

Changes in the concepts of childhood sociology essay



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Discuss how childhood has changed since the nineteenth century. How do constructs from this period continue to act upon current attitudes to childhood?

What is childhood? ? ?

Childhood, the early old ages of a individual ' s life, between birth to about 8 old ages, is besides considered most beautiful, most meaningful and most of import portion of life for a human being. The importance of childhood can be understood by detecting the fact that though many scientists have different theories to specify the procedure of human development they all agree on the importance of childhood and experiences in that clip holding a profound affect on an person ' s life. Many researches have been made on the procedure of human development and tough there are many proposed theories the existent difference between them is about how complex the relation truly is between the phases and non what the phases truly are. The

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differences are intrinsic non extrinsic. They all agree that childhood is a clip when a individual is traveling from concrete to abstract idea.

Man did learn scientific disciplines such as star divination, numerology, mathematics etc but the construct of schooling was lacking. Peoples merely knew every bit much as was required to merchandise and gain a life. A survey conducted on kid development concluded that in the twelvemonth 1750 about 33 per centum of babies and new born babes were left on doorsills or societal attention places by parents. (Archard, 1993) Poor kids were besides made to work in land mines and other industries by their parents to gain a life. Attempts to eliminate kid labour have been made over centuries by the responsible authorities organic structures in different states and societal public assistance organisations in the universe. But it seems that despite the altering perceptual experiences towards childhood, statistical information proves otherwise.

The beginning of specific kid development theories and recognition of these theories merely day of the month back to some 200 old ages ago, in the 17th and eighteenth century. An acclaimed name, in this respect is of Professor Malcolm W. Watson. (Heywood, 2001) He researched on Human Development and formed theories that are still studied and followed. Consequences of his findings emphasized on six major theories by different people in different times.

These theories focus on different phases adult male goes through from babyhood to adulthood. Detailss of how environment and other factors affect childhood are besides underscored.

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The theories encompass effects and behavioural alterations in adult male and what we opine about our ain egos, be it scientists, research workers or a common adult male.

Psychodynamic theory-Sigmund Freud. (James, 2004) This theory says that human psychological science can be broken down in to three separate parts. These are viz. “ the Idaho, the self-importance and the superego ” . Id is the infantile portion of our personality and its drive force is nutrient, heat and grasp and the sexual thrust. This side of every being is so balanced by the other two parts i. e. self-importance and superego. The superego is contradictory to id. It is that portion of human personality which enables us to command one ego. Through this one acts in a socially acceptable mode. The self-importance is some where in the center of these two extremes. Most of our problems arise from equilibrating between the Idaho and the superego.

“ Oedipus complex ” is another really of import entity of Freud ‘ s theory. This phase is when the kid develops feelings for his opposite sex parents. Boys wish to take topographic point of their male parent and be the caput of the household and act as a hubby to their female parent but at the same clip they respect their male parent and fright that if they cross bounds they will hold to bare the effects.

Psychosocial theory by Erik Erickson (Kehily, 2003) He coined the celebrated phrase “ Identity Crisis. ” His personality theory had 8 phases from babyhood to old age. These were 1. Hope, 2. Will, 3. Purpose, 4. Competence, 5. Fidelity, 6. Love, 7. Caring, 8. Wisdom. Erik was the first to

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convey forth the impression that development is spread over our full lives and non merely childhood.

Integrated Attachment theory- John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth: This theory originated in the early old ages of 1950s and was a joint attempt by John Bowlby, specializer in child psychopathology and a psychologist, Mary Ainsworth. The construct is based on relationships and connexions developed in the annual old ages of our life. Besides existent life issues in a kid ' s life pertaining to loss and separations with which he had emotional ties are emphasized upon in the theory.

Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura: This theory was a modified version of the traditional acquisition theories. It says that larning is the same in babies, kids, grownups and even animate beings. Albert says that all respond to stimulus.

Cognitive Mediation theory- Lev Vygotsky: Supporting many other major theoreticians, Vygotsky opines that larning comes foremost and paves manner for development. Harmonizing to his theory, a kid learns through other persons around him i. e. parents, instructors, siblings and other kids. He says that developing ideas and new accomplishments is based on people in the environment we live in and our interaction with them.

Cognitive developmental theory- Jean Piaget: Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist says that kids learn by constructing their ain cognitive universes. He believed that person ' s go through four phases of understanding. All of these are age related.

Sensorimotor phase: This is from birth to two old ages of age. In this first phase, babies coordinate the senses of seeing and hearing with physical and motoric experiences to understand. Therefore, the name sensorimotor.

Preoperational phase: It goes on from two old ages of age to seven old ages. Child at this phase get down associating the universe and their milieus with words and images. They go beyond the centripetal experiences in this phase.

Concrete Operational Phase: This 3rd phase stopping points from 7 old ages to eleven old ages. " Children can execute operations, and logical logical thinking replaces intuitive thought every bit long as logical thinking can be applied to specific or concrete illustrations. For case, concrete operational minds can non conceive of the stairss necessary to finish algebraic equation, which is excessively abstract for believing at this phase of development. "

(Mayall, 1994)

Formal Operational Phase: The concluding phase is from 11 to 15 old ages. Children move farther from concrete ideas to abstracts and logical thought. As a portion of abstractive believing they create conjectural ideal fortunes and so compare their ain life with these criterions, infering a satisfactory decision.

In a nutshell, childhood is the clip when we are understanding simple operations in order to be able to understand and maestro composite undertakings in future. We need to place the environment around us and utilize linguistic communication to do connexions to objects and the universe in general. If this basic apprehension is defective, the hereafter would surely keep a batch more surprises, and many of them would be unwelcome.
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Merely when a kid to the full understands the universe about is he truly able to hold on abstract constructs and utilize logic to make meaningful decisions in future.

Having now understood what childhood is all approximately, how a human head is developing, in phases, to understand the universe it is introduced to and how of import this portion of life is in your life and mine, allow us now take a expression into how childhood has been different for people in the past century and the present.

Childhood in the eighteenth century

Compared to

Childhood in the nineteenth century

To get down with, the intervention of kids with uttermost attention, particularly in their earliest old ages, is a reasonably recent impression.

Before the eighteenth century, child mortality rate was so high that people had a batch of kids of whom merely a few really survived. Parents could non afford to acquire excessively emotionally attached to kids until they crossed a threshold age where opportunities of endurance became greater than opportunities of decease. In France, during the seventeenth century, between 20 % -50 % of babies died in their first twelvemonth. (5) (Wyness, 2000)

Zelizer, in his book, Pricing The Priceless Child, tells us how in the in-between ages, Spanish kids when they died could be buried anyplace on the premises, instead like a cat or Canis familiaris, frequently, their organic structures were sewed together into pokes and set indoors common graves.
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In early Arabian civilizations, the birth of a female kid was considered a load, it was mourned upon and in instances the baby was buried alive. Religion played a critical function in commanding fickle human behaviours and in both the E and the West, the spiritual establishment was the first to acknowledge the rights of kids and honest traffics with them. The following tabular array describes how faith basd establishments have provided childhood attention installations in the African continent. (Linda, 1984)

With clip and with the slow but steady spread of instruction, the universe started going a different topographic point wholly, particularly in regard of the rights of kids, and that happened largely during the 18th and 19th centuries. We have, as the human species, come to recognize that childhood is non merely a biological stage in life. It holds much more significance ; it gives birth to a societal being that embodies the belief system of on an full public at a point in clip. Parents ' attitudes toward kid bearing and rise uping have undergone drastic Reconstruction in modern times.

nineteenth Century Concepts:

In the nineteenth century kids did non hold a important importance. No formal instruction and larning took topographic point inside places. Mothers by and large did non hold the consciousness to pass clip with their kids and foster them. A male parent in every place has been the breadwinner since times immemorial but adult females in the nineteenth century besides joined the earning conference. Till the early nineteenth century kids were used to gain a life and a survey shows that more than 50 per centum of mill workers were kids under the age of 11 old ages in northern parts of the universe.

They were made to work hard and execute risky occupations such as <https://assignbuster.com/changes-in-the-concepts-of-childhood-sociology-essay/>

cleaning up narrow chimneys and traveling down cramped tunnels owing to their little size.

Most historiographers would hold that kids in present twenty-four hours universe are much better off than the kids in past centuries. But they continue to debate the extent to which childhood has changed since the nineteenth century and how the grownup ' s attack to childhood and covering with kids has altered. As such, kids in past centuries worked with their parents from a really little age. But it was the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century which really caused the origin of child labor.

Research workers in the field of human development take one of two stances when explicating early childhood. They hold either an essentialist position (which considers childhood a commonality that is no different in any portion of the universe, more a biological province than anything deeper) . The other position to childhood, the constructionist position pictures childhood as being different in different civilizations and different times. A kid in Japan would be basically different than a kid in Britain. The kids of one state would besides be much different at different times. We can merely take a expression at the kids around us and see the difference between our childhood and theirs to hold on the importance of the constructionist position.

Cross cultural differences in childhood and its perceptual experience by seniors is linked to the societies ' sense of a kid ' s liberty. It was considered an a critical facet of Western civilizations (Holland, 1992) but was non so outstanding in eastern 1s. While western female parents emphasized on learning their child personal values and their rights at, each portion of their <https://assignbuster.com/changes-in-the-concepts-of-childhood-sociology-essay/>

lives, Nipponese and Pakistani female parents have ever emphasized more on differential intervention of seniors and good idiosyncrasy (Gittens, 1998) The difference, as we see it obviously today, is that Nipponese kids display greater sensitiveness and self discipline while American kids are more confident and expressive. However, it has long been a topic of statement between research workers that irrespective of the huge differences in child raising schemes across many civilizations the cardinal importance of parentage comes out in the signifier of heat and credence against rejection and disregard (Jenks, 1996) However whether eastern civilizations have been more hostile toward the kid in the yesteryear or western civilizations have been more so is a affair of argument. While western civilizations have displayed a by and large rigorous attitude toward the childrearing and the deficiency of recognition to their a kid ' s ain liberty, eastern civilizations on the other manus believe that stringency, control and and even bodily penalty are but ways to shw a kid how much a prent attentions. While the Chienese may see American parents less caring for their kids ' s development of of import societal virtuousnesss, the American parent may see Chinese as wholly autorotarian and irrational (Higgonet, 1998) However, another psychological statement presented by

Scientists says that in such collectivized cultural agreements as the Chinese, Nipponese or Indian, autocratic and restrictive parenting patterns are necessary for keeping harmoniously stable society.

Literature on childhood from different civilizations across the universe have shown two chief watercourse belief systems, the construct of childhood as Dionysian and Apollonian (Jenks, 1996) The Dionysian belief, taking from <https://assignbuster.com/changes-in-the-concepts-of-childhood-sociology-essay/>

the Greek fabulous figure Dionysus (Prince of vino, nature and revelry) assumes that every kid is born with immorality or corruptness in its nature imbued in their scruples. The Apollonian kid is considers, from nature, the really image of beauty, poesy, sunlight and visible radiation. This is the belief that is prevailing today in the twenty-first century but did non be in earlier centuries.

While 19th century kids were treated instead similar animate beings. The industrial revolutions laid the foundations for the market for low paid kid labor. IN fabric mills, they worked every bit many as 12 hours a twenty-four hours. As instruction crept into the multitudes the parliament began go throughing Torahs to restrict kid labor, but the first effectual regulation, emforced with the aid of mill inspectors, came about in 1833. Education was non considered a necessity for every kid and the duty of the province every bit tardily as 1870 and even so the poorest members of society could non afford school fee which were abolished in 1891. Victorian kids were used to whippings and in utmost fortunes, hapless kids were forced to have on a cap which said ' dunce ' intending ' a stupid individual ' . Children dressed like grownups, were supposed to move like grownups and were treated in both love and hatred as grownups. The extent of disregard towards kids can be seen by the fact that the first public park for kids was build every bit tardily as 1859 in the metropolis of Manchester. To us so, the 100s of complex Torahs that protect kids from immoralities makes extreme sense. Sexual and physical maltreatment, erotica, whippings and even simple disregard are considered offenses against childhood. Particular Torahs for the particular intervention of kids are now in topographic point to guarantee that kids are

treated with delicate attention. It seems that parental fondness is not much of an inherent aptitude but merely a contemplation of what parents consider to be their responsibilities toward their offspring. (Higgonet, 1998)

It is a fact that parents in our universe today can exert less power over their kids than in the yesteryear because a portion of kid raising is controlled by the province (Donzalot, 1980) . However these ordinances have been brought into action to restrict the abuse of parental authorization over kids. Good parents can still be good parents, in fact, outside intervention in matters such as household etiquettes, a kid ' s feeding, dressing, kiping and amusement wants and the scene of acceptable beahvorial criterions is considered a breach of the parents ' right. The province normally merely intervenes when it fears that the kid is being sick treated or when it believes that the kid is non good brought up and would be a danger to those around him or her. John Hood Willams (1990) points out that kids ' s lives are controlled by their households in rather a array of ways. Their societal infinites are purely defined, their times are set by seniors, their apparels and haircut is capable to the parent ' s image of decency or acceptableness. Parents even provide regulations to be followed when eating, walking, speaking and even standing in a crowd. Children are the most vulnerable to bodily penalty or all other members in the human society (Kline, 1993)

However, nineteenth century and present twenty-four hours childhood is immensely different. Today ' s universe is rather different than in the past century. Science and engineering have rocketed human apprehension of life many times over. Though the industrial revolution laid the foundations of all the advancement we have seen in the past two hundred old ages, the <https://assignbuster.com/changes-in-the-concepts-of-childhood-sociology-essay/>

greatest velocity in the development of scientific disciplines and find has been hosted by the past 60 -70 old ages. Increasingly, the universe has accepted that it is a planetary sphere and non one divided by geographical boundaries. Cross cultural cognition exchange has lead to a different public which is ready to take on facets of other societies about readily. The media and cyberspace have, without a hint of uncertainty, the greatest importance in the life of the modern kid. Children are non merely cognizant of manner, tendencies and coursework, they are besides cognizant of their rights and that 911 can salvage them from a parent ' s physical or emotional maltreatment. At the same clip that the present century is a approval on kids, it should besides be brought into history that the 20th and 21st centuries have made childhood much more prone to corruptness than old centuries. To get down with, our environment is in a province of dismay, pollution and the green house consequence have get downing runing glaciers. Sea degrees continue to lift and natural catastrophes have begun to impact worlds in of all time increasing ways. While states emphasize on going wealthier and more powerful, they continue to spread out their industrial and technological skylines but do non put due importance to the physical and mental development of a kid. Physical activity (particularly athletics) for kids has become an endangered species while computing machines and nomadic phones have taken their topographic point as a kid ' s amusement activity. Life has become fast and so much so that we enjoy and prefer fast nutrient even if it delivers highly low nutrition value and high cholesterin degrees. Drug and sex maltreatment of kids seems to be lifting steadily, despite the bing Torahs to modulate such unacceptable actions.

Terrorism, extremist idea and the spirit of revolution among young person
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have made childhood an age where there should really be more protection and concern from parents and the province.

A kid ' s cognitive and socioemotional development is hence at the head of modern universe ' s schemes to rise up better kids. Cross cultural psychological surveies have discovered that there are many ways in which cultural factors help in developing a sound kid who would subsequently develop into a socially acceptable individual.

The organisation of physical and societal apparatus in a surrounding, dictated by civilization has a profound affect on the kid ' s idiosyncrasy and activities.

Prevalent societal values, imposts and norms provide a medium to measure his ain acceptableness or conformance in a society.

Parental beliefs and patterns, which have been molded by civilization drama a mediating function in a kid ' s apprehension of the universe in which he/she lives.

Contemporary societies use the schooling system, besides built around their ain cultural value, to implant certain degrees of acceptableness standards in the heads of kids.

(Gittens, 1998)

For the wide minded modern kid, many pieces of information, the case of sexual information, is rather of import in order to be able to execute in an agreeable manner. It has already been shown by research that romantic

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ideals pave manner for adult females coming to footings with their sexual thrusts and experiences. (Woodhead, 2003) At the same clip male childs, who barely portion romantic ideals with their parents tend to take on their masculine audaciousness to cover with love and sexual engagement. This eventually leads to a form of married life (seen among the general public) where adult females barely get to the emotional intimacy they expect to have from their hubbies.