

# Why is childhood so difficult to define? essay sample

[Sociology](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## 1. Why is childhood difficult to define?

The term 'childhood' is a social invention and you cannot explain this term without understanding the 'context of childhood'. That means, that childhood is not equal in every part of the world and it is defined by the cultural expectations towards being a child. If you try to define childhood in your own words, you may come up with different suggestions, which reflect very much to your own experiences. But you can't find a general definition that fits to every young human being in the world. An adult person is often described as a finished product. This includes that children are unfinished products, as both physically and mentally. But is this true? In other parts of the world, for example India, children have to work as soon as children start going to school in Europe.

This shows, that being a child has very much to do with the expectation of behaviour and function of a child in a certain age. Further, how can somebody ever suggest a human being as a "complete and finished product"? A human being never stops developing, learning and processing on both physical and psychological stages. When a new human being is born, it is small and helpless, then it grows and learns being responsible for its own activities. I think, that the term childhood describes everything that is going on in between being "produced", born and standing on its own feet. But that is just placed in my mind, because my culture told me so. Therefore my personal idea of childhood is socially constructed, like everybody's opinion of 'childhood'. The term childhood can't be defined as one common valid explanation. It is an invented term and always depends on which

culture and legality you refer. That's the reason why childhood is so difficult to define.

2. Is there such a thing as one childhood? Explain your answer.

I don't think that there is such a thing as one childhood. There are several reasons for it. First of all, as I mentioned above, it depends on where somebody spent the younger years of life. The social impact and the environment plays a huge role in 'being a child' and 'having a childhood.' Further, there are physical definitions of being a child, like milestones, as there are legal regulations referring to the country a child is living in. But the legal regulations are also results of decisions, made by human beings and every human being was brought up by somebody and influenced by his/her environment. It is so difficult to say if there is something like a childhood in general. But people need to categorise life in order to have a functional social system.

Therefore laws were made, to organize a well arranged social system. But as the book "Childhood in society for early childhood studies" says, society develops and so do laws and the way people think. The example of the age of consent tells us that there are still very old laws, which need to be changed and developed, to adapt to the way people are thinking nowadays. But it happens over many generations, that we take for granted how we were brought up and don't think much about how our ancestors spent their early lives. And as everyone's' childhood is his/ her own witness, one childhood is divergent.

3. Which authors have been referenced? What are the sources of these references? Are they books, journals or website? You will need to find and examine the Harvard Referencing system and explain your answer.

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