

# **DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY**

## **Periods of development**

**Milestones of development**

- Developmental psychology is a scientific study of how and why human beings change over the course of life
- Is concerned with the scientific understanding of age-related changes in experience and behaviour

# Periods of psychological development

Developmentalists break the life span into 9 stages:

- **Prenatal Development**
- **Infancy and Toddlerhood**
- **Early Childhood**
- **Middle Childhood**
- **Adolescence**
- **Early Adulthood**
- **Middle Adulthood**
- **Late Adulthood**
- **Death and Dying**

## PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT

Conception occurs and development begins. All of the major structures of the body are forming.

Health of the mother is of primary concern

Each child reaches development milestones at his own pace

# INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD

- Dramatic growth and change – a newborn is transformed into **walking** and **talking** toddler within a relatively short period of time /0 to 2 years/
- Important are interactions and **attachment** between infant and primary caregiver /to develop a relationship with at least 1 primary caregiver for social and emotional development/
- **Gross motor skills development** - in conjunction with physical growth
- The average **milestones**:
  - By 5 months –may roll on
  - By 8 months –able to sit with assistance
    - crawl forward on belly
  - By 10 months – stand with support
  - About 12 months – stand alone and even walk
  - After 12 month – start walking independently
    - seat self on small chair
  - After 18 months – run fairly well
    - jump with feet together, down and forwards
  - After 2 years – start riding a tricycle
    - kick and catch a ball

- **Fine motor skills** – milestones:
- 0 – 6 months – reflexive grasp /newborn/  
voluntary grasp /3 months/
- 6-12 months – reaches, grasps, puts objects in mouth
  - pincer grasp /thumb and 1 finger/
- 1-2 years – builds tower of 3 small blocks
  - turns 2 or 3 pages of a book
  - paints with whole arm movement
  - self-feeds with minimal support, brings spoon to mouth
- 2 – 3 years – turns single pages of a book
  - holds crayon with thumb and fingers /not fist/
  - imitates circular, vertical, horizontal strokes
  - eats without assistance

- **Development of language:** **cooing**/at about 2 month/-short vowel sounds,move into **babbling** /4 month/ - speech become repetitive , „bababa“ – precursors of language development
- **First words** with meaning – at 12-13 months, average range **between 8 – 18 months**, at 2 years vocabulary grows to about 200 words, combining 2 or more words,2-3years – 450 words
- Boys often exhibit slower speech and language development due to the effect of testosterone on the left hemisphere
- Girls tend to speak sooner and interact more socially

- **Emotional development** : newborn smiles occasionally in sleep, **social smile** – at month 2, prefers looking at people, begins express anger, begin to calm themselves /by sucking on their own hands/, **cry** for help /crying is normal , first signs of communication, when they feel discomfort/
- **Separation anxiety** -/about 7-8 months/displays anxiety when caregivers leave.
- /After 18 months intensity is lower/
- **Self-awareness** – are aware that their body, emotions and behaviors are separate from others /after 13 month /
- First demonstration of **empathy** /13-18 months/
- First signs of **self control** – able to delay engagement in an enjoyable task
- **Temper tantrums** –frequent in **toddlers**, they do not have full control over emotions .As they mature, they develop more effective way of coping with negative emotions

# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## Preschool age

- Desire for **independence**
- Children become more competent at **feeding** themselves /2-5y./, **toileting** –ch.reach relative independence by age 4 or 5
- **Language** –the period from ages 2 to 6 is the most important time for language acquisition. By the age of 5 growth of vocabulary to about 2000 words
- Grammatically complex sentences, at age 5 uses sentences of 4-6 words, uses past, present and future tense mostly correctly
- Asks lot of questions,likes to talk, at 5 asks „who“ and „why“ questions
- **Gross motor skills**
- Being able to go up and down staircase
- Throws and catches ball, to hit a target
- Rides a tricycle
- Jumps back
- **Fine motor skills**
- Builds a tower of 9-10 blocks
- Uses playdough to make balls, cookies...
- Builds thihgs with large blocks – Lego Duplo
- Puts on most items of clothing
- Feeds himself well with a spoon and fork

- **Emotional development**
- Children are getting better at using words to express how they are feeling, but
- Still have not developed much impulse control – **tantrums** – are common and often in **toddlerhood**, begin in children 12 to 18 month old, get worse between age 2-3, then decrease until the age 4, after age 4 they rarely occur. They are normal part of kids growing up while learning to deal with their emotions
- Ch. are starting to develop **a sense of humor**
- **Empathy** –ch. start to understand that others have feelings

- **Six stages of play**

- Play is an essential part of human development – teaches children about motor skills, social development and emotional well-being
- **Unoccupied play** – birth – 3 months – baby is just making a lot of movements
- **Solitary play** – first 2 years, ch. plays alone, with his own toys, shows a little interest in playing with other babies
- **Spectator play** – 2-2a1/2y. – he watches other child playing without joining in
- **Parallel play** – about 3 y.-a child may see another child playing and may sit down to play next to him
- **Associate play** – 3 -4 y.-ch.starts to interact with others during play, interaction is for a short time, mostly plays separately
- **Cooperative play** - at about 4 y.old the child is ready to learn to play cooperatively with other children.

# SCHOOL AGE

- **Language**
- Large vocabulary – about 13.000 words  
/at 6 years/, uses longer words
- by 8 years – learns lots of new words through reading, get much better in telling stories, start to understand jokes
- Language skills become more abstract and complex – at the age 9-10 y.
- Grammar and pronunciation become normal

- **Motor development**

- Have smooth and strong motor skills /run, jump, climb, ride a bike.../
- Are highly active, they need physical activity, will be able to swim, roller skate, ice skate
- Fine motor skills – improve, can affect a child's ability to write, children like to draw and paint,
- Dresses and undresses self completely

- Emotional and social development
- Children become more involved in the social world
- Peer acceptance becomes more important, to be part of „the group“. It is normal to have 1 or several best friends and also an enemy
- They prefer **same-sex friendship** /closer to adolescence less negative about the opposite sex/
- **Peer victimization or bullying** – also begins to occur more frequently

# ADOLESCENCE

- **Physical development** – primary sex characteristics /changes in the organs directly related to reproduction/ and secondary sex characteristics /physiological signs of sexual maturity/
- The most important task –**search for identity**, with this search comes the struggle for **independence**
- Often characterized by egocentric behaviors and attitudes

- **Friendship** with members of the same sex, the opposite sex, different social and ethnic groups
- They develop the capacity for falling in love and forming **romantic relationships**
- **Thinking** is on higher level. Children are only able to think logically about the concrete –“ **the here and now**“. Adolescents move beyond these limits –“ what might be true“ instead of“ what they see is true“

Teens show a growing capacity for **abstract thought**

- **Intellect** expands and knowledge becomes more important
- Increased risk for **depression and potencial suicide attempts**, due to pressures and conflicts in their family, school, peer groups and intimate relationship

# ADULTHOOD

- Early Adulthood – 20 – 40 years
- Middle – 40 – 65 y.
- Late – 65 y. and more
- Physical growth has stopped and people are fully developed
- Early Adulthood - **physical activities** are at the peak / in mid 20s/ then begin a slow decline
- **Cognition** – the peak at around age 35, slowly declining in later adulthood, cognitive abilities remain relative steady throughout early and middle adulthood
- **Positive relationships** with significant others have been found to contribute to state of **well-being**

- **Middle Adulthood** – central tasks can include: maintaining healthy life patterns
  - raising children,
  - being proud of one's accomplishments
  - taking care of aging parents
- „ **Quarter – life – crisis** “ – between the ages 25-30 – challenges that arise from newly living life on their own and feeling overwhelmed with new responsibilities /after the birth of a child, after graduation cannot find job/ - worry about their future
- „ **Mid-life-crisis** “ – problems with work, trouble in marriage, children growing up and leaving home/“empty nest syndrome”, or the aging or death of a person's parents
- Some who experiences crisis struggles with how to cope and may engage in harmful behaviors – abuse of alcohol, drugs

- **Late Adulthood** – adults tend to look back upon their lives. It is important to find meaning and satisfaction in life
- A prominent aspect of this stage – **the fear of death**, which contribute to the hopelessness and become apparent
- Physical changes, chronic health problems interfere with quality of life
- **Retirement**
- **Widowhood** – stressful if the death of the spouse occurs early in life. Very helpful – close support of friends, particularly other widows. /One study found 10 times as many widows as widowers/

# DEATH AND DYING

- Has been studied extensively by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, who suggested that terminally ill patients display 5 basic reactions:
- **Denial** – an attempt do deny the reality
- **Anger** –frequently follows as the person envies the living and asks „Why should I be the one to die“
- **Bargaining** –the person pleads the God or others for more time
- **Depression**-the recognition that the death is inevitable
- **Acceptance** – the person finds peace with the inevitable