

Emotional Development



Self-conscious VS Self-evaluative

Involve self-reference and reference to social rules - demonstrating that they understand that there are certain expectations associated with certain behaviours

- Shame
- Guilt
- Pride
- Envy

Parents can influence a child's experience/expression of these. Relationship between pride over successes/shame of failures and the mother's reactions to these outcomes

Socialisation of emotions

Emotional display rules - specify the circumstances under which various emotions should/should not be expressed (culturally defined).

- Emotional 'codes of conduct'

How mother's respond to babies emotions determines how babies are trained to display them.

Emotional self-regulation

Strategies for managing emotions or adjusting emotional arousal to an appropriate level of intensity.

- Eg. 1 yr-olds rocking themselves, chewing or moving away from people
- By 3 yrs-old begin to show limited ability to disguise true feelings and try to replace them (mothers who emphasize positive emotions tend to have children who are better able to mask negative feelings).

Recognising and interpreting emotions

At 7-10 months infants begin to monitor parents' emotional reactions to uncertain situations to regulate their own behaviour. At 1 yr infants socially reference facial expressions and vocal expressions to determine their own behaviour. At 2 yrs, they often look to their companions AFTER appraising a new object.

Emotional competence

Conversations with children 2-5 yrs-old centre around positive emotions and the causes of negative emotions.

- By age 4-5, children can correctly infer whether a person is happy, angry or sad.
- Increasingly recognise that a person's current emotional state may stem from the person's thinking, rather than current events.
- Age 8 - recognise that many situations (eg. Big dog approaching) will elicit different reactions in different individuals.
- 6-9 yr-olds begin to understand people can experience more than one emotion.

Latter advances in emotional understanding emerge approx. same age that children can integrate more than one piece of info - Piagetian conservation tasks.

Achieving emotional competence is crucial to children's social competence - ability to achieve personal goals in social interactions and maintaining positive relationships.

3 components:

- a. Competent emotional expressivity - frequent expression of more positive emotions
- b. Competent emotional knowledge - ability to correctly identify other's feelings and factors responsible for those emotions
- c. Competent emotional regulation - adjusting one's experience and expression of emotional arousal to an appropriate level to successfully achieve one's goals

Temperament

A person's characteristic modes of responding emotionally and behaviourally to environmental events including attributes like activity level, irritability, fearfulness and sociability.

6 Dimensions (Rothbart & Bates, 1998):

Fearful distress - withdrawal in new situations/new stimuli

Irritable distress - showing distress when desires are frustrated

Positive affect - frequency of smiling, laughing, willingness to approach others and cooperate with them

Activity level - amount of gross motor activity

Attention span/persistence - length of time child orients to and focusses on objects

Rhythmicity - regularity/predictability of bodily functions

Hereditary of temperament

Identical twins are more similar in early years on most temperamental attributes, however the heritability coefficients for most temp. attributes are moderate at best, but still genetically influenced.

Environmental influences on temperament

- Home environment influences positive aspects of temperament (smiling/sociability/soothability)
- Negatively toned temperament attributes are shaped by nonshared environmental influences for siblings - happens when parents adjust their parenting to each child