ESSENTIALS OF LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

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SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN MIDDLE AND LATE CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Emotional and personality development
- Families
- Peers
- Schools

THE SELF

- Self-understanding
  - During middle and late childhood:
    - Describe themselves in terms of psychological characteristics and traits
    - Recognize social aspects of the self
    - Social comparison increases
- Understanding others
  - **Perspective taking**: Assuming the perspectives of others and understanding their thoughts and feelings

THE SELF

- Self-esteem and self-concept
  - **Self-esteem**: Global evaluations of the self
  - **Self-concept**: Domain-specific evaluations of the self
- Self-esteem does not always reflect reality
  - Consequences of low self-esteem
  - Children with high self-esteem
    - Do not necessarily perform better in school
    - Have greater initiative (positive or negative)

THE SELF

- Increasing children's self-esteem
  - Identify causes of low self-esteem
  - Provide emotional support and social approval
  - Help children achieve
  - Help children cope

THE SELF

- **Self-efficacy**: Belief that one can master a situation and produce favorable outcomes
  - Critical factor in students' achievement
- Self-regulation
  - Deliberate efforts to manage one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts:
    - Leads to increased social competence and achievement
    - Increased capacity for self-regulation

THE SELF

- Industry versus inferiority
  - Industry - Children become interested in how things work
  - Inferiority - Parents who see their children's efforts as mischief may encourage inferiority

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Developmental changes
  - Improved emotional understanding
  - Increased understanding that more than one emotion can be experienced in a particular situation
  - Increased awareness of the events leading to emotional reactions
  - Ability to suppress or conceal negative emotional reactions
  - Use of self-initiated strategies for redirecting feelings
  - Capacity for genuine empathy

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Coping with stress
  - Older children generate more coping alternatives to stressful situations
  - Outcomes for children who experience disasters
    - Acute stress reactions
    - Depression
    - Panic disorder
    - Post-traumatic stress disorder

FIGURE 8.1 - KOHLBERG'S THREE LEVELS AND SIX STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL 1

Preconventional Level

Stage 1
Heteronomous Morality

Children obey because adults tell them to obey. People base their moral decisions on fear of punishment.

Stage 2
Individualism, Instrumental purpose, and Exchange

Individuals pursue their own interests but let others do the same. What is right involves equal exchange.

LEVEL 2

Conventional Level

Stage 3
Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Interpersonal Conformity

Individuals value trust, caring, and loyalty to others as a basis for moral judgments.

Stage 4
Social System Morality

Moral judgments are based on understanding of the social order, law, justice, and duty.

LEVEL 3

Postconventional Level

Stage 5
Social Contract or Utility and Individual Rights

Individuals reason that values, rights, and principles undergird or transcend the law.

Stage 6
Universal Ethical Principles

The person has developed moral judgments that are based on universal human rights. When faced with a dilemma between law and conscience, a personal, individualized conscience is followed.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

- Influences on Kohlberg's stages
  - Cognitive development
  - Experiences dealing with moral questions/conflicts
  - Peer interaction and perspective-taking

- Kohlberg's critics
  - Moral thought and behavior
    - Too much emphasis on thought, not enough emphasis on behavior
  - Culture and moral reasoning
    - Theory is culturally biased
  - Families and moral development
    - Kohlberg underestimated

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

- Gender and care perspective
  - **Justice perspective**: Focuses on the rights of the individual and says that individuals independently make moral decisions
  - **Care perspective**: Views people in terms of their connectedness with others
    - Emphasizes interpersonal communication, relationships and concern for others
    - Kohlberg underplayed the care perspective in his theory

EMOTIONAL AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Domain theory of moral development**: Different domains of social knowledge and reasoning
  - Moral, social conventional, and personal domains
- **Social conventional reasoning**: Focuses on conventional rules that have been established by social consensus to:
  - Control behavior and maintain the social system
- Prosocial behavior
  - Behavioral aspects of moral development

EMOTIONAL AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

- Gender
  - **Gender stereotypes**: Broad categories that reflect general impressions and beliefs about males and females
  - Gender similarities and differences
    - Physical development
    - Cognitive development and achievement
    - Socioemotional development
  - Gender in context
    - The extent of gender differences depends on the context
    - Traits displayed may vary with the situation

FAMILIES

- Developmental changes in parent-child relationships
  - Spend less time with children during middle and late childhood
  - Support and stimulate children's academic achievement
  - Use less physical forms of punishment as children age
  - *Co-regulation* - Some control is transferred from parent to child

FAMILIES

- Parents as managers
  - Manage children's opportunities, monitor behavior, social initiators and arrangers
  - Important to maintain a structured and organized family environment
    - Established routines for homework, chores, bedtime
    - Effectively managing child's behavior
- Attachment
  - Parent-child attachment continues to be important
  - Social world expands to include peers, teachers, and others

FAMILIES

- Stepfamilies
  - Remarriages involving children has grown in recent years
  - Unique tasks faced in remarriages
    - Define and strengthen marriage
    - Renegotiate biological parent-child relationships
    - Establish stepparent-stepchild and stepsibling relationships
  - Types of stepfamily structure
    - Stepfather
    - Stepmother
    - Blended or complex

PEERS

- Developmental changes
  - Reciprocity becomes important in peer interchanges
  - Size of peer group increases
  - Peer interaction is less closely supervised by adults
 - Children's preference for same-sex peer groups

PEERS

- Peer status
  - **Popular children**: Frequently nominated as a best friend, rarely disliked by their peers
  - **Average children**: Receive an average number of both positive and negative nominations from peers
  - **Neglected children**: Infrequently nominated as a best friend, not disliked by their peers
  - **Rejected children**: Infrequently nominated as a best friend, actively disliked by their peers
  - **Controversial children**: Frequently nominated both as a best friend and as being disliked by their peers

PEERS

- Bullying
    - Verbal or physical behavior intended to disturb someone less powerful
    - Boys and younger middle school students are most likely to be affected
        - Anxious, socially withdrawn, and aggressive children often victims of bullying
    - Outcomes of bullying
        - Depression, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide
    - Increasing concern for *cyberbullying*

FIGURE 8.3 - BULLYING BEHAVIORS AMONG U.S. YOUTH
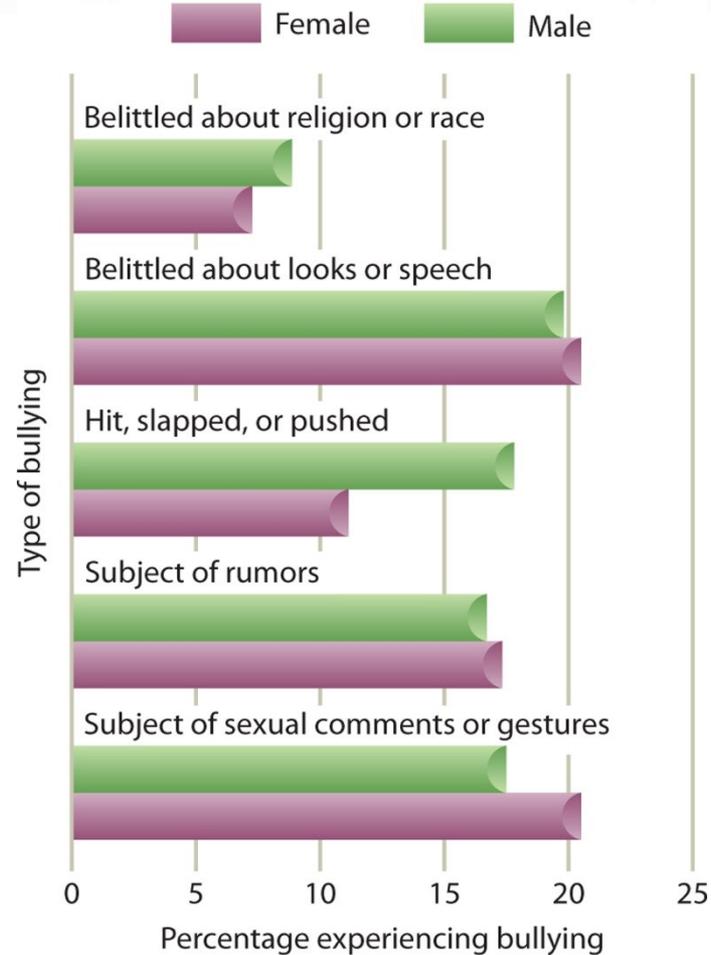
PEERS

- Friends
  - Typically characterized by similarity
  - Cognitive and emotional resources, foster self-esteem, sense of well-being
  - Serve six functions:
    - Companionship
    - Stimulation
    - Physical support
    - Ego support
    - Social comparison
    - Affection and intimacy

SCHOOLS

- Contemporary approaches to student learning
  - **Constructivist approach**: Learner-centered approach that emphasizes:
    - Importance of actively constructing knowledge and understanding
    - Teacher offers guidance
  - **Direct instruction approach**: Structured, teacher-centered approach
    - Characterized by teacher direction and control
    - Maximizing student learning time
  - Accountability
    - No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (2002)
    - Common Core State Standards Initiative (2009)

SCHOOLS

- Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and culture
  - Low-income, ethnic minority students have more difficulties in school
  - U.S. students have lower achievement in math and science than a number of other countries
    - Especially those in eastern Asia
- Education of students from low-income backgrounds
  - More barriers to learning
  - Most low-SES area schools tend to have:
    - Lower test scores, lower graduation rates, and lower college-attendance rates
    - Young teachers with less experience
    - Fewer resources

SCHOOLS

- Ethnicity in schools
  - Strategies for improving relationships among ethnically diverse students
    - Turn the class into a jigsaw classroom
    - Encourage students to have positive personal contact with diverse other students
    - Reduce bias
    - Be a competent cultural mediator
    - View the school and community as a team

SCHOOLS

- Cross-cultural comparisons of achievement
  - Poor performance of American children in math and science
  - Gap between American and Asian students becomes wider year after year
  - Asian teachers spend more of their time teaching math than American teachers
  - American parents have lower expectations for children's education and achievement than Asian parents
- **Mindset**: Cognitive view individuals develop for themselves
  - *Fixed mindset* – belief that qualities are carved in stone, cannot change
  - *Growth mindset* – belief that qualities can change and improve through effort

FIGURE 8.4 - MOTHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN'S MATH ACHIEVEMENT IN THREE COUNTRIES