

# Galinsky's 6 stages of parenthood



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The past of parenting is parallel to the growth and development of a child and thus as the child grows and develops, so are the parents as they move from one particular stage to another. The experience of parenthood, being complex and diverse, there are some common threads that are similar between parents in their experience in raising their children. Parenting practices will differ concerning first born and later born siblings in a family even at the same ages (Berns, 2012).

The first stage of parenthood involves image making and parents, at this stage begin shaping their roles as parents before the arrival of the child. The parents will create an image of what comes ahead in terms of the birth of the child and parenting behaviours. The parents will have this image in their entire life because parenting will be a lifelong process. Growth then occurs when the parents modify an image that is consistent with the reality that is happening.

Nurturing is the stage that occurs when the child is born to the time it starts speaking simple words. Parents do comparison of themselves and that of their child to find available discrepancies. Discrepancies present between the imaged child and the actual child is done by parents getting to know the child by touching and caring for it. At this stage, there is bonding and the parents become attached to the child. Parents face questions relating to their priorities; how much time they will devote to the child and how much time they will have for doing their other duties.

Authority stage begins when the child is two years to when it is five years, and parents are faced with the task of deciding the kind of authority to be put in place, the rules to be followed and consequences of breaking the rules. Parents, having assured themselves of their identity, develop an

attachment to the child, are faced with the task of accepting the authority they have over the child. This is the stage where they come to understand the child is not their extension; therefore, they form images of getting angry, having unconditional love, and having disciplinary actions that are different from those of their parents. There are parent/child relation problems, and the big question at this stage is how to solve problems that occur.

Interpretive stage has its onset when the child begins preschool years to onset of teenage. With the entering of the child into kindergarten, the parents ask themselves whether they have been realistic and they evaluate the past in order to prepare for changes coming. The task in this stage is for parents to the existence of their children to them, and they respond to the child's easy and not easy questions and concerns. This causes the parents to revive their thoughts, beliefs and values, thus pulling together their belief in order to translate them to the child (Gestwicki, 2012).

Independent stage is the stage that spans the teenage years of the child and predominated issues during authority stage arise. Parents will become aware of what has often been unaware about the child, and they will experience shocking changes in the child in terms of behaviour, clothing, and physical growth. The changes experienced are often dramatic to the parents and the parents will not have a clear image of the child. This stage has many dangers to the child with the diminishing powers of the parents. Parents must know themselves in order to handle this stage well because the teenager has the task of developing his identity.

Departure will take place when the child leaves home and parents, at this stage, evaluate whether they were able to achieve a relationship with the grown child. Images formed by the parents are about what the future will

bring i. e. how often they will be in touch with the child. At this stage, the parents find ways of saying they are still a family by creating rituals, traditions and even ceremonies. The parents will develop a new type of connection when they accept separation that has taken place.

Parenting is more than just a bi-directional relationship between a parent and a child because it will involve bi-directional relationship in more than one generation and the extent to other institutions such as education, with a culture, embedded in personal, social and family history. Parenting will present pervasive contexts and on-going interactions that effects life span development and changes in the transitions of life and the trajectories experienced by their parents' involvement. A child will also exert an active agency by having deliberate interventions in the parent's behaviour and attitudes (Diana, 1991). There are a variety of support groups and education programs for parents such as Shared opportunity Services that offer programs that focus on the roles of each member of a family and how they affects the community. Some of the services they offer include childcare, in-home parent support, parent education, and community outreach and the main aim of these programs is to strengthen the structure of the family.

#### References

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