

Emotional and self understanding

Psychology



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EMOTIONAL AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING

People undergo several changes in their self-perception as they grow up, from the early childhood years to adolescence to adulthood and full maturity. However, this paper discusses the stages of a persons life from birth to adolescence only. The stages can be generally classified as four major phases: from birth up to between 18 months to two years old, the next stage is at ages between 2 to 7 years old, the next is between 7 to 12 years old and the last stage is between ages 12 up to early adulthood (between 18 to 20 years old). Changes in the levels of self-esteem at the particular stage is discussed and explained below which coincides with certain developments in a childs growth from being newly born to a young adult ready to tackle the world.

First stage (0-2 years old) – the baby at this stage is still physically dependent on his or her mother or whoever cares for him for all the things needed for survival, such as feeding. This is the stage when the child is most vulnerable, totally dependent on his caretaker for everything. The baby can already start to differentiate itself from other inanimate objects as one measure of its self-esteem, that the self is separate and distinct from all the other objects around it.

Second stage (2-7 years old) – at this point in life, the baby had already started to crawl and even walk, in some cases in which a child is very

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precocious and physically well developed already. The level of self-esteem undergoes a marked change from one of dependence to that of a child eager to try out or venture on his own. At this stage, the child has a high regard of himself, although not justified yet by the level of physical development and refuses any offered help by a parent or guardian. The child wants to explore the world on his own volition out of curiosity and does not want to listen to advice; the self-esteem results in climbing chairs or falling down stairs.

Third stage (7-12 years old) – at this stage, the child suffers a degree of doubts but that self-esteem can be high at times. This is the stage when he starts school in the elementary grades where social communication skills are important to get along with all the peers and classmates. It is sometimes called as the concrete operational stage in which language is very important for the child's development in expressing ideas, emotions and thoughts to further the learning process.

Fourth stage (12 years and up) – this is the formal operational stage when an older child or young adolescent can now think logically in the abstract, in terms of concepts, propositions and hypotheses. The focus of major development is on the intellectual aspects, characterized by a lot of questions and doubts about certain things and matters in life. The level of self-esteem can get low at this stage because of self-doubts and this is when peer pressure has significant influence. A young adolescent has plenty of self-doubts and this is when positive family interactions has a marked benefit in terms of boosting self-esteem (Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 456).

It is very important for parents, guardians and child-care workers to develop in a child a good sense of self-esteem because this has a positive effect on developing a healthy self-image in the child. The child becomes confident

and self-assured; telling a child he or she is intelligent or smart lays the solid foundations for a healthy emotional and social development later on because once a sense of self has already been developed, the next step is to boost a child's self-esteem. A lot of children are harmed if they are not constantly told that they are wonderful; otherwise, they can get withdrawn, sulky, uncooperative, uncommunicative or even develop a tendency to isolate themselves from all other people (Beaver & Brewster, 2003, p. 29) which results in an inferiority complex and later on may cause deviant behaviors as a reaction to all negative comments.

Reference List

Beaver, M. & Brewster, J. (2003). *Babies and young children: Certificate in child care and education*. New Haven, CT, USA: Nelson Thomes.

Berk, L. E. & Roberts, W. (2009). *Child development*. Toronto, Canada: Pearson Education Canada.