Development Through the Lifespan

Chapter 10

Emotional and Social Development in Middle Childhood

Erikson's Theory:
Industry versus Inferiority

Industry

Developing a sense of competence at useful skills

School provides many opportunities

Inferiority
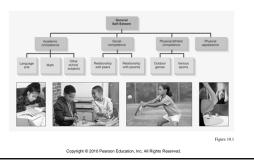
Pessimism and lack of confidence in own ability to do things well

Family environment, teachers, and peers can contribute to negative feelings

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Changes in Self-Concept During Middle Childhood

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More balanced, less all-or-none descriptions

Social comparisons

Ideal and real self

Reference social groups

Cultural variations

Hierarchical Structure of Self-Esteem in Middle Childhood

Figure 10.1

Influences on Self-Esteem

Culture

Child-rearing practices

Attributions
- mastery-oriented
- learned helplessness

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Role of Parenting in Self-Esteem

Authoritative style best

American cultural values focus on self
- can lead to overindulgence
- paradox: less achievement behaviors, more antisocial behaviors

Encourage goal-setting to boost self-esteem

Achievement-Related Attributions

	Reason for Success	Reason for Failure
Mastery	Ability	Controllable factors ▪ Can be change by working hard
Learned helplessness	External factors	Ability ▪ CANNOT be changed by working hard

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Influences on Achievement-Related Attributions

Parents
- too-high standards
- believe child incapable
- trait statements

Teachers
- learning vs. performance goals

Gender influences

SES, ethnicity

Cultural values

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Emotional Development in Middle Childhood

Self-conscious emotions more governed by personal responsibility
- pride and guilt

Emotional understanding
- explain emotion using internal states
- understand mixed emotions
- rise in empathy
- supported by cognitive development and social experience

Emotional self-regulation
- motivated by self-esteem and peer approval
- emotional self-efficacy

Coping Strategies

Problem-Centered Coping

Situation is seen as changeable

Difficulty is identified

Decision made on what to do

Emotion-Centered Coping

Used if problem-centered coping does not work

Internal, private, and aimed at controlling distress when little can be done about outcome

Goal is emotional self-efficacy

Selman's Stages of Perspective Taking

Level 0	Undifferentiated	3–6 years
Level 1	Social-informational	4–9 years
Level 2	Self-reflective	7–12 years
Level 3	Third-party	10–15 years
Level 4	Societal	14 years to adult

Changes in Moral Views

Flexible moral rules
- lying not always bad
- truth not always good

Clarify link between moral imperative and social convention
- more respect for conventions with purpose
- consider intentions

Understanding
Individual Rights

Challenge adult authority within personal domain

View denials of personal choices as wrong

However, place limits on individual choice
- typically decide in favor of kindness and fairness

Understanding
Diversity and Inequality

School-age children
- associate power, privilege with white people
- assign stereotyped traits to minorities

With age, reduce prejudice
- consider inner traits

Individual differences based on
- fixed view of personality traits
- overly high self-esteem
- social world in which people are sorted into groups

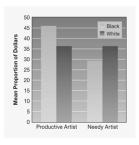## Reducing Prejudice

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Long-term intergroup contact
- neighborhoods
- schools
- communities

Foster belief in changeability of human traits

Volunteering

Racial Bias Demonstrated by Fourth-Graders

Figure 10.2

Peer Groups

Formed from proximity, similarity

Peer culture

- behavior, vocabulary, dress code
- can include relational aggression and exclusion

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Friendship in Middle Childhood

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Personal qualities, trust become important

More selective in choosing friends

- choose friends similar to self

Friendships can last several years

- must learn to resolve disputes

Type of friends influences development

- aggressive friends often magnify antisocial acts

Peer Acceptance

Popular	▪ popular-prosocial ▪ popular-antisocial
Rejected	▪ rejected-aggressive ▪ rejected-withdrawn
Controversial	
Neglected	

Bullies and Victims

Bullies

Most are boys

Physically, relationally aggressive

High-status, powerful

Popular
- most eventually become disliked

Victims

Passive when active behavior expected

Give in to demands

Lack defenders

Inhibited temperament

Physically frail

Overprotected, controlled by parents

Helping Rejected Children

Positive social skills
- coaching
- modeling
- reinforcing

Improve academic achievement

Intervene with harsh parenting practices
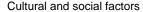

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Gender Typing in Middle Childhood

Gender stereotypes
- extend stereotypes to include personalities and school subjects
- more flexible about what males and females *can actually do*

Gender identity (3rd–4th grade)
- boys strengthen identification with "masculine" traits
- girls' identification with "feminine" traits declines

Cultural and social factors

Sports and Recreation

Gender Identity

Self-evaluations affect adjustment
- gender typicality
- gender contentedness
- felt pressure to conform to gender roles

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Fears and Anxieties in Middle Childhood

Fears of dark, thunder, lightning, and supernatural beings persist.

Fears based on the wider world emerge.
- Many are media-fueled.
- Harsh living conditions can lead to anxiety.

School phobia
- 5–7 years: separation from home
- 11–13: particular aspects of school

Harsh living conditions promote severe anxieties.

Factors Related to Resilience

Personal characteristics
- easy temperament
- mastery orientation

Warm parental relationship

Supportive adult outside family

Community resources