Chapter 12

Social and Emotional Development in Middle Childhood

- Social/emotional self
- Families (group work)
- Play, Friend, Popularity (group work)
- Schools and Media
Self

- I-self & Me-self emerge during early childhood
- As children continue to develop, their sense of self becomes more abstract

I don’t like broccoli. If I cry my mom won’t make me eat it.

I am a boy. I have brown hair.

I am a responsible boy who cares about my animals. I love my dog and I make sure he has enough food and water.
Social and Emotional Selves (7-11)

- **social comparison**: comparison of own qualities and abilities to those of peers
  
  “Am I as tall as her?”
  “Am I as smart as her?”

- Comparisons enable children to see their strengths and weaknesses
Self-evaluations

- **self-representations**: the ways people describe themselves
  
  *self concept*  "I am tall and fast"

- **self-evaluations**: the judgments people make about themselves
  
  "It is great to be tall and fast"

- **self-esteem**: the feelings people have about themselves
  
  leading to high self-esteem
Self-evaluations

- become more realistic during middle childhood
- distinguish between real self and ideal self
- may suffer if there is inconsistency between real and ideal in areas that matter to the child is large

I want to be a gymnast
I was not that great at gymnastics
Self-evaluations

- During middle childhood children make judgments about themselves on...
  - athletics
  - academics
  - social skills
  - physical appearance – males/females, population groups, ethnic groups, different countries

- Concern about physical appearance is detrimental for girls 4th grade --- adulthood

- Girls who base self-esteem on physical appearance tend to show low levels of self-esteem
Emotional Development

Increased ability in
- controlling and regulating own emotions
  \textit{self regulation}
- accurately reading other people’s emotions
- Children who learn positive emotional skills from parents have more success making friends
A Study on Empathic Adults

- Levels of empathy linked with childhood experiences
- Fathers more involved in their care
- Mothers more tolerant of dependant behavior, restricted aggression, satisfied as mothers
- Depressed mother-child constantly feels guilty and helpless
Emotional Development

- Why is accuracy in reading emotions an important social skill?
Gender Differences

boys
- more physical aggression
- Higher levels of assertiveness
- Threats & physical force to influence others

girls
- Relational aggression: hurting others by destroying social relationships
- rated by others as helpful, cooperative, sympathetic
- More likely to ask for help
- More easily influenced
- Verbal persuasion
by age 10, most children are at Kohlberg’s stage 1 or 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level I: Preconventional Moral Reasoning</th>
<th>Stage 1: Punishment and obedience orientation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Children decide what is right based on whether the action will be punished or rewarded, but do not consider the interests of others. They obey because adults have greater power.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level II: Conventional Moral Reasoning</th>
<th>Stage 2: Individualism, instrumental purpose, and exchange</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Children follow rules when it serves their own needs or interests. They are aware that others have interests, and that they may conflict with their own.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level III: Postconventional Moral Reasoning</th>
<th>Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity</th>
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<td>Children are concerned with living up to others’ expectations. “Being good” is important, and it means having good intentions, being concerned about others, being loyal and trustworthy.</td>
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<th>Stage 4: Social system and conscience</th>
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<td>Children define what is right according to what fulfills duties they have agreed to carry out. They abide by laws except in extreme cases. Moral actions are those that the larger society has determined are right.</td>
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<th>Stage 5: Social contract or utility and individual rights</th>
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<td>Values and rules are seen as relative to a particular group and can be changed. Rules should be followed for the welfare and protection of all people’s rights, and what is moral is what is best for the largest number of people. Some values, such as life and liberty, are recognized as nonrelative and must be upheld regardless of socially agreed upon laws.</td>
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<th>Stage 6: Universal ethical principles</th>
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<td>People develop and follow their own self-chosen ethical principles, which are part of an integrated and carefully thought-out system of values. If social laws violate these principles, the person’s actions will be consistent with their ethical principles.</td>
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(Adapted from Kohlberg, 1984.)
Pro-social Reasoning
Nancy Eisenberg

- how children think about helping others, including their reasons.
- Parallels between Kohlberg’s theory
- Preschool -12th grade
- Presented children w/ situations that would require some kind of personal sacrifice

Would a girl walking to a birthday party help another child that had fallen down? What sacrifices would she have to make?
### TABLE 12.2 Developmental Levels of Prosocial Reasoning

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<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>AGES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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| Hedonistic orientation       | Preschool to the beginning of elementary school | • The child is concerned with his or her own needs and consequences for himself or herself.  
• Child will help if it benefits himself or herself now or in the future, or if he or she likes or needs the other person.  
• Example: "I'd help because then he'd let me ride his new bike." |
| Needs-of-others orientation | Some preschool children; many elementary school children | • The child is concerned with the needs of others, even if they conflict with his or her own needs.  
• There is little evidence of sympathy for the other person or of guilt over not helping.  
• Example: "I'd help because he's hurt and needs help." |
| Approval and/or stereotyped orientation | Elementary school to high school | • The child is concerned with being accepted by others and gaining approval.  
• Decisions about helping or not are often based on stereotyped views of what "good" or "bad" people do.  
• Example: "I'd help because my dad would be really proud of me." |
| Empathic orientation         | Older elementary school to high school | • The child shows sympathy for the other person's situation.  
• The child expresses guilt for not helping and positive feelings for helping.  
• There are sometimes vague references to internalized values or responsibilities.  
• Example: "I'd help because he must feel really sad. It would help him feel better, and I'd feel good about helping." |
| Strongly internalized values orientation | Small number of high school students | • The child is concerned with following his or her own internalized values, norms, beliefs, or duties.  
• Violating the internal standards can cause loss of self-respect.  
• Example: "It's important to help people who are hurt. If we all did that all the time, our world would be a much better place." |

(Adapted from Eisenberg et al., 1983.)
Pro-social Reasoning

- Children move from their needs—social approval—broader principles
  - Views cognitive dev, and prospective taking as important in the dev. of pro-social reasoning.
  - Pro-social reasoning levels are not universal
  - Environmental & emotional factors affect the dev. and use of pro-social reasoning
Aggression

- relatively stable characteristic over time
  
  8 year-olds rated aggressive are more likely to be convicted of criminal offenses, serious crimes, domestic violence

- genetic predisposition - studies done with twins
Aggression

- family environment key (coercive home environment)
  - yelling, threats, physical punishment, are normal
  - both parents and children behave aggressively
  - high levels of anger/hostility
  - rarely reinforce pro-social behavior
  - low supervision of child’s activities, social relationships
  - not setting appropriate limits on behavior

- some cultural influence (poverty, stress, education, parenting, )
  - African American males high levels of aggression
  - poor white children are as aggressive
Conduct problems

- **oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)**: repetitive pattern of defiance, disobedience and hostility
  * 6% to 10% of children
  * 6 months of repetitive pattern

- **conduct disorder (CD)**: consistent violation of other people’s basic rights or breaking of society’s rules
  * 2% to 9% of children
  * 12 months of repetitive pattern

Both conditions treated with counseling, behavior and family therapy, and prescription medication
Resilient Children

- those who succeed, achieve or otherwise have positive outcomes despite growing up in negative conditions
- Pleasant personalities
- Average or above average intelligence
- Maintain positive tie w/family member or another adult
Ask yourself

- How many of you know someone who is divorced/separated?
- How do the children act/ react to the divorce?
- How can professionals help children cope with divorce?
Divorce

- is a process rather NOT a single event
- Process begins years before parents separate
- May not end until after legal divorce
Child’s adjustment to divorce

1. divorce-stress-adjustment perspective: emphasizes complex interaction of stressors, specific issues and protective factors determine individual child’s adjustment.
2. selection model: emphasizes that certain characteristics of parents (rather than the divorce) that cause children’s outcomes from divorce

- Parents’ negative traits that “select” them out of marriage

Ex: an abusive father can have a negative effect on children. More likely that wife will divorce him.
Effects of Divorce

I. Behavioral
A. acting out – disobedience, aggression, juvenile delinquency

II. Psychological
A. parentification – child taking on adult responsibilities
   1. instrumental- increase in household tasks
   2. emotional- child provides emotional support, acts as advisor

III. – Sleeper effect: subtle effects of divorce that may not become apparent until children reach adolescence or young adulthood. Have difficulty forming intimate & stable relationships
Adult children of divorced parents are less likely to marry than children of continually married parents. If they marry, marriage is more likely to end in divorce.
Effects of Divorce

- some positive outcomes
  - reduction of conflict in home
  - development of closer relationships with parents
  - development of social responsibility, competence and empathy
Effects of Divorce

What effects will occur and how negative they will be is determined by:

- **money** – families often struggle financially after a divorce
- **parenting** – a decline in quantity and quality often occurs
- **community connections** – frequent moves impact family
Families – Never Married

- In 2007, 40% of children born in US were born to mothers who were not married
- Factors that affect outcomes of divorce also affect children with never-married parents
Families - Stepfamilies

- stable positive stepfamily relationships benefit children
  - often improves financial situation
  - improves academic achievement and psychological well-being

- challenges as well
  - quality of parenting may be lower
  - competition between children and stepparent
Play

- preference for games and activities that have rules
- focus on acquiring and improving physical skills
- organized sports
Best Friends

- closer, more exclusive relationship
- number of best friends increases until age 11
- common activities is foundation
- rarely based on physical or shared personal characteristic
Popularity

- researchers use peer nomination technique to measure social status in childhood
  - children are asked to name the children in their class who they like best and who they like least
  - some children receive a lot of “like best” votes, some receive a lot of “like least” and others are mixed or don’t receive any votes at all
Categories of Social Status

- Rejected
- Popular
- Controversial
- Average
- Neglected

Many nominations

Few nominations

Mostly negative nominations ("like least")

Mostly positive nominations ("like best")
Categories of Social Status

- **Popular**
  - friendly, cooperative,
  - join groups easily

- **Rejected - Aggressive**
  - physically, verbally
  - or relationally aggressive
  - actively disliked

- **Rejected – Withdrawn**
  - do not participate or cooperate,
  - annoying to others

- **Controversial**
  - liked and disliked
  - equally

- **Average**
  - moderately liked
  - and disliked

- **Neglected**
  - ignored
Social Cognition Model

Used to explain how different children perceive, interpret and respond to information in social settings

- How does the event look and sound?
- What does the child think about what she has seen and heard?
- How does child choose to respond?
Social Cognition Model

- Popular children see and interpret events as innocent and therefore respond positively
  - A bump in the hallway is seen as an accident
- Rejected-aggressive children see and interpret events as threatening and therefore react aggressively
  - A bump in the hallway is seen as intentional
Helping rejected children

- Peer rejection can lead to:
  - School failure
  - Delinquency
  - Substance abuse
  - Depression
  - Violence

- Intervention includes coaching, role-playing, direct instruction in social skills
Children’s beliefs about achievement

**Achievement motivation**: the degree to which a person chooses to engage in and keep trying to accomplish challenging tasks

- Involves connections between beliefs about why you do or do not succeed, values and benefits of success, and psychological goals
Children’s beliefs about achievement

- **Attributions**: beliefs about why you succeed or fail
  - Ability
  - Effort
  - Luck
  - Task difficulty
  - Strategy use
Success in school

- Some children develop *mastery orientation* – attribute success to internal, controllable factors (hard work, ability) and failure to controllable or changeable factors (lack of effort, poor strategy)
- Focus on learning goals
- Attempt difficult task b/c it will help them learn new skills
- Failures mean that they need to work harder
Success in school

- Some children develop **helpless orientation** - attribute success to external, uncontrollable factors (luck) and failure to internal stable factors (lack of ability)
- Focus on performance goals
- Seeking task that they can accomplish

How can this prevent children’s development?
Cross cultural studies showed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Children</th>
<th>American Children</th>
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<tr>
<td>Associate learning w/diligence, persistence and concentration</td>
<td>Learning is a task to be tackled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children who lack these virtues are seen irresponsible and immoral</td>
<td>Emphasizing on learner’s ability and strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is a moral value</td>
<td>Learning is a practical task</td>
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Success in school

Teacher expectations influence

- goals they set for class
- classroom activities
- grouping practices
- Rewards

Teachers’ beliefs about themselves also influence student achievement

- **Self-fulfilling prophecy**: a prediction that comes true b/c people believe in it and behave in ways that produce the expected outcome
Factors in student achievement

- Classroom climate: the way the class feels with those in it
  - Characteristics of students
  - Characteristics of teachers
  - Physical arrangement
  - Number of students in class

- Grouping practices:
  - Ability grouping- placing children in groups based on ability levels
  - Between-class ability grouping (tracks)- students within a grade attend separate classes according to ability level

Is tracking beneficial to children with lower abilities?
Would tracking be a good method according to Vygotzky’s theory?
Children and the Media

- 60% of infants and toddlers watch TV or videos for about 2 hours a day.
- 65% of children age 8 and up have a TV in their room. 49% have a video game player in their rooms, 31% have a computer in their rooms.
- 2-3 hours spent watching TV every day in middle childhood.
- Boys tend to watch more than girls, play more video games than girls.
- Children in lower SES households are more likely to have TV.
TV and aggression

By the end of elementary school, the average child will have seen more than 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts on TV.
TV and aggression

- TV violence has a moderate negative impact on behavior
- Children who watched the most TV at age 8 were the most likely to commit crimes at age 30
TV’s positive effects

- Watching educational programs such as *Sesame Street* is associated with helping, sharing, using imagination, donating, offering comfort, and cooperating – mostly among children under 7, and children in middle-upper income homes.

- Positive portrayals of ethnic minorities has a positive impact on children’s beliefs.
Other Media

- Video Games
  - Short term gains in spatial skills, response time, visual perception, strategizing
  - Increases in aggressive behavior and thoughts

- Computer Games
  - What are the pros and cons?

- the Internet
  - What are the pros and cons?