Chapter 15 Learning Objectives

- Describe Erikson’s third stage of initiative vs. guilt
- Describe the changes in self-concept and self-esteem
- Describe children’s understanding of others
- Describe emotional regulation and delayed gratification
- Describe young children’s understanding of morality
- Summarize the main theories of gender development
- Explain the terms transgender, gender dysphoria, and intersex
- Describe the major parenting styles and their consequences for children
- Describe the role of siblings in children’s development
- Summarize the types of play in which children engage
- Describe the influence of the media on young children’s social development

Erikson: Initiative vs. Guilt

Self-Concept and Self-Esteem
Gender

identify some differences and learn whether they are boys or girls, preschoolers become more interested in what it means to be male or female. Gender is the cultural, social and psychological meanings associated with masculinity and femininity (Spears Brown & Jewell, 2018). A person’s sense of self as a member of a particular gender is known as gender identity. The development of gender identity appears to be due to an interaction among biological, social and representational influences (Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006). Gender roles, or the expectations associated with being male or female, are learned in one’s culture throughout childhood and into adulthood.

way. Knowing the sex of the child can conjure up images of the child’s behavior, appearance, and potential on the part of a parent, and this stereotyping continues to guide perception through life. Consider parents of newborns, shown a 7-pound, 20-inch baby, wrapped in blue (a color designating males) describe the child as tough, strong, and angry when crying. Shown the same infant in pink (a color used in the United States for baby girls), these parents are likely to describe the baby as pretty, delicate, and frustrated when crying (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987). Female infants are held more, talked to more frequently and given direct eye contact, while male infant interactions are often mediated through a toy or activity.
Theories of Gender Development

appropriate for each gender. Cognitive social learning theory also emphasizes reinforcement, punishment, and imitation, but adds cognitive processes. These processes include attention, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. Once children learn the significance of gender, they regulate their own behavior based on internalized gender norms (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Transgender Children

about two percent of the world’s population (Blackless et al., 2000). There are dozens of intersex conditions, and intersex individuals demonstrate the diverse variations of biological sex. Some examples of intersex conditions include:

- Turner syndrome or the absence of, or an imperfect, second X chromosome
- Congenital adrenal hyperplasia or a genetic disorder caused by an increased production of androgens
- Androgen insensitivity syndrome or when a person has one X and one Y chromosome, but is resistant to the male hormones or androgens

How much does gender matter for children: Starting at birth, children learn the social meanings of gender from adults and their culture. Gender roles and expectations are especially portrayed in children’s toys, books, commercials, video games, movies, television shows and music (Khor, 2017). Therefore, when children make choices regarding their gender identification, expression, and behavior that may be contrary to gender stereotypes, it is important that they feel supported by the caring adults in their lives. This support allows children to feel valued, resilient, and develop a secure sense of self (American Academy of Pediatricians, 2015).
Parenting Styles

overbearing and allow them to make constructive mistakes. Parents allow negotiation where appropriate, and consequently this type of parenting is considered more democratic.

![Figure 4.22 Authoritative Parenting](source)

distant. Consequently, children reared in this way may fear rather than respect their parents and, because their parents do not allow discussion, may take out their frustrations on safer targets—perhaps as bullies toward peers.

Table 4.3 Comparison of Four Parenting Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warmth/Responsiveness</th>
<th>Expectations/Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>uninvolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>authoritative</td>
</tr>
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**Culture:** The impact of culture and class cannot be ignored when examining parenting styles. The model of parenting described above assumes that the authoritative style is the best because this style is designed to help the parent raise a child who is independent, self-reliant and responsible. These are qualities favored in “individualistic” cultures such as the United States, particularly by the middle class. However, in “collectivistic” cultures such as China or Korea, being obedient and compliant are favored behaviors. Authoritarian parenting has been used historically and reflects cultural need for children to do as they are told. African-American, Hispanic and Asian parents tend to be more authoritarian than non-Hispanic whites. In societies where family members’ cooperation is necessary for survival, rearing children who are independent and who strive to be on their own makes no sense. However, in an economy based on being mobile in order to find jobs and where one’s earnings are based on education, raising a child to be independent is very important.

**Spanking**
• Praising and modeling appropriate behavior
• Providing time-outs for inappropriate behavior
• Giving choices
• Helping the child identify emotions and learning to calm down
• Ignoring small annoyances
• Withdrawing privileges

Sibling Relationships

more negative interactions between siblings have been reported in families where parents had poor patterns of communication with their children (Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1994).

While parents want positive interactions between their children, conflicts are going to arise, and some confrontations can be the impetus for growth in children’s social and cognitive skills. The sources of conflict between siblings often depend on their respective ages. Dunn and Munn (1987) revealed that over half of all sibling conflicts in early childhood were disputes about property rights. By middle childhood this starts shifting toward control over social situation, such as what games to play, disagreements about facts or opinions, or rude behavior (Howe, Rinaldi, Jennings, & Petrakos, 2002).

Researchers have also found that the strategies children use to deal with conflict change with age, but this is also tempered by the nature of the conflict. Abuhatoum and Howe (2013) found that coercive strategies (e.g., threats) were preferred when the dispute centered on property rights, while reasoning was more likely to be used by older siblings and in disputes regarding control over the social situation. However, younger siblings also use reasoning, frequently bringing up the concern of legitimacy (e.g., “You’re not the boss”) when in conflict with an older sibling. This is a very common strategy used by younger siblings and is possibly an adaptive strategy in order for younger siblings to assert their autonomy (Abuhatoum & Howe, 2013). A number of researchers have found that children who can use non-coercive strategies are more likely to have a successful resolution, whereby a compromise is reached and neither child feels slighted (Ram & Ross, 2008; Abuhatoum & Howe, 2013). Not surprisingly, friendly relationships with siblings often lead to more positive interactions with peers. The reverse is also true. A child can also learn to get along with a sibling, with, as the song says, “a little help from my friends” (Kramer & Gottman, 1992).
than those older; by age five associative and cooperative play are the most common forms of play (Dyer & Moneta, 2006).

they engaging in similar activities as the children around them.

on the activities and even make suggestions but will not directly join the play.

companions have no obvious trigger in the child's life (Masih, 1978). Imaginary companions are sometimes based on real people, characters from stories, or simply names the child has heard (Gleason, et. al., 2000). Imaginary companions often change over time. In their study, Gleason et al. (2000) found that 40% of the imaginary companions of the children they studied changed, such as developing superpowers, switching age, gender, or even dying, and 68% of the characteristics of the companion were acquired over time. This could reflect greater complexity in the child's "creation" over time and/or a greater willingness to talk about their imaginary playmates.

Do children treat real friends differently? The answer appears to be not really. Young children view their relationship with their imaginary companion to be as supportive and nurturing as with their real friends. Gleason has suggested that this might suggest that children form a schema of what is a friend and use this same schema in their interactions with both types of friends (Gleason, et al., 2000; Gleason, 2002; Gleason & Hohmann, 2006).

Children and the Media

cognitive and language development as well as be linked to attention problems later in childhood (Schmidt, Pempek, & Kirkorian, 2008; Courage, Murphy, & Goulding, 2010).
Child Care

mothers. In 1965 mothers with and without a university education spent about the same amount of time on child care. By 2012 the more educated ones were spending half an hour more per day. See Figure 4.27 for the difference between mothers in the United States who were university educated (dark blue line) and those who were non-university educated (light blue line).

Figure 4.27 U.S. Mothers’ Time Spent in Child Care

![Figure 4.27 U.S. Mothers’ Time Spent in Child Care 1965-2012](source)
facility. The physical environment should be colorful, stimulating, clean, and safe. The philosophy of the organization and the curriculum available should be child-centered, positive, and stimulating. Providers should be trained in early childhood education as well. A majority of states do not require training for their child care providers. While formal education is not required for a person to provide a warm, loving relationship to a child, knowledge of a child’s development is useful for addressing their social, emotional, and cognitive needs in an effective way.

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**Child Abuse**

**Victims of Child Abuse:** According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (2019), during 2017 (the most recent year data has been collected) Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies received an estimated 4.1 million referrals for abuse involving approximately 7.5 million children. This is a rate of 31.8 per 1,000 children in the national population. Professionals made 65.7% of alleged child abuse and neglect reports, and they included law enforcement (18.3%), educational (19.4%) and social services personnel (11.7%). Nonprofessionals, such as friends, neighbors, and relatives, submitted 17.3% of the reports. Approximately 3.5 million children were the subjects of at least one report.

**Sexual Abuse:** Childhood sexual abuse is defined as any sexual contact between a child and an adult or a much older child. Incest refers to sexual contact between a child and family members. In each of these cases, the child is exploited by an older person without regard for the child’s developmental immaturity and inability to understand the sexual behavior (Steele, 1986). Research estimates that 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 10 boys have been sexually abused (Valente, 2005). The median age for sexual abuse is 8 or 9 years for both boys and girls (Finkelhorn, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990). Most boys and girls are sexually abused by a male. Although rates of sexual abuse are higher for girls than for boys, boys may be less likely to report abuse because of the cultural expectation that boys should be able to take care of themselves and because of the stigma attached to homosexual encounters (Finkelhorn et al., 1990). Girls are more likely to be abused by family member and boys by strangers. Sexual abuse can create feelings of self-blame, betrayal, shame and guilt (Valente, 2005). Sexual abuse is particularly damaging when the perpetrator is someone the child trusts and may lead to depression, anxiety, problems with intimacy, and suicide (Valente, 2005).
**Stress on Young Children:** Children experience different types of stressors. Normal, everyday stress can provide an opportunity for young children to build coping skills and poses little risk to development. Even more long-lasting stressful events, such as changing schools or losing a loved one, can be managed fairly well. Children who experience toxic stress or who live in extremely stressful situations of abuse over long periods of time can suffer long-lasting effects. The structures in the midbrain or limbic system, such as the hippocampus and amygdala, can be vulnerable to prolonged stress during early childhood (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008). High levels of the stress hormone cortisol can reduce the size of the hippocampus and affect the child's memory abilities. Stress hormones can also reduce immunity to disease. The brain exposed to long periods of severe stress can develop a low threshold making the child hypersensitive to stress in the future.

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Figure 4.29

![Figure 4.29](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Social_Work_and_Human_Services/Remix%3A_Human_Behavior_and_the_Soci...)

Figure 4.30 How ACES Affect Children and Adults

![Figure 4.30 How ACES Affect Children and Adults](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Social_Work_and_Human_Services/Remix%3A_Human_Behavior_and_the_Soci...)

skills, emotional processing, and physiological health. When exposed to stress, children typically look to their parents for
support and care, and parents can reduce children’s stress. These separated children were already under extreme stress escaping their previous homes, and then were separated from the individuals who could support them through this process.

![Figure 4.31 Children in a Detention Center](source)

### References


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