CHAPTER 10
SOCIOEMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD
THEORIES OF SOCIAL AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

- **Freud**
  - Challenge is to form emotional bonds with peers and move beyond sole bonds with parents formed earlier

- **Erikson**
  - Industry versus Inferiority Stage
    - Develop a sense of competence
    - Willingness to work towards a goal
    - Failure leads to feelings of inferiority in school or social settings
CONCEPTION OF THE SELF

- Self-conceptions become more balanced and nuanced
- Describes strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other kids
- Recognize and reconcile conflicting traits
- Sense of self reflects views of parents and peers
Erikson suggested that children describe themselves as industrious when they win recognition by producing things beside and with others.

Come to enjoy persistence and hard work

Industry not just a school-based experience
GENDER DEVELOPMENT

- 8-9 years of age self-concepts reflect gender norms
- Gender differences in global self-esteem
- Gender linked personality traits
  - Instrumentality:
    - Trait that is characterized by a focus on action and accomplishments
  - Expressivity:
    - Trait that is marked by a “caring” orientation
- Gender segregation
- Gender schemas
  - Girls more flexible about gender norms and sex roles than boys.
# Table 10.1: Gender Differences in Middle Childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competencies reflected in self-descriptions</td>
<td>Math ability, sports</td>
<td>Verbal/reading ability, music, social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>Instrumental; emphasis on accomplishments and action</td>
<td>Expressive; emphasis on communication and collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Rough-and-tumble play all over the playground</td>
<td>Social games on the sidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media preferences</td>
<td>Science fiction, sports, comic books</td>
<td>Adventures, ghost stories, romances, animal themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Slightly higher than girls</td>
<td>Slightly lower than boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MORAL REASONING

- Kohlberg – Pre-conventional level
  - Focus on rewards and punishments associated with different courses of action
  - Development into higher stages of moral reasoning occurs when child is ready.

- Gilligan – gender and moral reasoning
  - Girls morality of care
  - Boys morality of justice
### TABLE 10.2: KOHLBERG’S THEORY OF MORAL REASONING IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional</td>
<td>Moral decisions are based on the rewards and punishments that could be associated with an action or behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Morality is judged by whether the behavior conforms to social rules and whether it will be approved of by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postconventional</td>
<td>Societal rules are considered relative; principles such as justice, fairness, and the sanctity of life guide decisions about moral behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIDEO: CHILDHOOD: MORAL DEVELOPMENT
PROSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Actions intended to benefit another person
- Increase through middle childhood due to ability to read emotional cues of others and developmental changes in reasons for helping
- Cross cultural variations in individualistic and collectivistic cultures
- Within-culture variations may reflect biological, cultural, or familial factors.
AGGRESSION

- Physical aggression decreases during middle childhood.

- Social and relational aggression peaks during transition between middle childhood and adolescence.

- Gender differences
THE FAMILY

Household structure

- Postmodern family:
  - Describes the variation in modern-day families- two parents and single parent, married and unmarried couples, and multigenerational households

Two-parent and one-parent households

- Two parent have a number of advantages:
  - Income
  - Higher education levels
  - Less maternal depression
  - Parenting more likely to be authoritative
Figure 10.3: Proportion of American children who live in different types of households.

- **Two parents (70%)**
  - Two biological/adoptive married parents 86%
  - One biological/adoptive cohabitating parents 4%
  - One biological/adoptive plus one stepparent 10%

- **Single mother (26%)**
  - Single mother 79%
  - Single father with cohabiting partner 2%
  - Single father 10%

- **No parents (4%)**
  - Grandparent 55%
  - Other relative 19%
  - Foster parents 11%
  - Nonrelative 8%
Parents underestimate the effects of divorce on children.

- Acting out and rumination are common.
- Several factors increase likelihood of adjustment problems:
  - A dramatic decrease in family income
  - Abandonment or fear of abandonment
  - Diminished parenting
  - Parental conflict
  - Dislocation
OTHER FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

- Blended families
  + Preschoolers adapt more readily than older kids.

- Adoption
  + Adopted children fare better than non-adopted biological siblings.
  + Adopted children have more problems than non-adoptive siblings.

- Gay and lesbian parents
  + Children similar to children raised with heterosexual parents
 Bronfenbrenner

+ Family an overarching system composed of several subsystems:
  - Parent-child relationships
  - Marital relationships
  - Sibling relationships
PEERS

- Friendships
  - Expectations change over middle childhood
  - Gender differences

- Peer groups
  - Peer group status
    - Popular children
    - Rejected children
    - Controversial children
    - Neglected children
    - Average children

- Networks and cliques
**BULLIES AND VICTIMS**

- Bullying refers to aggression by an individual that is repeatedly directed toward particular peers (victims).

- **Types of victims**
  - Shy, anxious, socially withdrawn
  - Aggressive, irritating

- **Styles of coping**
  - Aggression, anger, contempt
  - Passive capitulation or submissive avoidance
VIDEO: PEER ACCEPTANCE
SELF-EFFICACY

- An individual’s belief in their capacity to cause intended events
- Social comparisons are important
- Encouragement from valued sources, such as parents
- Actual experiences have the greatest impact
SELF-ESTEEM

Key components

- The amount of discrepancy between what a child desires and what a child thinks he has achieved
- Overall support the child feels she receives from important people, especially parents and peers

Self-esteem is stable in the short term but somewhat less so over periods of several years
ORIGINS OF SELF-ESTEEM

- Child’s own direct experience with success or failure
- Labels and judgments from others
- Value a child attaches to some skill or quality is affected by peers’ and parents’ attitudes
BROADER SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Organized activities
  + Participation depends on family income
  + Linked to improvements in academic and social skills

- Afterschool programs
  ✴ Effects depend on program quality and how often child attends

- Time without adult supervision
  + Self-care
  + Hanging out with friends
  + Care by child siblings
BROADER SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Neighborhoods
  - Structural characteristics
  - Residents’ perceptions of where they live

- Media: Television, video games, and computers
  - Television
    - Small negative relationship between time spent watching and academic achievement.
  - Content of electronic media is much more important.
    - Prosocial programming versus media that features violence
    - Gender stereotypes