

Obstacles to healthy growth

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Childhood Poor Motor Skills Development The development of motor skills begins at infancy and progresses through early childhood. Motor skills are important because they facilitate physical development and in children. Research studies indicate that the development of motor skills in children is dynamic. According to the dynamic system theory by Esther Thelen, a combination of nature (the child's innate abilities) and nurture (the environment) enables the child to practice and master limb movement (Santrock, 2011, p. 200).

A potential health problem children face in this regard is lack of an appropriate environment to develop their motor skills. Children need open spaces to facilitate physical development and muscle coordination. Children who spend most of their time strapped in cots or inactive may encounter motor coordination difficulties as they grow up. Therefore, parents should raise their children in environments that allow them to crawl and move around freely. Low Attention Span Besides their recreational value, physical exercises improve mental performance of functions like listening. However, elementary school children lack enough time to develop their motor skills due to the long periods of time they spend sitting in class.

Lack of enough physical movements can lead to fatigue, low attention span and poor physical development (Santrock, 2011, p. 207). In this regard, schools should allow elementary-level children exercise breaks every two hours to help them develop and refine their motor skills. Adolescence During early puberty, young people face healthy growth obstacles like eating disorders and drug abuse. These challenges have a negative impact in their social, psychological and physical development.

Eating Disorders Eating disorders in girls result from anxieties and concerns about their body shape and weight (Downing & Bellis, 2009). At puberty girls are aware of the physical changes taking place in their bodies. At the same time, secretion of sex hormones induces physiological changes that cause anxieties. Consequently, girls adopt unhealthy eating habits that could lead to obesity or being underweight. One way of preventing eating disorders is promoting psychosocial maturity in young people.

Studies indicate that psychosocial maturity lags behind physical development today due to the early age at which puberty begins (Downing & Bellis, 2009). Accordingly, it is necessary to develop specific educational programs aimed at promoting psychosocial maturity in adolescents. This will help them deal with anxieties associated with puberty and sexual development. Risky Behaviors Risky behaviors like unprotected sex and drug abuse among adolescents are associated with group (peer) influence and pressure. Young people desire to fit within their groups of socialization, which compels them to conform to group behavior. As a result, they find it difficult to resist behaviors that make them acceptable in the group.

In addition, adolescence is the time when young people experiment with risky activities like sex. Therefore, group and individual counseling is necessary to educate adolescents about the dangers of negative group influence and risk behaviors. Adulthood Substance Use One of the most common health risks that adults face is substance use. According to research studies, alcohol is among the top three causes of death in the U. S. (Brook, et al, 2009).

Smoking and marijuana use among adults is associated with respiratory infections such as cancer and heart diseases. Poor parent-child bonding and lack of parental affection have been identified as the major cause of drug abuse in adulthood. Internalizing Behaviors Behavior internalization involves directing emotions and feelings inward. These are behaviors directed at the self. Examples of internalized behaviors include anxiety, low self esteem, depression, and “ maladaptive coping with internal stressors” (Brook, et al, 2009, p. 563).

These behaviors are associated with unhealthy lifestyles like drug abuse in adulthood. Therefore, promoting close relationships between parents and their children will help avoid internalizing behaviors later in life. Health programs will help affected adults adopt healthy lifestyles.