

# Early childhood development



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## CHAPTER 01: Preschool child

## 1. 1 Preschool child

Preschool age is basically identified as year three to six. In psychology this age group categorize as “ early childhood”. This early childhood stage is more imperative in the child development and their learning procedure. That’s why the concept of preschool has come to play.

Preschoolers are always on the move, exploring their world with excitement, curiosity, and an apparently endless source of energy. The capacity of learning in this stage is enormous. They learn and develop from each experience, association, and adventure that they meet. Having the enough space and opportunity to discover objects and playing environments helps preschool child to develop their imagination and help the motor, language, cognitive, and psychosocial skills that are necessary for his future development.

There are significant physical changes happen in this stage, their height increases by two inches and weight increases by five pounds per year. Female children are comparatively bigger than male children. But there are individual changes in their appearance. The growing rate of human brain very high in this stage. At the age of five is completed, 90% of adult brain is already grown.

Nutrition is very important in this stage but food demand is very low for preschool child. Their demand is totally focus on intellectual curiosity and social skills. Their pattern is different than adults. For an example: They tend

to eat others food, ask more food at others houses but they don't eat them at their own home.

There are some common behavioral patterns can be identified in this early childhood. They speak, suddenly scream and walk while sleep. It is not a problem in behavior but a normal condition. And this is comparatively high in male children. It depends on intellectual development and the nature of social skills.

Enuresis condition can be seen in preschoolers. It is not a disease, but it depends on psychological matters such as unlimited pressure, fear in mind, family and parental conflicts and feeling of unsecure. But they come to an end with the maturity. They use mostly soft toys as transitional objects especially when go to the sleep, because their feeling of security is translated to that object.

Early childhood stage is beautiful and mysterious than all the other developmental stages of a human, so the development of this stage of a human is important to know.

## 1. 2 Early childhood development

Early childhood development is belonging to child psychology field. It is centric concept. And it can be illustrate with various perspectives. There are three main development types.

- Growth

Growth is mainly considered as physical development. It is a growth of external factors like height and weight, and growth of internal organs. In one hand it is a primary growth and comparatively it is a basic process. It is a quantitative concept and physiological. It is already programmed in genes.

- Development

Development is a qualitative secondary concept and more complicated. Language development, cognitive, emotion, personality, culture is belong to this category. This development is more psychological and various social and psychological factors affect to this and more social interaction is needed.

- Maturity

This is a qualitative growth, more complicated and a cultural factor. Maturity means children who are belong to some society, parameters of achievable skills and targets in each age stages according to that society and that child has achieved those parameters or not will be judge the maturity. These parameters vary in society to society. So the maturity of children in two societies will be not similar. The maturity can be varying from person to person, family to family in a same society.

Early childhood development was mainly ignored throughout the history. Children were considered as small versions of adults and slight awareness was paid to their language practice, cognitive capability, and physical growth.

Understanding the early childhood development means to understand the behavioral, cognitive, psychosocial, language and motor development that children get through their early childhood stage. Psychologists state about

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early childhood development in according to different views. The theories by Sigmund Freud stressed out the importance of early childhood actions and experiences that almost completely focused on mental disorders than normal performance.

According to Freud's early childhood developmental theories it is clarify as a progression of ' psychosexual stages.' In " Three Essays on Sexuality" (1915), Freud says these stages as oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital. Every period connect the fulfillment of a libidinal desire and be able to afterward play a role in adult personality and behavior.

Erik Erikson says that each period of child development based on overcome a conflict. As an example, the main conflict through the early childhood stage engages in creating a feeling of personal identity. Success or failures within the conflicts at each period can impact on the whole functioning. For an example, failure to develop a personal identity results in role confusion through the adolescent stage.

Early childhood development can be discussed under five developmental areas. Those are identified as;

- Motor development
- Behavioral development
- Psychosocial development
- Cognitive development
- Language development

#### 1. 2. 1 Motor development

As a child grows, the nervous system turns into more mature. When this happens, the child becomes capable of performing more and more complex actions. The rate at which these motor skills come out is sometimes a worry for parents whether or not their children are developing these skills at a normal rate. As mentioned above these rates may differ somewhat. However, almost all children begin to show these motor skills at a quite consistent rate unless some type of disability is present.

There are two types of motor skills:

- Gross motor skills engage the larger muscles with the arms and legs. Events involving gross motor skills include running, walking, sense of balance and coordination. When assessing gross motor skills, the factors that specialists look at contain strength, movement, muscle tone, quality and the variety of movement.
- Fine motor skills engage the smaller muscles in fingers, eyes, toes, and other parts. The events that involving fine motor skills tend to be more complicated, such as writing, drawing, grasping objects, waving, tossing and catching.

Although the preschool child is able to Run, jump, and to climb steps, he has no perfect balance to complete some movement. By sensitive motor activities the child can touch fine spun things, pick things as plates, and cup handles etc by two fingers. Motor coordination is good as the child can obey to the commands. The child can play with building blocks, can tie their shoes, keep some object in another place, handle their fingers so he can get

his meal alone, they can stand in one leg but can't jump in one leg and they stabilizes his hands in this stage. That is called handinance.

### 1. 2. 2 Behavioral development

Behavioral theories of early childhood development focus on how the environmental interaction of a child influences behavior and are supported upon the theories of theorists such as John B. Watson, Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner. These theories deal only with visible behaviors of children.

Development is considered as an outcome of rewards, stimuli, punishments and reinforcement. But this theory varies significantly from other child development theories as it provides no consideration to internal thoughts or feelings. Instead, it focuses only on how experience shapes who they are.

### 1. 2. 3 Psychosocial development

Most significant thing in this period is the growth of “ self concept”. That is the understanding and image of a child about himself. The child begins to separate himself from others. Child can make a self description but it is not a self general description. Egocentrism come forward in every speech. But have no ability to say what type of person is he.

Emotions are social friendly, empathetic, love and sympathetic and good volunteers. According to theories of Sigmund Freud in early childhood, the satisfaction migrate anal stage to phallic stage. They accomplish their satisfaction by attaching the sexual shapes. Gender difference is identifying in this stage.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development takes place through early childhood and is focused on children developing a greater sense of personal control.

Like Freud, Erikson believed that toilet training was a very important part of this procedure. However, Erikson's reasoning was quite different than that of Freud's. Erikson believes that educating to control one's body functions guides to a feeling of control and independence. Other significant actions include gaining more organize over food selection, toy choices, and clothing selection. Children who successfully complete this stage feel safe and confident, and who do not are left with a feeling of insufficiency and self-doubt.

Throughout the preschool years, children start to declare their authority and control over the world during play and other social interactions. Children who are successful in this stage feel talented and clever to guide others. Those who fail are left with guilty feeling and self-doubt.

#### 1. 2. 4 Cognitive development

According to Piaget's developmental theory, this stage is identified as preoperational stage. Age 2 - 4 symbolic activity stage and age 4 - 6 mental activity stage.

In symbolic activity age they have thought but it is symbolical. Symbols are essential to think and identify colours. They can work with colours and shapes but not with letters. In this stage they are so clever to imitate. They



imitate by collecting symbols. For an example if child is imitating his father, he wear his shoes, cloths and bag etc.

In mental activity stage the preschool child attempts to understand the world realistically. By constantly questioning his realistically thinking is developed. Answers should be given as he understands and it is not advisable to answer lies. The intelligent child always question about things. Sometimes they speak alone, that is a quality of intelligence.

Language is the most flexible way of mental representation. Piaget believed that sensorimotor activity provides the foundation for language, just imitation and make-believe play.

- Make-believe play

Make-believe play increases dramatically throughout early childhood. Piaget believed that by pretending, young children practice and build up newly acquired representational methods. Make-believe play regularly becomes less self-centered. Socio-dramatic play is the make-believe play with peers that first come into sight around age 2 1/2 and increases rapidly until 4 to 5 years.

Preschoolers who spend extra time at socio-dramatic play are higher in common intellectual development and seen as more socially capable. Recent research shows that children who have exhibit more complex socio-dramatic play, are advanced in psychological representation, and are friendlier with peers.

- Spatial Representation

Spatial understanding improves fast over the third year of life. Children realize that a spatial symbol locates for a specific condition of affairs in actual world. Providing children with lots of opportunities to study about the purpose of varied symbols, like picture books, maps, models, and drawings, improves spatial representation.

Egocentrism and animism is more important factors come up with cognitive development in early childhood. Egocentrism means build up a self centered philosophy. They draw me, my mother, and my home likewise a world that built up around him. They draw their own image in bigger scale. Sharing and caring must be trained after age of 03.

Animism means the belief of that every objects have live qualities, like feelings, thoughts, and intention. So they punish if they hit, teach to dolls talk with objects like trees, furniture, toys, moon, sky etc.

### 1. 2. 5 Language development

By the age of 6, a child will have quick achievement of vocabulary with words about 10, 000. Rapid mapping is connecting a new word with a fundamental concept after only a brief encounter. Young preschoolers seem to obtain labels for the objects quickly. Words for events as well as modifiers that submit to visible features are found in large numbers,

The attitude of mutual exclusivity is the statement by early childhood stages of vocabulary increase that words mark completely separate category.

Preschoolers expand language meanings throughout descriptions connecting tangible and by sensory comparisons with their adults.

### 1. 3 physical environment and early childhood development

Early childhood development is related to the quality of the physical environment, and that the quality of preschool is related to the quality of the physical designed environment.

There is a growing awareness internationally of the importance of early learning, its impact on the individual child, and the wider implications of early learning on the social and economic capacity of communities and nations. Alongside teacher and program quality, the physical environment is seen as a critical partner in a child's cognitive, social and physical development, described by many as the '*third educator*' (Hebert, 1998; Moore & Sugiyama, 2007).

The quality of the physical environment has been linked to positive learning outcomes, with a small body of research illustrating how the design of interior (e. g., room size, layout, furniture, lighting, noise) and external (e. g., outdoor spaces, nature, play equipment) space in an early learning childcare environment may enhance children's learning and development (Evans, 2006).

With differences in the developmental characteristics of children, the design of schools and the classroom needs to provide positive and enriching experiences in which children can move, explore, experiment, and discover for themselves. Children interpret the environment holistically and evaluate it for all the ways they can interact with it; they use the environment to aid their development and improve themselves (White, 2004).

Educational theorists and practitioners have always recognised the importance of physical space in an early learning environment, with prominent theorists such as Werner, Piaget and Montessori arguing that a child's environment is crucial to their development and that educational environments should be rich in stimuli, providing opportunity for exploration and testing (Moore, 1987). The design of the physical environment should facilitate a child's sense of competence (their capacity to explore their physical world with independence), creating opportunities for learning and play (Maxwell, 2007).

In 1990s researchers are continuing to discover in detail that how the physical environment impacts early childhood development. For an example, Alton J. De Long et al. (1994) revealed that by changing children's sense of space, they change their sense of time. In this experiment, the authors built a smaller scale structure inside their classroom that is child-sized, moveable, screened-in porch. They discovered that preschooler played complex in this structure; they played faster and spent more time than when they played in the natural classroom. These results suggest that we are able to boost children's concentration spans and help to process information more speedily by changing the scale of their physical environment.

A modern pioneer in curriculum studies, Joseph Schwab (1973), was strong in his idea that curriculum makers must consider four elements of equal level: the child, the educator, the subject matter, and the environment.

According to early childhood settings, Judith Seaver and Carol Cartwright (1986) present examples of direct relations between classroom design and

curriculum activities. In their point of view, “ the environmental setup should be determined from theoretical principles and connected to the daily schedule of activities.” They discuss about environmental design in relative to three educational philosophies. These philosophies are:

1. Maturationist-focusing on topics and experiences through “ informal, incidental, and unstructured activities.
2. Behaviorist-focusing on topics and skills through “ formal, planned, and structured activities.
3. Cognitive-focusing on skills and experiences through “ informal, structured, and unstructured activities.

In maturationist programs physical environment are designed “ to develop children’s sense of freedom and mobility.” For an example, all equipments are displayed and are easily accessible. Children have chance to be in contact with a spacious environment that contains clearly marked activity areas which are easily noticeable and connected by pathways.

In behaviorist programs “ the physical environment is clean, arranged, uncluttered, and apposite for focused work.” The classroom is arranged to “ focus attention and keep away from conflicts and distractions.” The structure is closed and pathways must direct preschoolers to specific activities. These activity areas are separated from each other to provide privacy and both group and individual work.

In cognitive programs, the activity areas are “ a combination of the open maturation areas and the more formal controlled work areas of behaviorist program.” These areas must define carefully to give children opportunities

for coping with change, to keep away from uncertainty and competition.

Pathways allow children to move “ with a sense of purpose”.

Relationship between physical environment and philosophy also offer a theoretical framework to understand the more specific interactions between the environment and child behavior and development.