Toddlerhood: Developmental Tasks

- Language development
  - communication competence
  - progression of communication/language development
- Elaboration of locomotion
- Fantasy play
- Self Control

Building on a foundation of trust and optimism formed during infancy, toddlerhood brings a flowering of the sense of personal autonomy, an enjoyment and confidence in doing things for oneself and expressing one's will. The successful blending of these two basic capacities for trust and autonomy provides a strong, protective shield for the young child's ego system. From this basis, children are able to venture into satisfying and meaningful social relationships, engage in playful problem solving, and face their future with an outlook of hopefulness and assertiveness (p. 178).

Language Development

A critical feature of language development is the emergence of the capacity for **semiotic thought**—the capacity to let one object, word, picture or gesture stand for something else (e.g., language, fantasy play). Achievement of communicative competence moves the child out of infancy and allows for increased (and eventually full) integration into the social world (i.e., society). This process begins during infancy...
Language/Communication Development

- **Prelinguistic Communication**: earliest form of communication, consists of gestures, sounds, facial expressions and imitation (e.g., peek-a-boo, patty-cake)
- Teaches the infant rules central to communication
- **Turn-taking**
  - breast-feeding
  - 1-sided conversations
  - 2-sided conversations
- Infant learns how to take turns, and that s/he has an effect on the world (predictability)

Another characteristic of language development is that infants become more intentional in their use of language over the course of the first year

- **Individual differences** characterize the timing and even the content of young children's language. These differences are linked to experiences
  - motherese - slow, high-pitched, exaggerated intonation and simple grammar, references things baby can see
  - scaffolding - parents model a level of sophistication just beyond that of the child
- Progression of Communication/Language Dev. (please look to Table 7.2, p. 186 for this information)

Elaboration of Locomotion

- Locomotion facilitates the transformation of ideas into action and prompts new types of interactions with the social and physical environment
- As locomotor skills develop, the child has:
  - more/new ways of keeping track of the attachment figure
  - new avenues for investigation/exploration of the environment
  - increased coping strategies
  - more elaborate play
- Advanced locomotor skills also will lead to increased conflicts with caregivers
Fantasy Play

- Children are no longer tied to the here-and-now because symbolic abilities allow them to operate on a mental level rather than simply a physical level (e.g., pretend play, imaginary playmates)
- Fantasy play is important to the child’s development and has been linked to more complex language use, greater flexibility in problem solving, popularity among peers, and higher levels of abstract reasoning.
  - Parents’ involvement can help
  - Opportunities for stable playmates lead to more complex imaginary play

Self Control

- Self Control - the ability to comply with a request, modify behavior according to the situation, postpone action, and behave in a socially acceptable way without having to be guided or directed by someone else.
- The child must understand the self as a causal agent, and recognize that s/he has control.
- Language and fantasy are the most useful tools for managing impulses
- 3 components are involved: capacity to experience empathy, temperament, attachment quality

Self Control (continued)

Language - the more articulate the child at expressing wishes, the more likely his/her wishes will be met, even after delay of gratification (and the child’s trust in this makes it easier for him/her to control impulses)
- Also, feelings that are articulated are easier for children to control than feelings that are not expressed.
- Language also may be used to disrupt/interrupt an impulsive act

Fantasy - children can create imaginary situations in which problems can be expressed and resolved (e.g., pretend a level of control they don’t have)