

Social, moral and emotional development research paper examples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Abstract

In the study of social, moral and emotional development process in children, I carried out a research on four children selected from different age groups; a pre-school, elementary, middle school and high school. I did this to ensure all the stages of child development were studied, laying emphasis on one gender in a bid to give a clear depiction of the developmental changes that occur as the child grows older. On completion, I compiled and did an analysis of the answers in respect to characteristics and milestones displayed at each stage thus making a conclusion on the developmental process in my study.

INTRODUCTION

ANNA: A 5 year old preschooler

- What did you do today? Today? I went to school. We sang many songs in school.

For a moment, Anna gets distracted by a noise from outside then I ask, "What else Anna?" Sally is bad. Sally wanted to take away my grizzly bear. Teacher took it and gave it to Sally. Teacher said we must share. Teacher is bad. The chairit hurt my leg and teacher punished it.

- What do you like doing? I love playing with my dolls. Mommy brought me another one with long hair, she is really pretty. I have tea party with them in my room so my nosy brother cannot disturb me. I brush their hair and tell them about school.

- When did you cry last? Today, at school. What made you cry? Teacher took grizzly away. She gave it to Sally. Oh wait! I remember, the bad chair hurt my leg, it was painful and I cried a lot. Sally told teacher and she punished

the chair.

- What does a good girl do? Mommy says a good girl should finish her food and complete her homework. Teacher says we should share with those who do not have.

- How do you make someone happy? I can give her my toys to play with. We can play tea party together.

Analysis of the interview with Anna provides detailed evidence on the characteristics displayed by children at pre-school age. The child has a short attention span and tends to be distracted by slight changes in the environment; noise from outside. Aspect of egocentrism is displayed through Anna's reluctance to let Sally play with her grizzly bear; it makes a child think selfishly without regard to other people's feelings (Myers, 2008).

In the social aspect, animism is seen when Anna says she converses with her dolls; she views them to be alive and capable of understanding her stories about school. Her emotions are not stable at this stage and can be affected by any occurrence that interferes with her pleasures; when the teacher takes away her bear and when she hurts herself. A child's concept of morality at this stage is dependent on adult view of moral behavior and according to Anna, good girls are supposed to do what mommy and teacher tells them to do. She also has a belief that thing which make her happy will also make others happy without regard to individual differences.

JOAN: A 9yr old child in elementary school

- What did you do today? School. I went to school with Lindsey. The teacher caught Tommy passing notes in class today and everybody laughed. Tommy

cried. Lindsey helped me complete my puzzle box.

- What do you like doing? I love sleepovers, last Saturday we had a sleepover at Jessica's house. We laughed, wore make-up, had popcorn and movies. I also like taking care of my little brother Josh. I dress him and comb his hair when mom is busy. Yesterday I warned the neighbor's kid who hit Josh with his toy car.

- When did you last cry? Yesterday. What makes you cry? I cry when I do something wrong and mommy gets upset. I don't like making mommy mad. I cried when our cat died; we found him dead in the backyard. It was really scary.

- What does a good girl do? A good girl is supposed to finish her homework on time and keep her room clean. A good girl respects other people and does not lie. Our Sunday school teacher says good girls go to heaven.

- How do you make someone happy? You ask them what they want and then give it to them.

Joan is slightly more developed and this is evident in the way she answers my questions. She is able to narrate occurrences in school though not in a chronological order. This shows her cognitive skills are more advanced in comparison to Anna. She is able to solve problems with help; she worked with Lindsey to solve the puzzle box. Socially, at this stage is characterized by loss of egocentrism; child starts socializing often in order to establish group acceptance (Jigsaw, 2009). Joan spends a lot of her time with her friends. She also develops a protective attitude towards her younger brother through taking care of him and ensuring nobody hurts him.

Emotions at this stage are more stable and only triggered by serious factors

such as pain, guilt and fear. The guilt she felt for making her mum upset made her cry. The loss of the cat also caused her grief. Moral and spiritual development is still dependent on what adults view as moral; Joan's view of morality is based on grown-ups' opinions and spiritual teachings she learns when she goes to church. She starts understanding individual differences when she says that you need to ask a person what they want to make them happy.

AMBER: A 12yr old in middle school

- What did you do today? Today was fun! I got picked second for the soccer game, I scored a goal and our team won. The coach was very happy and said we had done well but the other team was sad. Losing in bad.

- What do you like doing? I like hanging out with my best friends Lisa and Joyce. They are cool and popular, everybody likes them at school. I like it when we have ice cream, sleepovers and talk about boys we like.

- When did you last cry? The other day. What makes you cry? Jane the gossip told everyone in class that I had a crush on Jake. Everybody started teasing me when I walked in. it was supposed to be a secret; I only told Lisa and Joyce. I was so embarrassed and cried. Sometimes I cry when I watch soap operas or when mom and dad fight.

- What does a good girl do? A good girl is supposed to respect people. She is supposed to help others when they need help. She is also supposed to help at home with the dishes and cooking.

- How do you make someone happy? By spending time with them and telling them you love them. Being nice to them.

In middle school, Amber begins to develop principles and ideas of her own (Keating, 1979). Mental growth is evident in Amber's ability to give a chronological account of what transpired during the day; her attention span is longer and she is able to understand abstract concepts like love and hate. She explains to me how the other team looked sad after losing the game. Socially, she has developed close attachment to her two friends; a sign of trust. Interest in the opposite sex is developed and Amber start interacting with and talking about boys (Myers, 2008).

A child at this age is emotionally sensitive to her actions and failures; Amber was sad when the class found out about her secret crush. Inability to draw a clear line between real and imaginary situations is a characteristic of the pre-school stage but is also evident here when she says soap operas make her cry. She is affected by quarrels between her parents and her concept of morality is based on the rules that are set and consequences associated with them.

ASHLEY: A 16yr old in high school

- What did you do today? School sucks! The teachers are boring and there is so much work to do. We met up for group work and set a meeting date. I think Josh likes Alicel saw the way he kept staring at her over lunch.

- What do you like doing? I like hanging out with my girlfriends and going for dance practice. Dance practice is fun because I get to spend more time with my boyfriend after school without my parents' knowledge. We hit the mall on Saturdays and do a lot of fun stuff. Its way more interesting than being in class every day.

- When did you last cry? Last month. What made you cry? I broke up with my first boyfriend. He is a jerk. I dumped him and felt lonely; I cried for days but that's over now. I used to cry when mom and dad had their fights but now I just ignore them.

- What does a good girl do? A good girl is supposed to focus on her studies and not run around with boys; at least that's what mom says. She is supposed to respect herself and people around her.

- How do you make someone happy? You buy them something nice; something you think they will like. Or, help them find a solution to what is making them sad.

Analysis of Ashley's response depicts a more adult view of life in comparison to the others. At 16, her developmental process is nearing completion, she has formed principles and views of her own; she thinks the school and teachers are boring. Cognitive skills at this stage are very good and the child can undertake activities that involve decision-making, critical thinking and creativity according to Keating (1979). Ashley and her group mates are able to agree on an appropriate time for the discussion.

Her social life is complex and has to accommodate her girlfriends and romantic relationships as well. At this age, disregard for moral standards set by parents and teachers is common as Ashley uses dance practice an excuse to be with her boyfriend without her parents' consent. Emotions are triggered by pain, fear, loss or guilt. She cries due to break-up with her boyfriend but recovers after a while. She is affected by fights between her parents but chooses to ignore them and develops a sense of denial to help cope with the pain (Myer, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Childhood is the foundation of human life; this makes it the most important stage of growth and development in an individual. With regard to this fact, caretakers, family members, parents, teachers and the community need to understand the milestones and problems associated with this. It will enable them find the best way possible in dealing with issues and ensuring every child has the best life possible. The child will become a responsible and acceptable member of society she is part of.

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