibility |
| ■ Approach and withdrawal | ■ Threshold of responsiveness |
| ■ Adaptability | ■ Quality of mood |
| ■ Persistence | |
- (Chess and Thomas)*



Temperamental Constellations

Most infants can be classified into one of three broad categories of temperament:

- EASY
- DIFFICULT (HYPERSENSITIVE)
- SLOW TO WARM UP (QUIET)



Temperamental Constellations

EASY

- rhythmic, approaching, adaptable, relaxed
- happy and responsive much of the time
- capable of calming himself when he becomes overstimulated



Temperamental Constellations

DIFFICULT

- arrhythmic, withdrawing, low adaptability
- experiences every sensation with great intensity
- often overreacts and/or responds negatively to new situations which they then try to withdraw from



Temperamental Constellations

SLOW TO WARM UP

- tend to withdraw from new situations initially and then require some time to adapt to a change
- may be less demanding and may also be less responsive to parental attention
- often learns about the world by observation rather than interaction



Temperament

- There is evidence of the interplay of biology and environment to shape the expression of temperament through the life span
- Temperamental characteristics influence all aspects of development and behavior



Childhood Development

- Children experience *dynamic* changes throughout childhood and adolescence
- The most dramatic period of growth in an individual's life occurs during early childhood



Childhood Development

- Physical Development / Growth
- Gross and Fine Motor Skills
- Cognitive Skills
- Language Development
- Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Development



Infancy

Neonatal period:

- transition time

Three – Six months:

- improved state organization and increased social interaction/play

Six – Twelve months:

- significant motor development
- exploration and discovery



Toddlers

One Year:

- gross motor development – WALKING
- asserting independence and pushing the limits

Two Years:

- period of significant language development
- beginning of symbolic function – one thing stands for another



Preschoolers – “Play is their work”

Three Years:

- imagination
- social and emotional growth

Four Years:

- development of self-concept
- gender identity
- beginning of moral development



Early Elementary School

Five Years:

- transition to school
- socialization and separation

Six – Seven Years:


- reading
- relationships
- rules



Middle Childhood

Seven – Ten Years:


- robust physical health and development
- mastery of cognitive/academic skills
- activities and friendships
- self-awareness and control over new feelings deepen and evolve
- conflicts about psychological separation and control



Early Adolescence

Eleven – Thirteen Years:


- physical development – onset of puberty
- sexual awareness and heightened body awareness
- emergence of greater independence from family
- express individuality
- group identification with same-gender peers who share similar interests and spend much time together



Mid-Adolescence

Fourteen – Sixteen Years:

- peer groups expand from unisexual groups to mixed boys and girls – dating may begin
- sexual experimentation begins
- development of “introspection” – can reflect on their own thought processes – *self-centeredness*
- refinement of self-image – spend time, money, and energy on their appearance




Mid-Adolescence

Fourteen – Sixteen Years:

- high risk-taking behavior
- limit setting versus power struggle


Limit setting refers to rules and regulations concerning behaviors; power struggle occurs when authority itself is challenged



Late Adolescence

Seventeen years or older:

- final stage of transition from childhood to adulthood
- realistic awareness of “who I am” – beginning of lifelong evolving process
- critical life transitions to college or employment
- development of intimate interpersonal relationships



When a Kid is Just Being a Kid

“All the population, everybody at every age, were all at one time children. And they bring to their maturity and old age the strength and scars of an entire lifetime.”

Pauline Stitt
