The Developing Self

- The Self-Concept and Cognitive Development
- Self-Esteem
- Understanding and Regulating Emotions
- Erikson: Initiative versus Guilt
The Self-Concept and Cognitive Development

Changes in Self-Definition: The 5 to 7 Shift

• Four-year-old
  – Concrete, observable behaviors (I live, I have)
  – External characteristics (I like, I can, I love)
  – Particular skill versus general abilities (climb v athletic)
  – Self-descriptions unrealistically positive

• Seven-year-old
  – Generalized traits
    • Popular, smart, dumb
  – Self-critical while still having positive overall self-concept

• 5 – 7 shift: three steps
  – Single representations (one-dimensional, I like ___, one emotion only)
  – Representational mappings (logical connections between aspects of self)
  – Representational systems (integrate features into multidimensional concept)
The Self-Concept and Cognitive Development

Cultural Differences in Self-Definition

• Parents transmit cultural ideas and beliefs about how to define the self
  – Chinese parents encourage interdependent aspects of the self
    • Compliance with authority
    • Appropriate conduct
    • Humility
    • Sense of belonging to the community
  – European American parents encourage independent aspects of the self
    • Individuality
    • Self-expression
    • Self-esteem
Self-Esteem

*Developmental Changes in Self-Esteem*

- Before age 5 self-esteem not based on reality
  - Accept judgments of adults
  - Children may overrate their abilities
- Self-concept is all or nothing (good or bad)
Contingent Self-Esteem: The “Helpless” Pattern

- When self-esteem is high, child motivated to achieve
- 1/3 – ½ preschoolers, kindergartners, and first-graders show “helpless” self-esteem
  - Feel ashamed and give up
  - Don’t expect to succeed so don’t try
- Become demoralized when they fail
- Think they did poorly because of personality deficiencies
- Parents criticize rather than give feedback
  - “When are you going to learn to ___?” instead of “The tag on your shirt is showing in front.”
Understanding and Regulating Emotions

• Emotional understanding becomes more complex with age

• Understanding conflicting emotions
  – At three, one emotion at a time
  – By middle childhood, more sophisticated understanding occurs

• Understanding emotions directed toward the self
  – First recognize adults’ reaction to situations but not yet internalized
  – Second feel certain emotions only when being watched
  – Third feel certain emotions even if no one saw

• Cultural influences on emotional regulation
  – Brahman versus Tamang children: anger versus shame
Erikson: Initiative vs Guilt

- Arises from a growing sense of purpose
- Accomplished by making a plan and carrying out the activities
- Balance of initiative and guilt
  - Too much initiative, child grows into adult who is constantly striving for success, showing off, self-righteous, intolerant
  - Too much guilt, child is inhibited, lacking spontaneity, impotent, psychosomatic illness
- Virtue: purpose
Gender

- Gender Differences
- Perspectives on Gender Development
Gender

• Sense of being female or male develops in early childhood

• Gender differences are psychological or behavioral differences
  – Boys: more aggressive after age 2, more active, more intense pleasure in physical activity
  – Girls: better able to pay attention and inhibit inappropriate behavior
  – Very little cognitive gender differences
Perspectives on Gender Development

• Three related aspects of gender identity
  1. Gender roles
     – Behaviors, interests, attitudes, skills, personality traits that a culture considers appropriate for males or females
  2. Gender-typing
     – Acquisition of an appropriate gender role
  3. Gender stereotypes
     – All males _____; all females ___
Gender Development
Early Understanding of Stereotypes
Perspectives on Gender Development

• Biological Approach: genes affecting brain different
  – By age 5, boys brains 10% larger
    • More gray matter in cerebral cortex
    • Girls have more neuronal density
  – Corpus callosum size differences correlated with verbal fluency (girls have larger)
  – Hormones before or about time of birth
  – Chromosomally determined
    • Ambiguous sexual structures
  – Psychosexual development influenced by number of factors:
    • Chromosomes, genes, brain structure, family dynamics, social circumstances, prenatal androgen exposure, decisions about gender assignment
Perspectives on Gender Development

*Evolutionary Development Approach*

- Men seek to “spread his seed” to pass on his genetic inheritance
  - Males compete
  - Females nurture
Perspectives on Gender Development

• **Evolutionary development approach:**
  – Selection of sexual partners is response to differing reproductive pressures and survival of the species

• **Psychoanalytic approach:**
  – Gender identification occurs when child represses or gives up wish to possess the parent of the other sex and identifies with parent of same sex
Perspectives on Gender Development

• Social Learning Approach
  – Children learn by imitating models and being rewarded for gender-appropriate behavior
Perspectives on Gender Development

• **Cognitive Approaches**
  – Kohlberg
    • Children actively search for cues about gender in their social world
    • Gender constancy (sex-category constancy): realization that sex will remain the same, be constant: 3 stages
      – Gender identify (2 – 3: I am a ___)
      – Gender stability (I will be a ___ when I grow up)
      – Gender consistency (even though I change clothes or hair, I will still be a ___)
Gender-Schema Theory

- Sandra Bem: like Piaget’s schemes
  - Children organize their observations before they can talk
Perspectives on Gender Development

*The Role of Socialization*

- **Family influences**
  - Boys more strongly gender-socialized about play preferences
  - Egalitarian household, father’s role in gender socialization is important

- **Peer influences**

- **Cultural influences**
  - Television transmits cultural attitudes toward gender
  - Children’s books source of gender stereotypes
Play: The Business of Early Childhood

- Cognitive Levels of Play
- The Social Dimension of Play
- How Gender Influences Play
- How Culture Influences Play
Play

• Play contributes to all domains of development

• Children need a lot of time for free exploratory play
  – The trend for full-day kindergarten has markedly reduced time for free play

• Rough-and-tumble play common in middle childhood
  – Especially boys
Cognitive Levels of Play

- Sara Smilansky: increasing cognitive complexity
  - Functional play
    - Locomotor play, repeated practice in large muscular movements (rolling a ball)
  - Constructive play
    - Object play, use of objects or materials to make something
    - Children spend 10 – 15% of their time playing with objects
      - blocks
  - Dramatic play
    - Pretend play, fantasy play, imaginative play, make-believe objects, actions, roles
      - Emerges end of 2nd year
    - 12 – 15% of preschooler time
    - Age 2: imitative, initiated by adult, follows familiar scripts (feeding baby)
    - Age 3 – 4: more imaginative, self-initiated, more props
    - Involves cognition, emotion, language, sensorimotor
  - Games with rules
    - Organized games, known rules
      - Hopscotch
      - Marbles
The Social Dimension of Play

- Mildred Parten’s Six Types of Play
  - Least to most social
    - Unoccupied behavior
    - Onlooker behavior
    - Solitary independent play
    - Parallel play
    - Associative play
    - Cooperative or organized supplementary play

- Researchers not only look at whether a child plays alone but why

- Dramatic play becomes more social during the preschool years
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unoccupied behavior</td>
<td>The child does not seem to be playing but watches anything of momentary interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onlooker behavior</td>
<td>The child spends most of the time watching other children play. The onlooker talks to them, asking questions or making suggestions, but does not enter into the play. The onlooker is definitely observing particular groups of children rather than anything that happens to be exciting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary independent play</td>
<td>The child plays alone with toys that are different from those used by nearby children and makes no effort to get close to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel play</td>
<td>The child plays independently but among the other children, playing with toys like those used by the other children but not necessarily playing with them in the same way. Playing beside rather than with the others, the parallel player does not try to influence the other children’s play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative play</td>
<td>The child plays with other children. They talk about their play, borrow and lend toys, follow one another, and try to control who may play in the group. All the children play similarly if not identically; there is no division of labor and no organization around any goal. Each child acts as she or he wishes and is interested more in being with the other children than in the activity itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative or organized supplementary play</td>
<td>The child plays in a group organized for some goal—to make something, play a formal game, or dramatize a situation. One or two children control who belongs to the group and direct activities. By a division of labor, children take on different roles and supplement each other's efforts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Parten, 1932, pp. 249–251.
How Gender Influences Play

• Boys engage in more physical play than girls
• Boys play with objects more vigorously
• Girls tend to use objects for making things
  – Puzzles
  – Art projects
• Boys tend to use objects for weapons
• Sex segregation is common among preschoolers
  – Universal across cultures
• Biology (sex hormones), gender identification, adult reinforcement influence gender differences in play
  – Influence of peer group may be most powerful
• Girls engage in more dramatic play
• Boys’ pretend play often involves danger, discord, is competitive, dominant roles, is more stereotyped than girls
• Girls pretend stories generally focus on social relationships and nurturing, domestic roles (playing house)
How Gender Influences Play
How Culture Influences Play

• Cultural values affect play environments
  – Encourage independent thinking
  – Encourage active involvement in learning
    • Let children select activities from wide range of activities
  – Encourage academic skills
  – Encourage completion of tasks
  – Encourage social interchange
  – Encourage collaborative activities with teachers
  – Discourage talking or play
Parenting

• Forms of Discipline
• Parenting Styles
Forms of Discipline

• Discipline: to teach, to instruct, to train
  – Child development: methods of molding character and teaching self-control and acceptable behavior
  – Powerful tool for socialization

• What works best?
  – Reinforcement and punishment?
    • External versus internal reinforcements
    • Punishment is necessary (?), tied to the offense (often referred to as consequence)
      – Harsh punishment is counterproductive
    • Corporal punishment: causing a child to experience pain for the purpose of correction or control of child’s behavior
      – Popularly believed to be more effective
      – Thought to be harmless if done in moderation by loving parents
      – Growing body of evidence points to serious negative consequences
    • Line between some forms of punishment and physical or emotional abuse is blurry
      – Abuse is when injury results
        » What is an injury?
    • Psychological aggression: verbal attacks, threatening, swearing at child, name calling
      – 98% parents in one sampling reported using psychological aggression by the time the child was 5, 90% after 5
The Case Against Corporal Punishment

- Corporal punishment is banned in many countries
- More physical punishment a child receives:
  - More aggressive the child becomes
  - More antisocial
  - More aggressive as adult
- American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health urges parents to avoid spanking
  - Teach children words to express feelings
  - Give children choices
  - Help child to evaluate consequences
  - Model orderly behavior and cooperative conflict resolution
Forms of Discipline

Power Assertion, Induction, and Withdrawal of Love

- Power assertion: designed to discourage undesirable behavior through physical or verbal enforcement of parental control
- Inductive techniques: designed to induce desirable behavior by appealing to a child’s sense of reason and fairness
- Withdrawal of love: involves ignoring, isolating, or showing dislike for a child
- Choice and effectiveness of a disciplinary strategy depends on:
  - Parent’s personality
  - Child’s personality
  - Child’s age
  - Quality of parent-child relationship
  - Culturally based customs and expectations
  - Most parents use more than one strategy
Parenting Styles

*Diana Baumrind and the Effectiveness of Authoritative Parenting*

- Three parenting styles
  - Authoritarian
  - Permissive
  - Authoritative

- Maccoby and Martin added a fourth parenting style
  - Neglectful, uninvolved
    - Result of stress or depression
    - Focus on own needs
Authoritarian

• Parents:
  – Value control
  – Unquestioning obedience
  – Rigid standards
  – Punishment for violation of standards
  – Power-assertive techniques
  – More detached
  – Less warm

• Children: discontented, withdrawn, distrustful

• High demanding, low responsive
Permissive

- Low demanding, high responsive
- Consult with child about policy decision
- Rarely punish
- Warm, noncontrolling, indulgent
- Children: immature, lack self-control, don’t explore
Authoritative

• Parents:
  – High demand
  – High responsive
  – Value child’s individuality
  – Stress social constraints
  – Confidence in their ability as parent to guide child
  – Respect child’s independent decisions, interests, opinions, personalities
  – Loving, accepting
  – Demand good behavior
  – Firm in maintaining standards
  – Inductive discipline
  – Explain reasons behind position
  – Encourage verbal negotiation and give and take

• Children:
  – Feel secure
  – Self-reliant, self-controlled, self-assertive, exploratory, content
Parenting Styles

Support and Criticisms of Baumrind’s Model

• Research replicated
• Predictive of positive behaviors in children
• Predictive of social and academic outcomes
• Controversy:
  – Suggests one right way
  – Research is correlational, not causational
  – Consistency of “style” is in question
  – Temperament not considered
• Baumrind’s model reflects dominant North American view of child development
Special Behavior Concerns

- Prosocial Behavior
- Aggression
- Fearfulness
Prosocial Behavior

- Altruism: motivation to help others without expectation of reward
  - May involve self-denial
  - May involve self-sacrifice
  - At the heart of prosocial behavior
- Prosocial behavior
  - Voluntary behavior to help others
    - Sharing
    - Empathy
    - Comforting
  - Genetic and environmental
    - Parents are affectionate, use positive discipline which encourages prosocial behavior
    - Parents usually prosocial
  - Motives change over time
Aggression

Types:

• Instrumental: most common type in early childhood*
  – Used to reach a goal: you have it, I need it
  – Used for possessions or territory (space)

• Overt/direct
  – Physical or verbal aggression directed at target (boys)

• Relational
  – Social, subtle, damaging or interfering with relationships, reputation, rumors, exclusion of others (girls)
### Aggression

**Influences on Aggression**

- Temperament
- Genetic
- Environmental
- Parental behaviors
- Attachment
- Witnessing violence
  - Bandura’s social learning research
- Television
Fearfulness

• Passing fears are common
  – 2 – 4: animals (dogs)
  – 6: dark
  – Thunderstorms, doctors, imaginary creatures
  – Most disappear
• Fears come from intense fantasy life and tendency to confuse appearance with reality (things that look scary)
• Fears come from personal experience
• Parents can reduce fear by instilling trust and normal caution without being too protective
• Systematic desensitization
  – Exposed gradually increasing amounts of feared object/situation
Relationships with Other Children

- Siblings— or Their Absence
- Playmates and Friends
Siblings— or Their Absence

*Brothers and Sisters*

- Frequency of conflict
- Sibling rivalry not main pattern
  - Affection, interest, companionship, influence
- Older siblings initiate more
- Younger siblings imitate more
- Siblings less physical and more verbal after age 5
- Quality of sibling relationships carry over to relationships with other children
- A positive relationship with one sibling can buffer the effect of a negative relationship with another sibling
Siblings– or Their Absence

The Only Child

• 21% of children in US have no siblings in the home

• “Onlies” do well in 115 studies
  – Occupational and educational achievement (slightly higher)
  – Verbal intelligence (slightly higher)
  – More motivated to achieve
  – Have slightly higher self-esteem

• No significant differences in behavioral problems
Playmates and Friends

Choosing Playmates and Friends

- Preschoolers usually like to play with children their own age and own sex
- 75% of preschoolers have mutual friendships
- Traits young children look for in a playmate
  - Doing things together
  - Liking and caring for each other
  - Sharing and helping one another
  - Living nearby or going to same school
- Physical traits (appearance and size) rated higher for preschoolers
- Affection and support rated lower for preschoolers
Characteristics and Effects of Friendships

• Well-liked preschoolers and kindergartners rated by parents and teachers as socially competent:
  – Generally cope well with anger
  – Respond directly in ways that minimize further conflict
  – Avoid insults
  – Avoid threats

• Unpopular children tend to hit, hit back, or tattle

• Preschoolers have positive, prosocial interactions with friends

• Preschoolers have more quarrels and fights with friends

• Children with friends enjoy school more
Playmates and Friends

*Parenting and Popularity*

• Parenting styles and practices can influence peer relationships
  – Popular children generally have warm, positive relationships with both mother and father
  – Popular children have parents who are more likely to be authoritative
  – Children who are popular tend to be assertive and cooperative

• Children whose parents are authoritarian may be shy or withdrawn

• Overprotective parents can cause child to be wary of associating with peers (especially boys)

• Children are better liked who are less aggressive and prosocial
"Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself and know that everything in life has a purpose."

- Elisabeth Kübler-Ross