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[Psychology](#), [Child Development](#)



The purpose of this paper is to conduct a study of two social journals that are concerned with children and childhood conditions and to discuss some general theories related to the development of behavior and social interaction of children. The two social journals selected for this paper are Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal and The British Journal of Social Work. Both these journals are concerned with publishing articles and research papers related to childcare where some of the critical issues are discussed in detail by writers and contributors. This includes a discussion on factors that can have a positive influence on children in their formative years or while they are growing such as music, reading etc. These journals also focus on clinical social work practices with children and address current issues which are directly related to the lives of children and teenagers.

The British Journal of Social Work has recently released a number of articles that cover a wide variety of topics such as the development of therapeutic interventions with children and families and study of attachments for children received into state care or adopted into new families. The Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal has also published a number of articles such as “ Different Histories, Different Stories: using narrative tool to evaluate Children’s Internal Worlds”, studies related to childhood learning disorders like dyslexia and power of music therapy on children and adolescent kids. An understanding of child development is very important because it allows one to appreciate the emotional, physical, cognitive, social and educational growth that children undergo. As children develop into adults, they undergo various stages in which they face biological changes, psychological changes as well as social changes.

There have many theories propounded over the years which have endeavored to explain child development. One such theory which was proposed by Sigmund Freud stressed on the impact that childhood events and experiences have on shaping the personality and mentality of a child when it grows into an adult. Another very important theory was proposed by Erik Erikson. This was termed as Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. In this theory, it was proposed that the development of a child's psychology took place in a series of stages. While Freud spoke at length about psychosexual stages, Erikson's theory dealt with the impact of social experiences throughout life. In his theory, Erikson has outlined eight stages through which a person goes over the span of his life. This starts from the moment a child takes birth and continues till the moment of death. This theory has been very helpful in understanding social interactions, development of values and also the development of the social nature of persons which are a result of social relationships.

With regard to child development, the first four stages that Erikson has outlined in his theory are extremely relevant and enlightening. As the child grows he learns how to trust the people around him, he learns how to take control of his own actions and subsequently over the people and things in their environment and finally they develop a sense of accomplishment and pride in their actions. All these things can be described as the steps that children need to successfully complete to be able to develop into capable and independent individuals. As per Erikson, it is vital that children should learn how to trust those around them because it helps in making a child optimistic and positive and instills a feeling of hope in the child which is very

important when the child grows into an adult. A child who is able to exhibit some amount of personal control grows up to be a person who is safe and confident while those who are not able to achieve this are wrought with self-doubt and a low sense of self esteem.

Being able to assert power and control over others in childhood helps a child in developing a sense of leadership while the absence of this would lead to a lack of initiatives as an adult. As children, those who receive acclaim and appreciation for their work are more likely to feel competent and confidence in their skills. After laying down the stages that help in child development, Erikson stressed on the need for a balance between both sides of the stages.

Another part of child development is the assessment that is carried out in schools which are instrumental in identifying whether the child needs any kind of support or assistance. This core assessment which is usually carried out by social workers to evaluate and report on the identity of a child is very helpful instruments, but they need to be very accurate. In an article published in The British Journal Social Work titled, “ Representing Children’s identities in core assessments” by Jane Thomas and Sally Holland, the authors have conducted a qualitative study to understand the process that social workers adopt. Identity is one of the seven developmental needs of children categorized by the National Assembly for Wales. Even Erikson has identified ego identity or identity as one of the foundations for social interaction. Thus it is very important that children should be able to develop a positive and confident identity about them. In the report, the authors have said, “ The particular category of identity s important because it touches the

heart of one's being, the subjective self and therefore it could be argued that it is vitally important to be sensitive and balanced in how a child's identity is portrayed."

Both these articles and the theories of child development lay full stress on the importance of a positive development of the child psychology. If a child is exposed to positive, joyful and supportive environments in the formative years of his life he will grow up to be a safe and positive person who is confident and is able to build a successful career for himself. The contrary would result in an individual who is full of self doubt, has little confidence in himself and is not able to take any initiative. Since the impact of childhood memories, experiences and events is enormous it has been considered very important and consequently become the subject for much research and study. Many journals also carry articles and papers which detail how different items can impact the child's psyche and play a role in his mental development. Keeping these factors in mind, it is important to be very careful as parents or guardians during the initial years of a child's life.