Outline

Day 1:

Why is Child Development Important?

Respecting Children

Observing Children

Attachment

Resiliency

Discipline and Learning

Day 2:

Developmental Pathways

Infancy (0-12months)

Toddler (12 – 36 months)

Day 3:

Preschool (3-6)

Middle (7-12)

Adolescence (12 -18)

**Quote #1**

 “I have been writing generally about mothers and their own babies. I was not specially out to tell mothers what to do, because they can get advice over details quite easily from Welfare Centres. In fact advice over details comes to them almost too easily, sometimes causing a feeling of muddle. I have chosen instead to write for those mothers who are ordinarily good at looking after their own babies, intending to help them to know what babies are like, and to show them a little of what is going on. The idea is that the more they know, the more they will be able to afford to trust their own judgment. It is when a mother trusts her own judgment that she is at her best.”

 - D.W. Winnicott

**Quote #2**

“Seeing human learning at its most powerful, i.e. the learning of infants, above all their amazing and always unique discovery and conquest of language, gave me a yardstick against which I could measure all other teaching and learning. There is no better way to understand human learning than by closely watching babies and infants during those years in which they are learning (among many other things) to stand, walk, and talk, and no better place to do this than in the home, not as a teacher or coldly detached scientist, but as an attentive, concerned, and loving member of the family. Such an experience, living like an older brother or sister in families with young children, would be invaluable to people who want to be teachers or helpers of learning of any kind. It is the only kind of training for teaching, other than teaching itself, which has any chance of being any use at all.”

* John Holt

**Quote #3**

“A breastfeeding mother is giving herself totally, and the baby gets the message. The message will eventually translate into the concept of love from God: the mother teaches the baby first to trust, then to be loved, then to show love to others, and finally to understand what it means to love God our Father and to be loved by Him.”

* Martha Sears

**Quote #4**

“Children securely attached as infants are more resilient, independent, compliant, empathic, and socially competent than others. They have greater self-esteem and express more positive affect and less negative affect than do children who were anxiously attached as infants.”

* Vera Fahlberg

**Quote #5**

“It is only in the context of the parent-child relationship that the child is able to successfully move through the stages of development.”

* Vera Fahlberg

**Quote #6**

“The attachment system serves to support human maturation across the lifespan. Deficits in attachment lead to deficits in maturation. We should do all we can to make sure that we are not the limiting factor in the attachment relationship and in the developmental potential of our children.”

* Chris White

**Quote #7**

“If as Christian parents you sincerely want to discipline your child, your most effective discipline is to create such an attitude within your child and atmosphere within your home that punishment seldom becomes necessary.”

* Dr. Sears

**Quote #8**

“Children who are products of attachment parenting are easier to discipline because even as infants they learn what it is to feel right, and children who feel right are more likely to act right. This inner feeling of rightness of being able to trust others, is the beginning of a baby’s sense of self-worth, and children’s behavior usually mirrors their feelings about themselves.”

* Dr. Sears

**Quote #9**

“We know from developmental psychology and attachment theory that the bond between parent and child is the most important factor in a child’s development and behavior. When children are attached in a deep and meaningful way, they want to follow their parents’ lead and will not, for the most part, be resistant.”

* Chris White

**Quote #10**

“There is a beautiful intelligence about how a child’s development is meant to unfold. When children are deeply attached to their parents this bond allows us to transmit our rules and values and guide them in a positive way. At the same time, attachment protects our children from outside influences and incompatible messages and values by preventing our children from listening to those to whom they are not attached.”

* Chris White

**Quote #11**

“…methods of parenting rooted in the philosophy of behaviorism can achieve short term changes in a child’s behavior, but at a long term cost of delaying development and promoting immaturity.”

* Chris White

**Quote #12**

“Instead of trying to get children to be obedient, I recommend that we strive for them to have good judgment. Obedience lasts only as long as we are in the room with them. It does not help a child know what to do in a brand-new situation. I think every parent has had this experience: Children do something so wild that we never thought of making a rule about it. We usually punish them anyways, because they “should have known better.” But we can’t expect them to have a flexible intelligence to figure out what is right or wrong in a new situation if we have taught them to obey only by enforcing rules. Our world is so complex that children need to have intelligence and good judgment, not just rules.

The goal of most punishment is obedience. Good judgment, on the other hand, comes from talking with children, brainstorming about how they might handle different situations, and discussing moral dilemmas. We have to be on the same wavelength with our children before we can have these types of conversations, so connect first. Connecting with children after they’ve done something wrong, listening to how they feel about it, and telling them calmly how we feel, all do much more to instill good judgment than punishment does.

Children develop into thoughtful, considerate, honest, and kind adults because of love and affection, because of high moral standards, and because of a close relationship with someone who models those values. I have never seen anyone punished into being good. Bribes don’t work either. Promises, threats, rewards, and punishments have been called “the most primitive way of dealing with human beings.” Since humans can think and reason, and because close connections are so important to us, it makes more sense to use loving and talking as the basis for our discipline. “

* Lawrence Cohen, Playful Parenting p. 241

**Quote #13**

“If the purpose is to train leaders, it’s important not to force the young person through their learning experiences. Force in learning kills the spirit, dampens the passion and destroys the zest and life of learning. Force trains followers, not leaders.

Unfortunately, most of us were conditioned to believe that if we aren’t forced to learn, especially something like math or advanced science, we won’t do it. In truth, force does teach lessons, but they are the wrong lessons. The negative lessons of force include:

* Do the bare minimum.
* Learning means pleasing the authority figure.
* Learning, schooling and studying are no fun.
* Playing is when you don’t have to learn.
* To be a good student I have to study somebody else’s interests.
* My own interests must be pursued on my own time, and they aren’t as valuable as the “accepted” topics of study.
* If nobody is making me study, I’d rather be entertained than learn.

The list could go on, but the point is that force is a bad method of incentivizing and encouraging learning. Wise parents and teachers learn to inspire their students to intensive self-study, instead of requiring them to follow a pre-formulated curriculum.

The truth is that most parents and teachers really prefer force, really like the ability to just assign and demand and mete out consequences. We have been conditioned to believe that this is what education is, that anything else must be less valuable or less effective. But compare the list of lessons above to the following list of lessons learned by the person who is inspired to get a great education:

* There is so much to learn and it is so exciting.
* Learning is more fun than almost anything.
* I can learn on my own, in a group, or with help from a teacher or parent.
* All I need is a book and I can learn. In fact, I can learn even without a book.
* I love learning!
* I am passionately interested in (fill in the blank here from horses, to surfing, to dolls to Nancy drew, etc.).
* If I do more than is assigned, I’ll learn more and have more fun. The assignments are just minimums.
* My thoughts and ideas are as valuable as anybody else’s.

Again, the list could go on, but clearly the natural lessons of choosing your own education are very valuable. Indeed, freedom is the natural teacher of leadership, just as leadership is the perpetuator of freedom”

* Oliver DeMille

**Quote #14**

“Most teachers, themselves ready to do whatever authority tells them, think that by making the child obey, they are making him moral. Instead, they are destroying whatever moral possibilities he may have. Teachers ask me all the time how they can teach people to be moral – or ‘human’ or ‘humane.’ But we can’t teach it, can’t make someone moral or humane, and least of all in a place where, without his consent, we have taken control of his life and thought. The most we can do to help someone else become more moral is to treat him morally, which at the very least means that we do not make him our subject or slave. Prisons, jails, schools, coercive institutions of all kinds, are very good at teaching dishonesty, irresponsibility, immorality and crime. But morality, justice and virtue are precisely what they cannot teach.”

“People who learn, as children do in school, to obey official authority out of fear of disgrace or punishment – sullenly, blindly, like Dr. Milgram’s subjects – irresponsibly – are almost certain to lose the ability either to recognize real and natural authority or to submit to it, willingly, responsibly, and with a whole heart. It is only people who know how to obey for the right reasons who will not obey for the wrong ones, and who will not press the torturer’s switch no matter who orders them to press it.”

* John Holt

**Quote #15**

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

* George Santayana 1905

“a thing which has not been understood

Inevitably reappears; like an unlaid ghost,

It cannot rest until the mystery has been

Resolved and the spell broken.”

* Sigmund Freud 1909

**Quote #16**

 “An individual is seen as progressing along one or another of an array of potential developmental pathways. Some of these pathways are compatible with healthy development; others deviate in one or another direction in ways incompatible with health. …The model of developmental pathways regards an infant at birth as having an array of pathways potentially open to him, the one along which he will in fact proceed being determined at every moment by the interaction of the individual as he now is with the environment in which he happens to be. Each infant is held to have his own individual array of potential pathways for personality development which, except for infants born with certain types of neurological damage, include many that are compatible with mental health and also many that are incompatible. Which particular pathway he proceeds along is determined by the environment he meets with, especially the way his parents (or parent substitutes) treat him, and how he responds to them. Children who have parents who are sensitive and responsive are enabled to develop along a healthy pathway. Those who have insensitive, unresponsive, neglectful, or rejecting parents are likely to develop along a deviant pathway which is in some degree incompatible with mental health and which renders them vulnerable to breakdown, should they meet with seriously adverse events. Even so, since the course of subsequent development is not fixed, changes in the way a child is treated can shift his pathway in either a more favorable direction or a less favorable one. Although the capacity for developmental changes diminishes with age, change continues throughout the life cycle so that changes for better or for worse are always possible. It is this continuing potential for change that meants that at no time of life is a person invulnerable to every possible adversity and also that at no time of life is a person impermeable to favorable influence. It is this persisting potential for change that gives opportunity for effective therapy.”

* John Bowlby

**Quote #17**

“The feeling appropriate to an infant in arms is his feeling of rightness, or essential goodness. The only positive identity he can know, being the animal he is, is based on the premise that he is right, good and welcome. Without that conviction, a human being of any age is crippled by a lack of confidence, of a full sense of self, of spontaneity, of grace. All babies are good, but can know it themselves only by reflection, by the way they are treated. There is no other viable way for a human being to feel about himself; all other kinds of feeling are unusable as a foundation for well-being. Rightness is the basic feeling about self that is appropriate to the individuals of our species. Without the sense of being right, one has no sense of how much one ought to claim of comfort, security, help, companionship, love, friendship, things, pleasure or joy. A person without this sense often feels there is an empty space where he ought to be.”

“So when an infant forms an impression of his relationship to all that is other than himself, he is building the framework which will become his home for life, to which everything will be referred, by which everything will be measured and balanced. His stabilizing mechanisms will be at work to maintain it. A baby deprived of the experience necessary to give him the basis for full flowering of his innate potential will perhaps never know a moment of the sense of unconditional rightness that has been natural to his kind for 99.9% of its history. Deprivation, in the degree to which he has suffered its discomfort and limitations in infancy, will be maintained indiscriminately as part of his development.”

* Jean Liedloff, The Continuum Concept

**Quote #18**

“Sensitive care for children in the early months of life emerges as the most powerful predictor of the quality of the child’s attachment. Parental sensitivity and responsiveness are also associated with a higher level of mastery motivation and higher intellectual functioning at subsequent ages.”

On the other hand – “insensitivity appears to be the central factor accounting for long-term psychological consequences.” (Toddlers, Infants and Families)

**Quote #19**

“After birth, brain growth and the particular ways brain functions are organized are subject to the influence of the infant’s environment. Experience influences which neural pathways will be strengthened, which will remain available, and which will atrophy. Appropriate caregiving and stimulation enhance brain development, whereas understimulation and poor or traumatizing caregiving retard or shape brain functioning in maladaptive ways. From the perspective of brain growth and its effects on subsequent development, the transactions between infants and caregivers take on critical importance.”

* Douglas Davies

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| Emotions are Not Bad Behavior |
| **by Robin Grille**Excerpted from *Heart to Heart Parenting* |

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| **A child's right to receive attention** One of the most commonly heard parental laments is about how children try to get attention. So many behaviors that adults don't like are brushed off as "merely" attention-seeking devices. "Don't worry about him," we say, "he is just doing it to get attention."When children use oblique ways to get attention, such as causing a ruckus, exaggerating or feigning their hurts, picking on other children, showing off, being coquettish - they risk being ignored or put down, as nearby adults roll their eyes in exasperation. Sometimes, this also happens to children even when they directly and openly call for the attention they crave. Instead of scorning the child, why don't we ask these questions: When a child is being manipulative, instead of direct, how did he learn to do this? How did he come to feel that he shouldn't openly ask for a hug, an answer to his question, sympathy or just to be noticed or played with? |
| All children begin their lives with complete frankness about their needs. Babies and toddlers reveal their longings with no compunction: what you see is what you get. If a child reaches out for attention and for warmth and she gets it, her ability to be open and directly assertive is reinforced. By begrudging our children's healthy attention-seeking behaviors, we unwittingly train them to be indirect. We leave them little room for much else, so they go for the attention they need and deserve through the back door. | *We unwittingly train ourchildren to be indirect.* |

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| Our society tends to consider children's needs for attention as a bother. No wonder children become indirect attention seekers, some even going to great lengths to fall ill or get injured in order to be noticed. Children who have too often been denied attention can become insatiable, as if no amount of limelight ever fills their cup. Attention is life-giving, a basic need and a human right. Children deserve all the attention they want. When you wholeheartedly give a child the attention she asks for from the beginning, she soon has her fill. This is precisely what helps her to become more autonomous. As she grows, she asks for less of your attention (research shows that well-attached babies grow into children who are more independent), and when she does want attention, she asks directly, boldly and clearly.**Punished for feeling**Time and time again children are heavily reprimanded for committing the offence of crying or being angry. Let's get this straight: emotions are not bad behavior. Emotions don't hurt anyone. Suppressing children's emotions does, on the other hand, cause them harm: over time, if done repeatedly, it unbalances their brain chemistry, it stresses their immune and digestive systems, and it undermines their ability to relate to others. |
| *Attention is a basic needand a human right.* | Emotional censorship starts early. One of the most common things we say to a crying baby is "Shhh!" We say it soothingly, but why exactly do we shush them? Think of all the lullabies that start by telling our little babies to "hush", and "don't you cry". Have you ever paused to wonder why, in trying to comfort our babies, we ask them to be quiet? It seems as if the first thing we want is for the crying to stop - instead of connecting with our baby until the reason for crying has gone. |

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| Instead of berating your child for feeling her feelings, give her the space to feel, and comfort and support her if she needs it. Sometimes when our children cry, sob or yell in anger we feel overwhelmed, irritated or burdened. Our children don't deserve the blame for this. When our child's emotions press our buttons, we need to own the problem. We need to somehow honor our own need for support or rest without making our children responsible.**What does listening mean?** |
| The listening I am talking about here is not just about receiving and storing information, not just about remembering what your child said. I am talking about listening with your heart, not just with your ears. Real listening is all about feelings. All you need to be a good listener is a genuine interest in your child's emotional world. When you truly want to hear, no special skill is needed. Your child senses your interest in the tone of your voice, in your body language and the look in your eyes. You know you have listened when you feel moved. You might feel compassion, protectiveness, you might feel some pain about your child's hurts, pride or excitement about his achievements, or joy to meet his joy. Listening means letting yourself feel touched somehow, and being aware of the feelings that move through you. | *Real listeningis all about feelings.* |

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| **What listening is not** Sometimes listening comes easy. You find yourself intently listening in stillness, without even having decided to, and there is a wonderful and natural flow between you and your child. But sometimes listening can be hard. Our children's emotions spark off our own, and in discomfort we turn away, or we try to talk them out of their feelings. Whether it's because we cannot bear to see our children in pain or because they are freely feeling something that we were never allowed to express - anger, joy, sadness, fear, passion - we block them out, we nip the connection in the bud. |
| *Anyone canbe a profoundlygood listener.* | I remember the embarrassment many of us felt as students of counseling psychology as we awkwardly practiced our listening skills together in the classroom, how often we appeared to be listening, while inside we were miles away, disengaged from the person speaking to us. It was often funny, and always quite confronting, to ask ourselves and each other: Are you listening right now, or just nodding your head a lot while you wait for your turn to speak? Are you actually listening, or sitting in judgment? Are you really listening, or just taking mental notes and storing facts? Are you listening, or just thinking about how you can change me? |

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| How often we tell ourselves we are listening intently when in fact our minds are wandering elsewhere. It is unlikely that consistently good listeners exist. For most of us, good listening is a skill that comes and goes with our fluctuating moods. All counselors, psychologists and anyone in the helping professions are imperfect (and sometimes lousy) listeners, and we should be honing our listening capacity for the rest of our lives. It is humbling to note that anyone can be a profoundly good listener without any training whatsoever, since all it takes is an open heart and an interest in the other person.**Blocking empathy** |
| It's a fact of human relationships that our capacity for listening is elusive; we lose it, we regain it, we lose it again. Sometimes it is hard to see whether we are listening so that our children really feel heard. We kid ourselves. We think we are listening when really we are avoiding contact - and then we are bewildered by and surprised at our child's frustration. It can be very useful to get a clear picture of what is listening and what is not. When our own fears, our shame, our jealousies or our emotional exhaustion get in the way, we tend to play some pretty clever games to deflect our children's communications so that their feelings won't touch us. One of the biggest reasons we avoid listening is because our children's disappointments make us feel guilty. Our evasive tactics are called "empathy blockers". Empathy blockers save us the trouble of listening, but they cost us our connection with each other. | *Our children'sdisappointmentsmake us feel guilty.* |
| Sometimes we use empathy blockers inadvertently because we are anxiously trying to save our children from emotional pain. Ironically, the greatest salve for our children comes from being heard, not from us trying to change how they feel. For all of these reasons, we all use empathy blockers from time to time, quite automatically and unconsciously. You could say we are all quite skilled at blocking. Here are some of the most common examples used when children become emotional: |

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| **EMPATHY BLOCKER** | **EXAMPLES** |
| **Downplaying** | Oh, don't cry. I'm sure it's not that bad! It's not the end of the world. |
| **Denial** | There is nothing wrong; nothing for you to be upset about. Everything is OK. |
| **Reasoning** | Don't cry. Can't you see that the other child didn't mean to hurt you? |
| **The positive spin** | Look on the bright side. Can't you see, this probably happened for a good reason? |
| **Cheering up** | Don't worry. Here, let me tell you something funny I heard the other day. Here, have an ice cream. That'll cheer you up. |
| **Advising/giving options** | Why don't you try doing this, or that? I think you should just ignore that so-and-so. |
| **The expectation** | You should have known better. Get over it. Don't let it get to you. |
| **Put down** | Don't be silly. Don't be ridiculous. |
| **Diagnosing/labeling** | You are being over-sensitive. |
| **Distracting/diverting** | Hey, have a look at the pretty puppet. |
| **Stealing the thunder** | Now you know how I felt when the same thing happened to me. |

 As you can see, on the surface most empathy blockers are not malicious, they are not ostensibly attempts to shame the child, and sometimes they can even be well intentioned, but they do not help the child to feel heard and connected to you. It might seem surprising, even bewildering, to hear that when you try to cheer up a child who is upset, this can often backfire - she might even feel more distressed, even angry. This is because she feels that her feelings are not accepted when what she actually needs is support for feeling the way she does. If this is hard to understand, then think of the last time you felt deeply upset, offended or anxious and someone told you to lighten up. How did that make you feel? Empathy blockers leave anyone on the receiving end feeling shut out and frustrated, and as if there must be something wrong with them for feeling the way they do. |
| *Our children justwant to be heard.* | Take a few moments to check this out for yourself. Have you ever heard yourself use one, a few or perhaps even all of the above empathy blockers with your child? How did your child respond? Can you imagine what you could have done instead? Now, in case you're tempted to become self-critical, remember: we all put up barriers to listening from time to time. Those of us who teach others about empathy blockers know them too well because we've used them so much ourselves. |

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| By the way, not all of the responses in the table above are always inappropriate. There sometimes is a place for advice or a helpful opinion, but unless we take the time to hear our children's feelings first, advice comes too soon and it alienates our child from us. Before jumping in with advice, we need to ask our children if they want it. The most important thing for us to get is that primarily, our children just want to be heard. First and foremost they want evidence that they are not alone, that someone sees how they feel and cares about them. This makes more of a difference than all the advice in the world. |
| Empathy blockers really muddy the connection between parents and children; they create detachment and distance, and they frustrate children's attempts to reach out. The more we use empathy blockers, the less our children are inclined to come to us with their feelings, the less they want to tell us about their lives and the less they want to listen to us. When we are concerned that our children don't listen to us, perhaps we need to take an honest look at how well we have listened to them. | *Listening is at theheart of connection.* |
| It is sad when blocked empathy diminishes our sense of closeness with each other, and particularly worrisome when our children feel lost or in some kind of trouble but don't turn to us for help. Our children's trust in us is a function of how safe they feel to open up to us without feeling manipulated, expected of, judged, put down or criticized. Listening is at the heart of connection, and if we can't listen well, we cease to be an influence in our children's lives.  |

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**Attachment**

**Functions of Attachment**

* Provide a sense of security
	+ The goal of attachment is to keep the infant feeling secure.
* Regulation of affect (emotional response) and arousal
	+ Though the experience of being soothed, the infant internalizes strategies for self-soothing.
	+ Children who have not been helped to regulate arousal tend to feel at the mercy of strong impulses and emotions. They have behavioral problems because they haven’t developed effective internal ways of controlling their reactions to stress.
* Promoting the expression of feelings and communication
	+ Attachment develops out of transactions. The infant expresses a need and the parent responds. It becomes a vehicle for sharing positive feelings and learning to communicate and play.
	+ Important aspects of attachment are attunement to each other’s feelings, a high degree of mutual involvement and attentiveness and empathy on the part of the parent.
* Serving as a base for exploration
	+ When the child is secure in his attachment – he does not need to be concerned about it – exploratory behavior dominates – exploring from a secure base gives him opportunities to focus on developmental tasks and feel competent.
	+ Toddlers with insecure attachment will be preoccupied with attachment and inhibited from exploring emotionally focusing on attachment.

Attachment Helps the Child

* Attain his full intellectual potential
* Sort out what he perceives
* Think logically
* Develop social emotions
* Develop a conscience
* Trust others
* Become self-reliant
* Better cope with stress and frustration
* Reduce feelings of jealousy
* Overcome common fears and worries
* Increase feelings of self worth (Vera Fahlberg)

**Relating God’s Nature and Character to Our Care of Children**

*Taking a look at Discipline*

“I believe that God designed us to begin our lives as babies, totally dependent and vulnerable, because ***He intended the family to be the setting in which His love was modeled***.” - Floyd McClung, The Father Heart of God

“Our job as parents is to reflect God to our children so they will want to know and love Him. “ –Dr. William Sears

When God’s love is modeled to a child, the child’s concept of love from and for God will not be abstract, it will be real.

**Take a look at the following scriptures, keeping in mind how we can model God’s love to children. Take time to meditate and reflect on a few scriptures (either choose some from the following, or your own choice, these scriptures are just a guide to spark your thoughts).**

**Ask and seek how these truths can be applied to particular circumstances that may come up when working with children at risk. Be specific. What about when a child is misbehaving? Disobedient? Has a tantrum? Disrespectful? Aggressive? Not listening? Not participating? Having a bad attitude? You will face these situations, so take the time now to really think it through.**

**Allow the Holy Spirit to bring revelation and be open to share with the group.**

**Scriptures:**

“Parents, don’t keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves.” (Ephesians 6:4 TLB)

"He shall lead his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs in his arms and carry them close to his heart and shall gently lead the sheep who have nursing lambs." (Isaiah 40:11)

And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:3)

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14)

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.” (Luke 9:46-47)

“You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; *Are they* not in Your book?” (Psalm 56:8)

“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.” (Psalm 34:17)

 “Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.” (Psalm 55:17)

 “The Lord is near to all who call on him. To all who call on him in truth.” (Psalm 145:18)

 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9) and (Deuteronomy 11:18-20)

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing.” (John 15:5 The Message)

 “O Lord you have searched me and you know me… you perceive my thoughts from afar, … you are familiar with all my ways. …If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (Psalm 139 vv1-2b,3b9-10)

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful I know that full well.” (Psalm 139 v. 13-14)

“For the Lord takes delight in his people.” (Psalm 149:4)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 51 vv.23-24).

 “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

“And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people.” (Luke 2:52, The Message)

Isaiah 49:14, “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you.”

Isaiah 40:11 “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.”

 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)

 “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

“Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother’s breast.” (Psalm 22:9)

 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

 “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

 “Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my sighing. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.” (Psalm 5:1-10)

“He will deliver the needy who cry out.” (Psalm 72:12)

 “Be kind and compassionate one to another.” (Ephesians 4:32)

 “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

“A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.” (Proverbs 15:1)

“Gentle words are a tree of life.” (Proverbs 15:4)

“Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs.” (Proverbs 19:11)

 “Since God chose you to be holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.” (Colossians 3:12-17)

"The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.  ...He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve."   (Psalm 103:8, 12)

“The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.” (Psalm 103:13)

**"Your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!"  (Matthew 6:8)**

**"But each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me."  (Psalm 42:8).**

"Don't Lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example."  (1 Peter 5:3)

"Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you?  Does this mean nothing to you?  Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?"  or in the NIV, "...God's kindness leads you toward repentance." (Romans 2:4)

“I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love.” (Hosea 11:4)

“Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.” (1Peter 5:7)

“He is mighty to save, he will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17)

“You will guide me with Your counsel.” (Psalm 73:24)

“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

“Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first.” (1 John 4:18)

“For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breast; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance.” For this is what the Lord says: “I will extend peace like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream; you will nurse and be carried on her arm and dandled on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 66:11-13)

“Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.” (Romans 12: 15-18)

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (Romans 5:8)

“But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.” (James 3:17-18)



Many times we don’t think about applying these scriptures directly to our relationship with children. But they DO apply, because a child is a person as fully deserving of love and respect as any adult. Hopefully you are beginning to see that being a sensitive parent, teacher, caregiver, or child advocate will help you be a more sensitive Christian. And it will help the children you work with to learn about the character of God. You can model your behavior towards children on Jesus’ own compassionate responses to those in need around Him.

**Take it Further:**

Read through the Gospels and note how Jesus treated children as well as adults. How did He disciple the disciples? What character does He want us to demonstrate?

Read through 1 John. How can this book be applied to family relationships?

 Read through the Epistles. How do they relate to our own behavior and how we teach others?

Stop and think about how God has disciplined you. How, exactly did Jesus make you a disciple?

In times of need when you cry out to God, what do you expect? What would you think of God if He didn’t seem to hear you or respond?

Read the story of the Prodigal Son. How does it apply to our responses, attitudes and actions towards the children in our care?

**Love Exercise**

When relating to or disciplining children, the Bible is clear and we all know that we need to have love. So what does that look like practically? 1 Cor. 13 gives a beautiful description of love.

**4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

 **8** Love never fails

**Questions to ask ourselves**

Love -

* suffers long; (am I being patient, or do I expect instant results from kids?)
* is kind; (is what I am doing to this child kind?)
* does not envy; (who am I comparing the child to? “Why can’t I have “good” kids like other parents/teachers/childcare workers?”)
* does not parade itself ; (who am I trying to impress with this child’s behavior?)
* does not get ‘puffed up’ ; (am I trying to make this child behave a certain way because it makes me a “good parent/teacher/childcare worker”?)
* does not behave rudely ; (would my attitude/behavior towards this child be considered rude if they did the same to me? Would I speak this way to another adult or friend?)
* is not easily provoked; (am I taking this child’s behavior personally?)
* does not think evilly, nor rejoice in sin; (does it make me feel better to punish this child because I am getting even with them?)
* rejoices in the truth; (what positive things are true about this child, or am I only focusing on their temporary behavior?)
* bears all things; believes all things; hopes all things; endures all things. Love never fails.

**Spoiled Rotten -- A Timeless Complaint**

**By Alfie Kohn**

*[This is an expanded version of the published article, which appeared in the*Post*’s Sunday “Outlook” section.]*

If the subject is kids and how they’re raised, it seems our culture has exactly one story to tell.  Anyone who reads newspapers, magazines, or blogs -- or attends dinner parties -- will already know it by heart:   Parents today, we’re informed, either can’t or won’t set limits for their children.  Instead of disciplining them, they coddle and dote and bend over backward to shield them from frustration and protect their self-esteem.  The result is that we’re raising a generation of undisciplined narcissists who expect everything to go their way, and it won’t be pretty -- for them or for our society -- when their sense of entitlement finally crashes into the unforgiving real world.

Read ten articles or books on this topic and you’ll find yourself wondering if a single person wrote all of them, so uniform is the rhetoric.  The central premise is that the problem’s dimensions are unprecedented:  What’s happening now contrasts sharply with the days when parents weren’t afraid to hold kids to high standards or to allow them to experience failure.

That’s why no generation of teens and young adults has ever been as self-centered as this one.  Take it from journalist Peter Wyden, the cover of whose book on the subject depicts a child lounging on a divan eating grapes while Mom fans him and Dad holds an umbrella to protect him from the sun:  It’s become “tougher and tougher to say ‘no’ [to children] and make it stick,” he insists.

Or listen to the lament of a parent who blames progressive child development experts for the fact that her kids now seem to believe “they have priority over everything and everybody.”

Or consider a pointed polemic published in *The Atlantic*.  Sure, the author concedes, kids have always been pleasure seekers, but longtime teachers report that what we’re currently witnessing “is different from anything we have ever seen in the young before.”  Parents teach “nothing wholeheartedly” and things come so easily to children nowadays that they fail to develop any self-discipline.  Forget about traditional values:  Today, it’s just a “*culte du moi*.”

Powerful stuff.  Except now that I think about it, those three indictments may not offer the best argument against today’s parents and their offspring.  That’s because they were published in 1962, 1944, and 1911, respectively.

The revelation that people were saying almost exactly the same things a century ago ought to make us stop talking in mid-sentence and sit down – hard.  In fact, the more carefully we look at the cranky-wistful conventional wisdom about how children are raised, the less there is to be said in its favor.

Specifically, let’s consider three questions:  Are parents unduly yielding (or overprotective)?  Are kids today more narcissistic than earlier generations were?  And does the former cause the latter?

**BAD PARENTS?**

Everyone has an anecdote about a parent who hovered too close or tolerated too much.  But is it representative of American parents in general?  Has any researcher, for example, calculated how many parents could be classified as “permissive” -- assuming we can agree on how to define that word?

No.  My own efforts to track down national data – by combing both scholarly and popular databases as well as asking leading experts in the field – have yielded absolutely nothing.  Scholars have no idea how many parents these days are permissive, or punitive, or responsive to their children’s needs without being permissive *or*punitive.  (The tendency to overlook that third possibility is a troubling and enduring trend in its own right.)

Not surprisingly, then, no one has a clue as to whether parenting has changed over the years – and, if so, in what direction.  Researchers have shown that various practices are more likely to produce certain outcomes, but they shrug when asked how prevalent those practices are.  And just as with permissiveness, “you will find next to no scientific data on helicopter parenting,” says Keene State College psychologist Neil Montgomery, using the colloquial term for overinvolvement in one’s child’s life.  The scores of articles and books about this phenomenon rely on carefully selected anecdotes to give the appearance of a trend.

What we *do* know about discipline is that corporal punishment remains extremely popular in this country.  In a 1995 poll, 94 percent of parents of preschoolers admitted to having struck their children within the last year, a fact that’s not easy to square with claims that parents have become softer or more humane.  (Of course, even if spanking had become rarer, that wouldn’t prove that parents were permissive or even necessarily less punitive.)

It’s also interesting that the great majority of contemporary parenting books, seminars, and syndicated columns are focused not on meeting kids’ needs but on making them do whatever they’re told.  Some of the recommended *methods* have shifted over the years, but the *goal* is still compliance.

One of those recommendations is to praise children when they please us or impress us.  “Good job!” is typically employed in the service of getting kids to obey; it’s a verbal reward -- the mirror image of punishment.  When you think about it, the same is true of much so-called “overparenting”:  it’s an exercise in control, not indulgence.  Yet praise and hovering are commonly interpreted as signs of excessive encouragement.

Critics also tend to lump together a bunch of alleged problems that are actually quite distinct:  kids are said to be overscheduled, they’re pushed too hard to achieve, they get A’s too easily, they’re micromanaged by their parents, they’re shielded from failure, they’re not disciplined sufficiently, and so on.   This conceptual sloppiness helps writers to get away with broad, unsubstantiated claims.  And the goal is usually to move parenting in the direction of being even more traditional and controlling than it already is.

**SELF-CENTERED CHILDREN?**

When the conversation turns to what the kids themselves are like, we notice a similar goulash of complaints:  they’re rude, lacking in moral standards, materialistic, defiant, self-centered, excessively pleased with themselves, and more.  Again, these characteristics are very different from one another, and the existence of each would need to be demonstrated.

What *are*interchangeable, in style and substance, are the polemics themselves -- recent books with titles like *Overindulged Children*, *Spoiling Childhood,* *The Myth of Self-Esteem, The Epidemic,* *Pampered Child Syndrome,* *The Omnipotent Child*,*Generation Me, The Narcissism Epidemic*, and countless articles in the popular press.  Trust me:  If you’ve read one of these, you’ve read them all.

Like the “permissive parents” trope, the notion that kids are full of themselves and out of control is decades, if not centuries, old -- despite the critics’ assertion that things are worse than ever.  Jean Twenge, who wrote the last two books on that list, establishes her conservative bona fides with sweeping attacks on anything that deviates from back-to-basics education and old-fashioned parenting.  But unlike her ideological counterparts, she has actually collected some data -- which have received widespread and largely uncritical media attention.

Along with fellow psychologist W. Keith Campbell, Twenge has looked at various surveys of young people conducted over several decades and reported that later groups say they like themselves somewhat more, are more confident about themselves, or score higher on questionnaires intended to measure narcissism than did earlier groups.

But other researchers have questioned these findings, raising multiple concerns about Twenge's methodology: whether it makes sense to combine everyone from elementary school students to 30-somethings into a single “generation,” as she does at one point, whether the groups of young people sampled then and now are truly comparable, and whether those questionnaires are valid.  Two separate groups of researchers then conducted their own analyses -- in one case drawing from additional data -- and discovered no meaningful differences across generations.

The interesting question is why many of us are so willing to *believe* that kids today are excessively self-confident or self-centered.   Social psychologists have described how we selectively notice and remember examples that confirm our assumptions -- which is why “proof by anecdote” is so unreliable:  Look, there’s a parent who’s wimpy.  And my cousin knows a 20-year-old who refuses to work hard.  I *knew* it was true!

But why would we gravitate to these beliefs in the first place?  In an article published earlier this year in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science,* Brent Roberts, Grant Edmonds, and Emily Grijalva, researchers at the University of Illinois, explained that “Generation Me” -- Twenge’s catchy, snide label -- actually reflects people's age, not the age they live in. "Every generation of young people is substantially more narcissistic than their elders, not because of cultural changes, but because of age-related developmental trends."

To that extent, they continue, “when older people are told that younger people are getting increasingly narcissistic, they may be prone to agree because they confuse the claim for generational change with the fact that younger people are simply more narcissistic than they are.  The confusion leads to an increased likelihood that older individuals will agree with the Generation Me argument despite its lack of empirical support.”

In short, “every generation is Generation Me.  That is, until they grow up.”

**ONLY CONNECT…**

There’s no evidence, then, that today’s parents are too permissive, or are more permissive than parents of yesteryear.  And with the failure to corroborate Twenge’s claims, there’s no evidence that today’s young people are more narcissistic.  But even if both were true, critics would have to show that the second phenomenon results from the first.  No one has come close to doing so.

In fact, three recent, and disparate, studies cast serious doubt on that proposition.  The first, published in *Pediatrics* last May, discovered that there is indeed a parental practice associated with children who later become demanding and easily frustrated.  But it’s not groovy, indulgent parenting.  It’s *spanking*.

The second study, by a pair of sociologists, addresses the claim that students with unrealistic expectations -- in this case, about going to college -- will implode when they’re unceremoniously brought back to earth.   Analyzing data based on thousands of young people, they found “almost no long-term emotional costs” when those expectations weren’t realized.

Finally, in a small, unpublished study of the effects of helicopter parenting on college students, Keene State’s Montgomery did not discover any “sense of entitlement” or exploitative behavior; if anything, the closely monitored students tended to be somewhat anxious -- while, at the same time, displaying certain positive qualities such as “the capacity to love, feel supported, and seek out social connections.”

Even if a researcher did show that today’s youth were unusually self-centered, we might be inclined to attribute that to an extraordinary emphasis on achievement and winning in contemporary America, schooling that’s focused on narrowly defined academic skills, excessive standardized testing, copious amounts of homework, and a desperate competition for awards, distinctions, and admission to selective colleges.  Indeed, earlier research has shown that competitive individuals -- or people who have been instructed to compete -- tend to be less empathic and less generous.

In any case, neither logic nor evidence seems to support the widely accepted charge that we’re too easy on our children.  Yet that assumption continues to find favor across the political spectrum.  It seems, then, that we’ve finally found something to bring the left and the right together:  an unsubstantiated critique of parents, an unflattering view of kids, and a dubious belief that the two are connected.

**Early Intervention Programs**

Elements of Programs that Provide the Most Protection for Children’s Development:

* *Timing and longevity.* Programs that start when children are young and continue for several years have the greatest positive effects.
* *Intensity.* Intensive interventions produce larger effects than do less intensive interventions. For example, a program that combines daily attendance at a good preschool with weekly homebased family sessions produces measurable benefits to disadvantaged children, while less intensive interventions make little difference. The more disadvantaged an at-risk child is, the more intensive an intervention must be.
* *Direct Intervention.* Programsthat intervene directly with children as well as with parents produce more change than indirect approaches such as parent training.
* *Comprehensiveness.* Interventions taking an ecological focus that includes individual and family interventions, as well as responsiveness to health, educational, and concrete needs of families, are more effective than more circumscribed programs. The more disadvantaged and at-risk a child is, the more comprehensive intervention must be.
* *Risk/intensity relationship.* Intervention must take into account the degree of risk. While a child with few risk factors may make significant gains from a targeted, low-intensity intervention, another child with multiple risks will benefit only when intervention is both intensive and comprehensive.
* *Continuing intervention and support.* The positive effects of intervention on children in continuing high-risk situations will not be maintained unless there is continuing interventions that pays particular attention to augmenting protective processes in the child’s environments.

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| You Will Hear Voices |
| **by Lu Hanessian** |

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| "Put him down or you'll spoil him." "You don't have to meet all of your baby's needs.""She's just trying to get your attention.""She's so demanding!""He's just a baby; he doesn't have feelings like sadness or loneliness or fear.""He knows how to get what he wants!""She's just crying for nothing. I just fed her and changed her. She's fine.""Crying it out may be painful for a few days, but after that, it's worth it.""Holding her all the time isn't good for her. It creates too much dependency.""Picking him up every time he cries will make him cry to get picked up.""Don't go to her at night. She'll never learn to sleep on her own.""Never bring him to bed with you!""Breastfeeding is a hassle.""She's a little diva!""I can tell he's going to give you a run for your money!""Uh oh! She's going to be trouble.""He has you wrapped around his little baby finger already...""Just wait until the terrible two's...""You can't give in to every whim!""Let her cry for a few minutes before you jump to her rescue.""You will have no life. Just wait and see.""Forget about sleeping. You are setting yourself up for problems for years to come...""Too much attachment is bad. He needs to know where the line is drawn from an early age, or else he'll take advantage of everything he can later on.""Make your baby as independent as possible as early as possible. You'll be thankful you did.""Babies are resilient. They'll adapt.""They won't remember anything..." **What Is Your Own Voice Telling You?**"My baby needs to know he can count on me to respond.""If I couldn't speak, and I needed to communicate something, I'd make myself heard too. And I'd do it louder with every moment I wasn't heard. Why do I want to create that insistent need to be heard in my child? Why do I think that responding would spoil... when, in fact, and so obviously for adults, being heard is validating and fosters connected relationships?" |
| "We know from powerful data that babies absolutely have feelings and emotional reactions to their environment from the time they are in the womb. Amazing studies on mother-baby attachment from around the world show that babies feel very deeply, and can actually turn away and be unresponsive to a parent after stress or suffering the pain of a longer absence. Babies can shut down emotionally, internally, after feeling deep emotional pain and fear. That doesn't look like much on the outside, but there's more going on than we can see with the eye." | *Babies have feelingsfrom the time they arein the womb.* |

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| "Crying it out is such a common North American practice, yet it goes against all of the research on attachment that says that crying it out can change a baby's brain chemistry. And just because a baby looks fine afterwards doesn't mean the crying-it-out process hasn't planted deep seeds of insecurity for later on down the road. Science shows that this kind of stress early on can prime a person for a more stressful and anxious state later." "Babies don't manipulate. They have no agenda.""A baby doesn't cry just to be fed, changed or burped. Babies, like any other human of any age, have a range of feelings. But, because babies don't understand loneliness, anxiety or fear and can't articulate the words, they cry out for us. What else can they say to express that need? And what do we want to say in response to that need?" |
| *Babies don't manipulate.They have no agenda.* | "Babies learn to sleep when they're comfortable and feel secure, not when they've given up trying to tell us that something is bothering them." "My baby won't be sleeping in my bed when she's 14. She needs me now. It's her molars. Or gas. Or a bad dream. And responding to her at night does not create sleep problems later. It prevents them.""Nursing my baby is the most natural thing I can imagine. It is a language of the heart, nature's perfect food, and the spirit's balm." |

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| Why are we so defensive as parents, crouched in the foxhole waiting for the first sign of mutiny? Our children come to us with no agenda.Just like we once did with our parents. The moment we buy into some unfounded cultural fear that we need to tame the wild beast in our baby, we stop trusting our own voice - and our baby - and begin the painful, depleting and chaotic cycle of parenting with fear, shame, doubt, resentment and regret.When we put relationship first, we see through different eyes. We see with the heart.That's a parenting journey worthy of our struggles and most valuable lessons.Enjoy the ride.Detours and all...  |

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**Inappropriate Expectations for Infants and Toddlers**

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Sleeping through the night

Holding the bottle independently

Following an adult-driven feeding schedule

Regulating feelings and emotions

Understanding the meaning of the word “no”

Being ready for toilet training (and staying dry through the night)

Having the motor control to prevent rough, clumsy behavior

Understanding cause and effect

Paying attention for an extended period of time

Remembering lessons from day to day or week to week

Generalizing a rule from one setting to another

Developing a taste for grown-up foods (babies experience sour or bitter tastes more intensely than adults do)

Putting toys away independently

Remaining quiet in settings such as movie theaters or church

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*Martha Farrell Erickson, KarenKurz-Riemer, Infants,Toddlers, and Families, A Framework for Support and Intervention*

**Reframing Infant Behavior**

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| Behavior | Negative Attribution | Reframe |
| Crying | She’s just trying to get at me.She’s such a brat. | She sure lets you know when she needs something.She’s really able to tell you what she wants. |
| Thumb sucking | He’s such a wimp. He’s going to ruin his teeth. | Isn’t it great that he’s found a way to comfort himself? |
| Separation protest | She’s so spoiled. I can’t move without her hanging on my leg. | You sure are special to her. She really knows you’ll take care of her. |
| Getting into things and making messes | What a pain in the neck!He won’t ever stay out of my stuff. | He’s so curious and eager to learn. He wants to see and touch everything. That must be exciting for him. |
| Saying “no!” | She’s so defiant. She’d better learn some respect fast! | She’s becoming so strong and independent. She needs to show you she has a mind of her own. |

**Infant Development**

*Birth – 12 Months of Age*

**Overall Tasks**

* To develop attachments and dyadic strategies for maintaining them
* To gradually gain control over motor skills
* To develop a beginning ability to regulate arousal and affect

**Neonatal Period: 0-4 Weeks**

* Perceptual abilities are present at birth
* Orientation to sound and sights within range of visual acuity (1 week+)
* Orientation to human face and voice (1week+)
* Recognition of primary caregiver (1-4 weeks)
* State modulation begins: alternating states of alertness and habituation to stiumuli (1-2 weeks)
* Discrimination between novel and familiar stimuli (2-3 weeks)
* Cross-modal perception and integration of senses (3 weeks)

**Age1-3 Months**

* Developing capacity for self regulation of body rhythms (with help of caregivers): regulation of sleep/wake and feeding/elimination cycles (1-2months)
* Beginning capacity for regulation of arousal, including dyadic strategies and self-soothing (1-3 months)
* Orientation to external world: using the senses to take in impressions of the environment (2 weeks – 3 months+)
* Interactions with caregivers: beginnings of preferential attachments; focusing attention on caregivers for longer periods; social smiling; cooing (1-3 months)

**Age 3-6 months**

* Development of attachment: consistent recognition of primary caregiver(s): clear preferences for interacting with them; responsiveness to parents’ playful behavior; ability to use attachment relationship to regulate arousal and affect (3 months+)
* Play develops: within the attachment relationship (interactive play and baby games); exploratory play; utilizing the senses; both forms of play gradually become more elaborate and comple (3-4 months+)
* Memory develops, as indicated by the infants’ preference for certain types of pleasurable interactions and play sequences (3 months+)
* Motor skills: gradual development of control over upper body functions, including head and neck control (3 months+), reaching for objects (4 months+), grasping objects (4-5 months+), eye-hand coordination (4-5 months+), coordinating hand movements by bringing the hands together (4-5 months+)

**Age 6-12 Months**

* Initiates play interactions, rather than depending on parent to initiate them; this is evidence for the beginnings of intentionality, goal-directed action, and awareness of cause and effect (6-7 months)
* Intensification of interest in relationships, own body, and the physical world (6 months+)
* Ability to “entertain” self for brief periods, due to interest in the physical world and own body (6 months+)
* Beginning ability for mental representation: the infant apparently can keep the image of the parent in mind for longer periods by remembering him or her (6-7 months+)
* Language and communication: vocalizing and babbling (4-6 months); gestural communication expressed via looking and pointing (8-9 months); understands first words (8-9 months); speaks first words (9-12 months)
* Persistent motivation to develop physical skills, especially locomotion, in a progression of creeping, crawling, cruising, and walking (7-14 months)
* Feelings of autonomy and pleasure based on the development of physical skills; also feelings of frustration and anxiety while the infant is working to master physical skills (6-12 months+)
* Memory: beginning awareness of connections between past and present, and predictability of repeated events, as indicated by reactions to separation from parents; awareness of differences between familiar and unfamiliar events and people, as indicated by stranger anxiety (8-10 months)
* Object permanence: looking for hidden object shows the infant can keep an object she has seen in mind, even though it is no longer in sight (8-9 months)
* Beginning awareness of others’ point of view: joint attention and social referencing (9-12 months+)
* Following simple directions: responding to parents’ words and gestures (9-10 months)
* Imitative learning: watching caregivers to learn how to do things (9-12 months)
* Sense of self begins to develop, based on feelings of self-efficacy (a beginning sense of feeling control over action and communication with caregivers) and self esteem, when the infant feels successful at accomplishing a goal. The development of positive sense of self is strongly related to responsive caregiving (6-12 months+)

**Toddler Development**

*1-3 Years of Age*

**Overall Tasks**

* Balancing attachment and exploration, with increasing movement toward autonomy and individuation
* Internalization of parental values and standards
* Developing the ability to symbolize, through mental representation, play and communication

**Attachment**

* Continuing transactional patterns of regulation of arousal and affect (1-3 years)
* Working models of attachment develop, allowing the toddler to develop some autonomous self-protective and self-soothing behaviors, especially between 24 and 36 months
* Use of transitional (comfort) objects for self-soothing and to cope with separation (16-36months)
* Attachment relationship supports progressive development, including providing modeling for behavior, social referencing, helping the toddler understand the world, encouraging language and communication, and support for autonomous behavior (1-3 years)

**Social Development**

* Toddlers’ egocentric view of the world, combined with their need to feel autonomous and in control, limits their ability to share or acknowledge others’ different intentions (16 months to 3 years)
* Beginning understanding of reciprocity develops through play with peers (2-3 years)
* Imitation of parental behavior implicitly incorporates a beginning understanding of social expectations (2-3 years)

**Cognitive Development**

* Intense interest in understanding and learning about the world (1-3 years)
* Development of conscious expectations, based on memory of prior experiences; awareness of violations of expectations (13 months to 3 years)
* Ability to observe and imitate others facilitates learning (1-3 years)
* Conscious goals and plans: toddlers can formulate plans, consciously remember them, and persist in trying to realize them (18 months+)

**Language and Communication**

* Language learning: after gradual growth in vocabulary from 12 to 18 months, there is a burst of language development; this burst is motivated by the toddler’s growing wish to communicate her experience (1-3 years)
* Two- and three-word sentences are used (18-24 months)
* Rapid development of vocabulary, syntax, grammatical structures, as well as idiomatic usage and pronunciation patterns used by parents (2-3 years)
* Beginnings of mental representation using words, narrative, and verbally mediated thinking (18 months to 3 years)
* Social uses of language develop: using language to share experiences, putting wishes into words, and a beginning ability to slow down impulses by verbalizing them (18 months to 3 years)
* Limitations in language ability are a common source of frustration (and angry behavior) over not being able to communicate (18 months to 3 years)

**Symbolic Communication and Play**

* Sensorimotor play: exploration of properties and functions of objects (1-2 years+)
* Pretend play: imitation of ordinary activities (pretending to eat) or caregiving behavior (1 year to 18 months)
* Symbolic play: substituting one object for another, sequences of actions in pretend (16 months+)
* Play becomes used as the child’s symbolic commentary on his experience, as well asa means to represent and emotionally discharge reactions to stressful situations (18 months to 3 years+)
* Play of toddlers often provides a more complex representation of experience than they are able to express in words (18 months to 3 years+)

**Self Regulation**

* Beginnings of autonomous self-regulation emerge; however, toddlers’ internal means of coping with stress are limited and consequently they continue to rely on dyadic strategies of coping, based on the attachment relationship (1-3 years)
* Toddlers are subject to many sources of uncertainty and anxiety, and have difficulty exerting autonomous control over impulses; impulse control slowly improves during the toddler period (1-3 years)
* Coping mechanisms of toddlers include the following: dyadic regulation through attachment relationships; self-stimulation as an outlet for tension; play as a vehicle for mastering stress; language as a means for communicating distress; imitating and internalizing parents’ ways of regulating anxiety (1-3 years)

**Moral Development**

* Young toddlers’ mobility and strong motivation to explore inevitably causes parents to limit their behavior, often to protect them from danger; the toddler begins to experience a discrepancy between his wishes and his parents’ limits (1-2 years)
* Parents’ direct approval and disapproval, especially when accompanied by strong affects, supports internalization of parents’ rules; at this point, the toddler tries to control his behavior in order to gain the parents’ approval and avoid punishment (1-3 years)
* Internalization of standards: toddlers notice deviations from expected norms and become concerned if their expectations are violated; they evaluate their own performance, feeling good if they have done well and bad if they have not; they have learned their parents’ expectations for behavior – all these factors support the development of self-control (18 months to 3 years)
* Beginnings of prosocial behavior: beginning capacity for empathy may cause toddlers to comfort distressed peers and may help older toddlers inhibit aggressive impulses (18 months to 3 years)

**Sense of Self**

* Self-assertion: insistence on having things their own way and pursuing their own goals imply toddlers’ increasing sense of self-importance (14-20 months)
* Self-recognition: midway through the second year, toddlers can recognize themselves in a mirror, confirming a new sense of consciousness of themselves (18 months to 2 years)
* Egocentrism dominates toddlers’ view of self and others; they tend to emphasize their own needs and point of view over those of others (1-3 years)
* Separation-individuation: awareness of psychological differences and autonomy from parents; toddlers are more vulnerable to separation anxiety and more likely to activate attachment behavior during the most stressful period of separation-individuation, occurring at about 18-20 months (16 months – 3 years)
* Theory of mind: awareness that others have thoughts, feelings, intentions that may differ from one’s own (16-18 months+)
* Beginnings of autonomous sense of self, symbolized by independent behavior and in language by the emerging use of the words “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine” (2-3 years)
* Gender identity: sense of self includes awareness of gender identity (2-3 years)

**Summary of Preschool Development (3-6 years)**

**Overall Tasks**

* Development of play as a vehicle for exploring reality
* Make transition from view of world based on egocentric and magical thinking to a more logical reality-based view

**Attachment**

* Attachment continues to provide security when child is under stress (3-6 years)
* Attachment needs are frequently verbalized rather than simply being expressed in action (4-6)
* Improving memory and sense of time allow child to cope with separations – the child can understand better when a parent will return (4-6)
* Working models of attachment are firmly established and can be generalized to relationships with nonparental caregivers and peers (3-6 years)

**Social Development**

* Development of social skills through interaction and play with peers; social competence gradually develops through peer interactions involving negotiation about play scenarios, conflicts based on egocentrism and possessiveness, and triangular dynamics involving competition and exclusion (3-6)
* Development of verbal approaches to social interaction and conflict resolution (4-6)
* Prosocial interaction is elaborated and more frequent, based on increasing identification with adult models and growing skills in empathy and perspective taking (3-6)
* Exposure to peer group and prosocial values in preschool settings encourages cooperation, sharing, and problem-solving skills (3-6)
* Peers become more important; sustained exposure to peers lead to decreases in egocentrism; the preschooler identifies with peers and is motivated to make interactions with them pleasurable (4-6)
* Friendships based on common play interests develop (4-6)

**Language and Communication**

* Vocabulary at age 3 equals about 1,000 words and continues to increase at a rate of about 50 words each month (3-6)
* Speech becomes clear and easy to understand in most preschoolers (3-4)
* Long, grammatically complex sentences involving 8-10 words and dependent clauses is typical of the speech of preschoolers (4-5)
* Out loud self-talk or private speech, accompanies behavior and play; the child describes and directs his behavior in this way
* Interactive play increasingly depends on language
* Language gradually supplants action as the child’s primary means of communication (4-6)

**Symbolic Communication and Play**

* Preschooler’s play tends to be imaginative, dramatic and interactive (3-6)
* Functions of preschool play: exploration of reality and social roles; mastery of stress; expression of fantasies, wishes, and negative, forbidden, or “impossible” impulses (3-6)
* Distinction between real and pretend: this distinction becomes increasingly clear as the preschool period proceeds; play, which children understand is pretend, helps them begin to distinguish between fantasy and reality (4-6)
* Play provides opportunities for practicing emerging cognitive skills, including cause-and-effect thinking, construction of narrative, perspective taking, problem-solving, and exploring alternative interpretations of reality (4-6)

**Cognitive Development**

* Generalization and thinking in categories increases (3-6)
* Improving memory provides a greater knowledge base for categorizing new information; at the same time, a wider range of categories for information storage increases the chance the child will remember new information (3-6)
* Cause and effect thinking: increasing awareness of causality leads the preschooler to look for causal connections between events; however, limitations in the ability to think logically or emotional arousal may lead the preschooler to mix up cause and effect (4-6)
* Egocentric thinking persists, causing limitations in accurate understanding of reality; types of egocentric perceptions include the following; inability to assume another’s perspective; reversal of cause and effect; attributing the causes of events to the self; transductive reasoning; personalism; animism (3-6)
* Magical thinking and the fusion of fantasy and reality are common, especially when affective arousal, as in trauma, influences thinking. In situations where there is need for “hidden”information, such as figuring out how a seed becomes a plant, the preschool child is likely to utilize fantasy as a way of trying to explain reality (3-6)

**Self Regulation**

* Increasing ability to categorize experience reduces sense of novely in new situations, resulting in feelings of control and less vulnerability to anxiety (4-6)
* Cognitive ability to imagine and anticipate the consequences of behavior contributes to improving impulse control; this ability is increasingly supported by the child’s internalization of social expectations (4-6)
* Inner speech and private speech are used to sort out experience and provide reminders of rules, prohibitions, and expectations (3-6)
* Ability to displace real-world concerns and anxiety into fantasy play and other forms of symbolic expression (3-6)
* Internalization of dyadic strategies of regulations: working models of dyadic regulation are generalized to self regulation (3-6)
* Beginnings of conscious inhibition of emotional expression and arousal (4-6)
* Psychological defense mechanisms: projection, displacement, denial, regression

**Moral Development**

* Gradual internalization of moral values, resulting in the establishment of a conscience or superego by about 6 (3-6)
* Increased self-monitoring; older preschoolers monitor their behavior, applying standards of morality to themselves; however, this Is not done consistently (5-6)
* Guilt develops as a distinct emotion (4-6)
* Rule-governed behavior: with reminders and reinforcement, preschoolers can follow rules at school or home; howevery, they have difficulting abiding by the rules of a game, in part because they cannot emotionally tolerate losing, and in part because the fantasies that games evoke seem more important to them than the rules (4-6)
* Increasing importance of peer relationships helps children control negative or impulsive behavior because they want to maintain the friendship and approval of peers (4-6)
* Moral controls are gradually internalized by age 6 through the following influences: consistent parental monitoring, limit setting, and praising of good behavior; increasing parental expectations as the child’s capacity for self-control matures; identification with parental values; increasing capacity for empathy; increasing peer orientation

**Sense of Self**

* Self-esteem is supported by child’s growing sense of competence, autonomy, and coping abilities (5-6)
* Preschool children who have received parental love and support over time tend to have a positive view of self (5-6)
* Preschool children who have received parental love and support over time tend to have a positive view of self (5-6)
* Identification becomes a basis for defining self; children consciously strive to be like their parents and also unconsciously assimilate parental charactistics (3-6)
* Positive identification helps allay the child’s anxiety about being small an incompetent relative to adults
* Gender identity: children demonstrate increasing awareness of gender identity and culturally based sex roles in play and peer relationships (3-6)
* Sexual sense of self: during the preschool years sexual interests develop, as manifested in preoccupations with the body, increased masturbation, Oedipal interests, and curiosity and anxiety about sex differences (4-6)
* Racial identity: minority children are aware of prejudicial racial sterotypes; the impact of this awareness for self-esteem, however, depends on whether minority children have experienced the positive processes contributing to self esteem described above (5-6)

**Summary of Middle Childhood Development (6 – 11 or 12)**

**Overall Tasks**

* To develop and utilize a sense of calm, educability, and self-control
* To develop real-world skills and a sense of competence
* To establish oneself in the world of peers

**Attachment**

* Child uses autonomous coping rather than attachment seeking in situations of mild stress (6+)
* Rituals symbolizing attachment persist – bedtime routines, gestures of affection (6+)
* Proximity seeking may be activated in situations of severe stress or during transitions (6+)
* Attachment needs are increasingly expressed in friendships with peers (6+)

**Social Development**

* Increasing orientation toward peers, development of friendships (6+)
* Social skills (sharing, negotiation, etc.) develop through peer interaction (6+)
* Development of peer group norms and status hierarchies (6+)
* Elaboration of gender roles and behavior (6+)
* Prosocial behavior, based on internalization of values and improved perspective taking (6+)
* Social perspective taking: increasingly clear understanding of others’ view points, social expectations, and social cues (6+)
* Awareness of the psychological intent of others (8-10)
* Holds two opposing viewpoints in mind at the same time (10-12)

**Language and Communication**

* Basic facility in syntax and grammar established (6-7)
* Gradually increasing understanding of nuance of meaning and more difficult grammatical features such as the passive voice (6-7+)
* Gradually increasing ability to put thoughts and feelings into words (6+)
* Narrative ability – child can tell an organized story (7+)
* Understanding of wordplay, jokes, figures of speech, metaphor (8-10)

**Play and Fantasy**

* Play is increasingly sublimated into a work orientation, emphasizing physical skills and intellectual competence (6-7)
* Play continues to be an important source of pleasure and discharge, but now is increasingly ritualized into games (6+)
* Fantasy play is increasingly ritualized and rule-governed (6+)
* Uses of fantasy include displacement of feelings and wishes into imaginary scenarios and imagining the self in more competent or grown-up roles (6+)
* Interest in collections and hobbies (7-8)
* Interest in games involving planning and strategy (10-12)

**Cognitive Development**

* Increasingly accurate perception of reality (reality testing) (6+)
* Reversibility – systematic ability to analyze perceptions by thinking back over them (6-7)
* Improving understanding of cause and effect; decline in magical thinking (6-7)
* Decentration: decline in egocentrism and increase in decentered thought allow child to distinguish between subjective and objective reality (6-7)
* Concrete operations: process of logic and reasoning can be applied to understand immediate reality (6-7+)
* Development spurt in cognitive functions at about age 7: spatial organization; visual organization ability; time orientation; distinctions between parts and wholes; seriation; auditory processing (6-8)
* Memory: improved registration and categorization of memory contributes to mastery of academic tasks (6+)
* Executive processes: new skills in thinking about problem solving, sustaining attention to intellectual tasks (7-8+)

Self Regulation

* Application of cognitive strategies to self-regulation: logical thinking; representational competence; conscious control of arousal and anxiety; using thinking to delay acting on impulses; conscious intent to stay focused on attainment of goals (6+)
* Internalization of values, expectations, rules and social norms fosters self control (6+)
* Psychological defense mechanisms become more effective in limiting anxiety (6+)
* Desire to receive approval of peers sets limits on impulsive behavior (6-7+)
* Capacity to see conflicting views and tolerate ambivalence improves self control (10 years)

Moral Development

* Decentered thinking and perspective taking enable child to better understand and empathize with the needs of others (6+)
* Development of the conscience (superego) as an internal force controlling behavior (5-7)
* Cognitive understanding of rationales, rules, and norms of correct behavior (6-7+)
* Social conformity and acceptance of authority supports adherence to rules and expectations (6+)

Sense of Self

* Self-esteem based on awareness of competence, status in peer groups (6-7)
* Identification with parents, other adults, and peers as role models (6-7)
* Capacity for self-control influences self-esteem and self-concept (6-7)
* Increasing awareness of identity – personal characteristics, gender expectations, racial and ethnic identity (7+)
* Awareness of racism, negative stereotypes applied to the self (7-8)
* Increasing capacity for self-observation (8+)
* Ability to make comparisons between past and present characteristics of the self (7-8)
* Internalized values create need to gain self-esteem by pleasing oneself, not just others (8)

**Executive Processes and Problem Solving in Middle Childhood**

* *Ability to articulate a problem and generate ideas about what actions can be taken to solve it.*
* *Knowing Cognitive Strategies that will help in problem solving*. For example, a school age child who is told to remember a set of pictures will spend time studying them because she knows the extra attention will help her remember them; by contrast, a 4 year old will not look at the pictures for as long as the school-age child does, apparently because she does not yet understand that a longer study will improve memory.
* *A more flexible approach to problem solving*.A preschool child is more likely to persist in solving a problem in the same way, even if he is not succeeding, while a 9 or 10 year old is more likely to “discard inefficient solutions that are not working and to search systematically for better alternatives.”
* *Longer attention span, ability to resist distractions, and better control of anxiety*.More solid self-regulation, including especially the ability to inhibit frustration and wishes to give up, allows school-age children to keep focused on problem solving even when the problem is hard to solve.
* *Ability to continuously monitor performance*.The child can pay attention to how he is working on a task and evaluate whether he is on the right track.
* *Faith in her ability to think about problems*.A younger child stops trying if she cannot figure out a problem, whereas a school-age child knows from experience that thinking can work.
* *Awareness of shortcomings in thinking*. Older school-age children are usually aware when a solution they have arrived at is inadequate. Unlike preschoolers, who are less concerned about mistakes or ideals of performance, school-age children have internalized standards of performance that cause them to search for the best solution to a problem.