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Human Growth & Development

27 January 2023

Unit 2 Essays

Required Question

Early Childhood is often characterized by physical growth and change that can be seen by the naked eye, but it's important to note that unseen changes that occur in the brain and nervous system are significant as they start to prepare the child for cognition and language development. During early childhood as stated in the textbook, the average child grows 2 1/2 inches and gains anywhere from 5-7 pounds. During these years children slim down as the trunk of the body starts to lengthen, during this stage the head is still somewhat large for the body but should lose that appearance towards the end of early childhood. Growth pattern does vary from child to child and this is due to contributing factors such as ethnic origin and nutrition. The brain and nervous system also start to increase in maturation during early childhood. Early childhood is when children start to become more aware of the world around them; it enables them to plan actions, attend to stimuli, and make more developments in the language. Furthermore, it was discovered that local brain patterns dramatically change during early childhood; also myelination continues and dendrites increase. In regards to Gross/Fine motor skills

children in this stage can move around with more confidence, and pick up objects more precisely.

Chapter 5 Q2.

Myelination can be described as the process by which axons (nerve fibers) are coated with fatty cells that increase the speed and efficiency of knowledge moving through the nervous system. Myelin is produced by two cells in the central nervous system, which are: oligodendrocytes (the brain and spinal cord cells) and Schwann Cells (glial cells). Myelin is rich in lipids and surrounds axons to insulate them and increase electrical impulses, the Myelin Sheath is composed of 70 percent of essential fatty acids. The existence of Myelin was not discovered until the mid 19th century and was discovered by German pathologist Rudolf Virchow who came up with the name Mylien which stems from the Greek word myelos (meaning marrow or core). Myelination is important in the development of physical and mental abilities; as it aids in performing actions like hand-eye- coordination, higher-level thinking skills, and other cognitive abilities; the development of most of these skills is not complete until late childhood/ adolescence. In one study highlighted in the textbook, showed that young children with higher performance in cognitive ability showed an increase in myelination by the age of 3 years old. The development of the brain and myelination process is extremely important; because researchers have found that poverty and parenting performance is tied to brain development; this is due to contributing factors of maturational lags in the frontal and temporal lobe.

Chapter 5 Q8.

Zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a part of Vygotsky's theory; which focuses on the social contexts of learning, and the building blocks of knowledge being developed through social situations. Zone of proximal development describes tasks that are difficult for a child to complete alone but can be learned and achieved through teaching adults or children more skilled at those certain tasks. Two limits can define the Zone of proximal development; those being the upper and lower limits. The lower limit can be described as the level of skill a child is able to display without the help or assistance of others. The upper limit is the additional skills gained and able to display with the assistance of an instructor. The Zone of proximal development exhibits a child's cognitive skills that are developing, and assistance from adults allows the child to hone those skills and become more advanced. Vygotsky describes the skills that cannot be accomplished independently as "buds" or "flowers" of development and describes skills that can be achieved independently as "fruits" of development. It should be noted that the effectiveness of ZPD can be affected by factors such as better emotion regulation, secure attachment, and child compliance. Upon further advancements in ZPD scaffolding is introduced to make adjustments on adult support as the child starts to advance more in learning skills. Scaffolding can be described as changing the level of support, for example, if a child is advancing in a certain skill the supervisor/adult may provide less guidance regarding that certain skill and or task.

Chapter 5 Q11.

Memory can be described as the process of retaining information/memories over time; which is very important for children's cognitive development. Most memories in early childhood are fragile and often aren't recalled in the later stages of development. In order to distinguish between short-term memory and long-term memory; implicit memory and explicit memory have to be defined first. Implicit memory can be defined as unconscious memory that can affect thought processes and behaviors; some examples of implicit memory consist of: being able to recall the words to a song after only hearing a few words, riding a bike, performing simple cooking tasks, and even buttoning a shirt. Explicit memory can be described as conscious thought, such as recalling information, and internal recollection of past experiences and information. Some examples of Explicit memory consist of remembering the birthdates of family members, names and locations of important addresses, and historical events. Short-term memory can be defined as holding and recalling small information over short time intervals; the average limitation of short-term memory has been discovered to be 18 seconds. Some examples of short-term memory include: remembering a certain passcode to unlock something and remembering a phone number quickly given to you. Recent research has suggested that short-term memory increases during early childhood. It's also important to note that memory span varies with age. It's critical to children's cognitive development that the rehearsal of information is practiced.

Chapter 6 Q21.

Parenting plays an important role in child development and the formation of a child's behavior; which can influence the child's temperament. Diana Baumrind discovered that there are four types of parenting styles: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Neglectful, and Indulgent parenting. Authoritative parenting can be defined as encouraging children to be independent while placing boundaries and controls on their actions. There is a give-and-take relationship at play in authoritative parenting, and parents exhibit warm nurturing behavior toward their children. Authoritative parents support their children's behavior, but also expect their children to be independent and well-behaved. Children raised under this parenting style tend to: maintain healthy friendships/relationships, and engage in more personal behavior. Neglectful parenting can be described as having as little involvement in the child's life as possible and having little regard for the raising and development of the child. Children under this parenting style develop a sense that they are not important; this can lead to children becoming socially incompetent. Many children raised under this parenting style exhibit traits like low self-esteem, no-self control, and show signs of immaturity. In regards to the Authoritarian parenting style it can be defined as a restricting parenting style; where the children are expected to follow directions and respect their authority; in this style, firm limits are placed on the child with little leeway. Children of this style often have communication issues and are fearful, and anxious. This last parenting style to be discussed is Indulgent parenting which can be

categorized as: parents being highly involved with their children, and placing very few rules on them; essentially letting them be free to do as they please. Children of this style have a hard time developing respect for others and have a hard time controlling their behavior.

Chapter 6 Q.17

At the beginning of early childhood, children begin to develop self-recognition skills and grasp the tools necessary for self-understanding. This is a result of advances in socio-emotional development, and the ever-growing mind at this stage of life. Regarding Erik Erikson's eight developmental stages of life; he depicts that early childhood is when the child has clearly developed self-understanding. Self-understanding can be defined as the representation of self, the materials of self-conceptions. Early-self understanding encompasses self-recognition. In this stage of early childhood; children can set themselves apart from their peers by describing and identifying characteristics that set them apart from their peers or people around them. For example, children in early childhood are able to identify characteristics such as size, shape, and color. Physical activities also contribute to self-awareness/ understanding; because children can describe themselves concerning playing and other activities. In the early stages of childhood, children are only able to describe themselves with observable features and activities, but as they advance to later stages of early childhood (around age 4 or 5) they are able to use psychological and emotional traits as they hear and see others around them starting to use

them. For example, a five-year-old may describe him/herself as being happy, smart, and nice.

Chapter 6 Q26.

Play can be defined as an activity usually engaged in by children for enjoyment and recreation.

Play is fundamental to a child's development and aids in several functions. Theorists like Freud and Erikson have theorized that play helps children navigate anxiety and conflict. Play is also beneficial in the therapy setting, as therapists use play therapy to analyze a child's conflict and coping mechanisms. Play also plays a big role in cognitive development; as play allows children to display their knowledge and skills in a pleasurable environment. The act of play aids in the child's curiosity and hunger for discovery which is all important in development. It should be noted that there are six different types of play, those being: Sensorimotor play, Practice play, Pretense/ Symbolic play, Social play, Constructive Play, and Games. Sensorimotor play can be described as behavior that exercises sensorimotor schemes, this allows the child to engage in exploration by using responsive objects; like toys that make a certain sound. Practice play is the repeated behavior of learning new skills required for a game or sport. Pretense/symbolic play is when a child uses their imagination to transform an object or environment into another action or object; for example, using a stick as a horse. Pretense/symbolic play shows advances in cognitive development and symbolic understanding. Social play involves engaging in activities with peers or social

interactions. Constructive play combines the components of sensorimotor and symbolic representation; this involves a child creating a product or solution. Games are activities engaged in for pleasure but possess rules; for example tag and red light green light.

Chapter 6 Q.23

Birth order is defined as the order a child is born in their family. Birth order has been found by researchers to have an impact on psychological development. Researchers are divided on birth order's influence on behavior. It has been discovered that children with younger and older siblings have been linked to the development of certain personality traits. One research study concluded that firstborn children have the characteristics of being knowledgeable and driven; while later-born children have the characteristics of being rebellious and agreeable. Differences in birth order can be affected by interactions with parents. For example, when raising a firstborn a parent might be more cautious, strict, and attentive when caring for the firstborn during infant years and early childhood. Upon the raising of a later-born child that same parent, may be less cautious, and restricting, and may take a laid-back approach to care for the later-born child during the infant and early childhood. This may result in the different personalities of the children and expectations of the children. For example, the first-born may be expected to assume more responsibilities and consequences in the household; while the later-born has more freedom regarding their behavior which can contribute to the formation of those certain personality archetypes like being laid back and rebellious vs knowledgeable and driven; although this is just one difference in birth order, majority of the differences can vary depending on environment, culture, and parenting. In fact, researchers have stressed the

fact that when all factors that influence behavior are considered, birth order has very little accuracy regarding the prediction of behavior.

Works Cited

Santrock, John W. *Essentials of Life-Span Development*. McGraw-Hill Education, 2022.