

Psychosocial Development: Middle Childhood

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 - Latency
 - Industry vs. Inferiority
- Self Understanding
- Peer Group
 - General information
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 - Social Status

General Information

Children of this age group:

- Are less dependent on parents
 - ☞ changes in family relationships
 - ☞ increased responsibility for child
 - ☞ greater self-control
- Depend more on their peer group
 - ☞ more time with other children
 - ☞ more influenced by other children
 - ☞ challenges posed by all of this
- Develop more sophisticated notions of “self”
 - ☞ who am I?
 - ☞ what makes me unique
 - ☞ how am I like/different from others?
 - ☞ how do I rate in comparison to others?

- Face challenges associated with achievement
 - ☞ central challenge of this stage
 - ☞ relevant to all domains of development
 - ☞ sets stage for remainder of life
- Face increasingly serious school challenges
 - ☞ primary context for achievement
 - ☞ primary influence on developing sense of self
 - ☞ primary setting for social interactions

Theories

- Freud: superego strong enough to (temporarily) overpower id = **Latency**
- Erikson: child moving out of the family and into society

INDUSTRY -----VS-----**INFERIORITY**
(industrious and productive) (inferior & inadequate)

- remember that the child is carrying forward what was accomplished in the previous stages
- recognize the implicit importance of the school experience

Self Understanding

- Many of the advances which characterize this stage contribute to the child's increased understanding of the self and others.
- Part of this process involves self-evaluation, and this occurs in part through **social comparison** – the tendency to assess one's abilities, achievements, social status, and other attributes by measuring them against those of other people, especially one's peers
 - children often feel personally at fault for their shortcomings
- Self-understanding comes at a price
 - lower self-esteem
 - greater self-criticism and self-consciousness
- Not surprisingly, self-development also is affected by relationships with parents and peers

The Peer Group

- Peer Group: a group of individuals of roughly the same age and social status who play, work and learn together.
- Peers become increasingly important
 - getting along with peers is crucial during middle childhood
 - being rejected is a precursor for other problems
 - children depend on each other for companionship, advice, self-validation (belonging)
 - peer partners must learn to negotiate, share, compromise, and defend each other and themselves
 - peer group provides a place to learn about the world outside your home/family

Peer Group (continued)

- Characteristics (“society of children”)
 - dress codes
 - secret languages/codes
 - formation of exclusive clubs
 - codes of behavior

Friendships

- Personal friendships are even more important to children than acceptance by the peer group
 - During middle childhood, friendships become more:
 - intense
 - intimate
 - demanding
 - lasting
 - difficult to form
- and children become more choosy in picking friends
- Best friends likely to be same in sex, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status

Social Status

- Popular Group
 - positive, supportive, non-punitive and non-aggressive
 - accurately assess others' feelings, regulate their own emotion and take others' wishes into consideration
- Neglected Group
 - often ignored by peers—neither shunned nor accepted
- Rejected Group
 - (withdrawn-rejected) – actively rejected by the peer group due to their withdrawn, anxious and timid behavior; problems regulating their emotions
 - (aggressive-rejected) – actively rejected by the peer group due to their aggressive, confrontational behavior; problems regulating their emotions
