

CHAPTER THREE

Social, Moral, and Emotional Development

At Parren Elementary/Middle School, eighth-graders are encouraged to become tutors for first-graders. They help them with reading, math, and other subjects. As part of this program, Sam Stevens has been working for about a month with Billy Ames.

“Hey, shorty!” says Sam one day when he meets Billy for a tutoring session.

“Hey, Sam!” As always, Billy is delighted to see his big buddy. But today his friendly greeting turns into a look of astonishment. “What have you got in your lip?”

“Haven’t you ever seen a lip ring?”

Billy is impressed. “Awesome!”

“A lot of guys are wearing them.”

“Didn’t it hurt to get a hole in your lip?”

“A little, but I’m tough! Boy, was my mom mad, though. I have to take my lip ring off before I go home, but I put it back on while I’m walking to school.”

“But didn’t your mom . . .”

“Enough of that, squirt! You’ve got some math to do. Let’s get to it!”

The interaction between Sam and Billy illustrates the enormous differences between the world of the adolescent and that of the child. Sam, at 13, is a classic young teen. His idealism and down-deep commitment to the positive are shown in his volunteering to serve as a tutor and in the caring, responsible relationship he has established with Billy. At

the same time, Sam is asserting his independence by having his lip pierced and wearing a lip ring, against his mother’s wishes. This independence is strongly supported by his peer group, however, so it is really only a shift of dependence from parents and teachers toward peers. His main purpose in wearing a lip ring is to demonstrate conformity to the styles and norms of his peers rather than to those of adults. Yet Sam does still depend on his parents and other adults for advice and support when making decisions that he knows have serious consequences for his future, and he does take off his lip ring at home to avoid a really serious battle with his parents.

Billy lives in a different world. He can admire Sam’s audacity, but he would never go so far. Billy’s world has simpler rules. He is shocked by Sam’s daring to wear a lip ring. He is equally shocked by Sam’s willingness to directly disobey his mother. Billy may misbehave, but within much narrower limits. He knows that rules are rules, and he fully expects to be punished if he breaks them.

USING YOUR EXPERIENCE

CRITICAL THINKING Teenagers assert their independence in ways that often are supported by their peer group, but not by their parents. In light of this, what kinds of clashes might you anticipate encountering in a secondary classroom, and how do you propose to handle them? What strategies could you use to prevent clashes in the first place?

WHAT ARE SOME VIEWS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT?

As children improve their cognitive skills, they are also developing self-concepts, ways of interacting with others, and attitudes toward the world. Understanding personal and social development is critical to your ability to motivate, teach, and successfully interact with students at various ages (Berk, 2013; Boyd & Bee, 2012; Feldman, 2012; Squires, Pribble, Chen, & Pomes, 2013). Like cognitive development, personal development and social development are often described in terms of stages. We speak of the “terrible twos,” not the “terrible ones” or the “terrible threes”; and when someone is reacting in an unreasonable, selfish way, we accuse that person of “behaving like a 2-year-old.” The words *adolescent* and *teenager* are associated in Western culture with rebelliousness, identity crises, hero worship, and sexual awakening. These associations reflect stages of development that everyone goes through. This section focuses on a theory of personal and social development proposed by Erik Erikson, which is an adaptation of the developmental theories of the great psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. Erikson’s work is often called a **psychosocial theory** because it relates principles of psychological and social development.

Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development

Like Piaget, Erikson had no formal training in psychology, but as a young man he was trained by Freud as a psychoanalyst. Erikson hypothesized that people pass through eight psychosocial stages

in their lifetimes. At each stage, there are crises or critical issues to be resolved. Most people resolve each **psychosocial crisis** satisfactorily and put it behind them to take on new challenges, but some people do not completely resolve these crises and must continue to deal with them later in life. For example, many adults have yet to resolve the “identity crisis” of adolescence, and then they feel compelled to buy motorcycles in their 40s or 50s.

ERIKSON'S STAGES OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT As people grow, they face a series of psychosocial crises that shape personality, according to Erik Erikson. Each crisis focuses on a particular aspect of personality and involves the person's relationship with other people.

Stage I: Trust versus Mistrust (Birth to 18 Months) The goal of infancy is to develop a basic trust in the world. Erikson (1968, p. 96) defined basic trust as “an essential trustfulness of others as well as a fundamental sense of one's own trustworthiness.” The mother, or maternal figure, is usually the first important person in the child's world. She is the one who must satisfy the infant's need for food and affection. If the mother is inconsistent or rejecting, she becomes a source of frustration for the infant rather than a source of pleasure (Cummings, Braungart-Rieker, & Du Rocher-Schudlich, 2003; Thompson, Easterbrooks, & Padilla-Walker, 2003). The mother's behavior creates in the infant a sense of mistrust for his or her world that may persist throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Stage II: Autonomy versus Doubt (18 Months to 3 Years) By the age of 2, most babies can walk and have learned enough about language to communicate with other people. Children in the “terrible twos” no longer want to depend totally on others. Instead, they strive toward autonomy, the ability to do things for themselves. The child's desires for power and independence often clash with the wishes of the parent. Erikson believed that children at this stage have the dual desire to hold on and to let go. Parents who are flexible enough to permit their children to explore freely and do things for themselves, but at the same time provide an ever-present guiding hand, encourage the establishment of a sense of autonomy. Parents who are overly restrictive and harsh give their children a sense of powerlessness and incompetence, which can lead to shame and doubt in one's abilities.

Stage III: Initiative versus Guilt (3 to 6 Years) During this period, children's continuously maturing motor and language skills permit them to be increasingly aggressive and vigorous in the exploration of both their social and physical environment. Three-year-olds have a growing sense of initiative, which can be encouraged by parents and other family members or caregivers who permit children to run, jump, play, slide, and throw. “Being firmly convinced that he is a person on his own, the child must now find out what kind of person he may become” (Erikson, 1968, p. 115). Parents who severely punish children's attempts at initiative will make the children feel guilty about their natural urges both during this stage and later in life.

Stage IV: Industry versus Inferiority (6 to 12 Years) Entry into school brings with it a huge expansion in the child's social world. Teachers and peers take on increasing importance for the child, while the influence of parents decreases. Children now want to make things. Success brings with it a sense of industry, a good feeling about oneself and one's abilities. Failure creates a negative self-image, a sense of inadequacy that may hinder future learning. And “failure” need not be real; it may be merely an inability to measure up to one's own standards or those of parents, teachers, or brothers and sisters.

Stage V: Identity versus Role Confusion (12 to 18 Years) The question “Who am I?” becomes important during adolescence. To answer it, adolescents increasingly turn away from parents and toward peer groups. Erikson believed that during adolescence the individual's rapidly changing physiology, coupled with pressures to make decisions about future education and career, creates the need to question and redefine the psychosocial identity established during the earlier stages. Adolescence is a time of change. Teenagers experiment with various sexual, occupational, and educational roles as they try to find out who they are and who they can be. This new sense of self, or “ego identity,” is not simply the sum of the prior identifications. Rather, it is a reassembly or “an alignment of the individual's basic drives (ego) with his or her endowment (resolutions of the previous crises) and his or her opportunities (needs, skills, goals, and demands of adolescence and approaching adulthood)” (Erikson, 1980, p. 94).

Certification Pointer

For teacher certification tests you will probably be asked about Erik Erikson's stages of personal and social development. You should know that vigorous exploration of their physical and social behavior is a behavior typical of children in Stage III, initiative versus guilt.

Stage VI: Intimacy versus Isolation (Young Adulthood) Once young people know who they are and where they are going, the stage is set for the sharing of their life with another. The young adult is now ready to form a new relationship of trust and intimacy with another individual, a “partner in friendship, sex, competition, and cooperation.” This relationship should enhance the identity of both partners without stifling the growth of either. The young adult who does not seek out such intimacy or whose repeated tries fail may retreat into isolation.

Stage VII: Generativity versus Self-Absorption (Middle Adulthood) Generativity is “the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation” (Erikson, 1980, p. 103). Typically, people attain generativity through raising their own children. However, the crisis of this stage can also be successfully resolved through other forms of productivity and creativity, such as teaching. During this stage, people should continue to grow; if they don’t, a sense of “stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment” develops, leading to self-absorption or self-indulgence (Erikson, 1980, p. 103).

Stage VIII: Integrity versus Despair (Late Adulthood) In the final stage of psychosocial development, people look back over their lifetime and resolve their final identity crisis. Acceptance of accomplishments, failures, and ultimate limitations brings with it a sense of integrity, or wholeness, and a realization that one’s life has been one’s own responsibility. The finality of death must also be faced and accepted. Despair can occur in those who regret the way they have led their lives or how their lives have turned out.

Implications and Criticisms of Erikson’s Theory

As with Piaget’s stages, not all people experience Erikson’s crises to the same degree or at the same time. The age ranges stated here may represent the best times for a crisis to be resolved, but they are not the only possible times. For example, children who were born into chaotic homes that failed to give them adequate security may develop trust after being adopted or otherwise brought into a more stable environment. People whose negative school experiences gave them a sense of inferiority may find, as they enter the work world, that they can learn and that they do have valuable skills—a realization that may help them finally to resolve the industry versus inferiority crisis that others resolved in their elementary school years. Erikson’s theory emphasizes the role of the environment, both in causing the crises and in determining how they will be resolved. The stages of personal and social development are played out in constant interactions with others and with society as a whole. During the first three stages the interactions are primarily with parents and other family members, but the school plays a central role for most children in Stage IV (industry versus inferiority) and Stage V (identity versus role confusion).

Erikson’s theory describes the basic issues that people confront as they go through life. However, his theory has been criticized because it does not explain how or why individuals progress from one stage to another and also because it is difficult to confirm through research (Miller, 2011).

WHAT ARE SOME VIEWS OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT?

Society could not function without rules that tell people how to communicate with one another, how to avoid hurting others, and how to get along in life generally. If you are around children much, you may have noticed that they are often rigid about rules. Things are either right or wrong; there is no in-between. If you think back to your own years in middle school or high school, you may recall being shocked to find that people sometimes break rules on purpose and that the rules that apply to some people may not apply to others. These experiences probably changed your concept of rules. Your idea of laws may also have changed when you learned how they are made. People meet and debate and vote; the laws that are made one year can be changed the next. The more complexity you can see, the more you find exists. Just as children differ from adults in cognitive and personal development, they also differ in their moral reasoning. First we will look at the two stages of moral reasoning described by Piaget, and then we will discuss related theories developed by Lawrence Kohlberg. Piaget proposed that there is a relationship between the cognitive stages of development and the ability to reason about moral issues. Kohlberg believed

that the development of the logical structures proposed by Piaget is necessary to, although not sufficient for, advances in the area of moral judgment and reasoning.

Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

Piaget's theory of cognitive development includes a theory about the development of moral reasoning. Piaget believed that cognitive structures and abilities develop first. Cognitive abilities then determine children's abilities to reason about social situations. As with cognitive abilities, Piaget proposed that moral development progresses in predictable stages, in this case from a very ego-centric type of moral reasoning to one that reflects a system of justice based on cooperation and reciprocity.

PIAGET'S STAGES OF PERSONAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT As people develop their cognitive abilities, their understanding of moral problems also becomes more sophisticated. Young children are more rigid in their views of right and wrong than older children and adults tend to be.

To explore moral development, Piaget posed two stories to older and younger children. In the first story, a boy broke 15 cups completely by accident. In the second story, a boy broke one cup while he was trying to steal a cookie. Piaget asked the children who was naughtier and should be punished more. Younger children of 5–10 years focused on the results of an action to make their judgments, regardless of each child's intentions—more cups broke so the first child was naughtier. This type of reasoning is called *heteronomous morality*. Older children in Piaget's experiment were able to make judgments based on the intent of an action—the second child was misbehaving, so he was naughtier. This type of reasoning is called *autonomous morality*. Piaget noted that these two phases overlap.

Recently, when presented with a similar story, one 5-year-old responded, "They are both mean because they broke cups," whereas a 10-year-old responded, "The first boy didn't do it on purpose." Table 3.1 summarizes the characteristics of heteronomous and autonomous morality, according to Piaget.

To understand children's moral reasoning, Piaget spent a great deal of time watching children play marbles and asking them about the rules of the game. The first thing he discovered was that before about the age of 6, children play by their own idiosyncratic, egocentric rules. Piaget believed that very young children were incapable of interacting in cooperative ways and therefore unable to engage in moral reasoning.

Piaget found that by age 6, children acknowledged the existence of rules, though they were inconsistent in following them. Frequently, several children who were supposedly playing the same game were observed to be playing by different sets of rules. Children at this age also had no understanding that game rules are arbitrary and something that a group can decide by itself. Instead, they saw rules as being imposed by some higher authority and unchangeable.

TABLE 3.1 • Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

HETERONOMOUS MORALITY	AUTONOMOUS MORALITY
Inflexible rules are made by authorities such as the police, parents, and teachers.	Intentions are more important than the results of one's behavior.
Rules are permanent, do not change, and must be followed.	There are times when it is ok to break rules.
Egocentrism in childhood results in children believing that others view their rule-following ideas in the same way that they do.	People may view "what is right" differently.
Degree of punishment should depend on how bad the results of one's actions were.	Degree of punishment should depend on intentions and the degree of misbehavior.
Misbehavior will always be punished. For example, if you do something bad, and then later on you fall and hurt your knee, it is because you misbehaved. This is called "immanent justice."	Coincidental bad outcomes are not seen as punishments for misbehavior.

Piaget (1964) labeled the first stage of moral development **heteronomous morality**; it has also been called the stage of “moral realism” or “morality of constraint.” *Heteronomous* means being subject to rules imposed by others. During this period, young children are consistently faced with parents and other adults telling them what to do and what not to do. Violations of rules are believed to bring automatic punishment; people who are bad will eventually be punished. Piaget also described children at this stage as judging the morality of behavior on the basis of its consequences. They judge behavior as bad if it results in negative consequences, even if the actor’s original intentions were good.

Piaget found that children did not conscientiously use and follow rules until the age of 10 or 12 years, when children are capable of formal operations. At this age, every child playing the game followed the same set of rules. Children understood that the rules existed to give the game direction and to minimize disputes between players. They understood that rules were something that everyone agreed on and that therefore, if everyone agreed to change them, they could be changed.

Piaget also observed that children at this age tend to base moral judgments on the intentions of the actor rather than on the consequences of the actions. Children often engage in discussions of hypothetical circumstances that might affect rules. This second stage is labeled **autonomous morality** or “morality of cooperation.” It arises as the child’s social world expands to include more and more peers. Through interaction and cooperation with other children, the child’s ideas about rules and, therefore, morality begin to change. Rules are now what we make them. Punishment for transgressions is no longer automatic but must be administered by taking into account the transgressor’s intentions and any extenuating circumstances.

According to Piaget, children progress from the stage of heteronomous morality to that of autonomous morality with the development of cognitive structures, but also because of interactions with equal-status peers. He believed that resolving conflicts with peers weakened children’s reliance on adult authority and heightened their awareness that rules are changeable and should exist only as the result of mutual consent.

Research on elements of Piaget’s theories generally supports his ideas, with one key exception. Piaget is felt to have underestimated the degree to which even very young children consider intentions in judging behavior. However, the progression from a focus on outcomes to a focus on intentions over the course of development has been documented many times.

Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Reasoning

Kohlberg’s (1963, 1969) stage theory of moral reasoning is an elaboration and refinement of Piaget’s. Like Piaget, Kohlberg studied how children (and adults) reason about rules that govern their behavior in certain situations. Kohlberg did not study children’s game playing, but rather probed for their responses to a series of structured situations or **moral dilemmas**, the most famous of which is the following:

In Europe a woman was near death from cancer. One drug might save her, a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The druggist was charging \$2,000, ten times what the drug cost him to make. The sick woman’s husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said “No.” The husband got desperate and broke into the man’s store to steal the drug for his wife. Should the husband have done that? Why? (1969, p. 379)

Source: From *Handbook of socialization theory and research in stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to socialization* by L. Kohlberg, D. A. Goslin. Published by Rand-McNally, © 1969.

On the basis of the answers he received, Kohlberg proposed that people pass through a series of six stages of moral judgment or reasoning. Kohlberg’s levels and stages are summarized in Table 3.2. He grouped these six stages into three levels: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. These three levels are distinguished by how the child or adult defines what he or she perceives as correct or moral behavior. As with other stage theories, each stage is more sophisticated and complex than the preceding one, and most individuals proceed through them in the same order (Colby & Kohlberg, 1984). Like Piaget, Kohlberg was concerned not so much with the child’s answer as with the reasoning behind it. The ages at which children and adolescents

Certification Pointer

Teacher certification tests are likely to require you to know the theoretical contributions of Lawrence Kohlberg to the understanding of children’s development of moral reasoning.

TABLE 3.2 • Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning

When people consider moral dilemmas, it is their reasoning that is important, not their final decision, according to Lawrence Kohlberg. He theorized that people progress through three levels as they develop abilities of moral reasoning.

I. PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL	II. CONVENTIONAL LEVEL	III. POSTCONVENTIONAL LEVEL
<p>Rules are set down by others.</p> <p>Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience Orientation. Physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness.</p> <p>Stage 2: Instrumental Relativist Orientation. What is right is whatever satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Elements of fairness and reciprocity are present, but they are mostly interpreted in a "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" fashion.</p>	<p>Individual adopts rules and will sometimes subordinate own needs to those of the group. Expectations of family, group, or nation seen as valuable in own right, regardless of immediate and obvious consequences.</p> <p>Stage 3: "Good Boy-Good Girl" Orientation. Good behavior is whatever pleases or helps others and is approved of by them. One earns approval by being "nice."</p> <p>Stage 4: "Law and Order" Orientation. Right is doing one's duty, showing respect for authority, and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.</p>	<p>People define own values in terms of ethical principles they have chosen to follow.</p> <p>Stage 5: Social Contract Orientation. What is right is defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards that have been agreed on by the whole society. In contrast to Stage 4, laws are not "frozen"—they can be changed for the good of society.</p> <p>Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle Orientation. What is right is defined by decision of conscience according to self-chosen ethical principles. These principles are abstract and ethical (such as the Golden Rule), not specific moral prescriptions (such as the Ten Commandments).</p>

Source: From *Handbook of socialization theory and research*, by L. Kohlberg and D. A. Goslin. By Rand McNally & Company (Chicago), Copyright © 1969 reprinted with permission of Rand McNally & Company (Chicago).

go through the stages in Table 3.2 vary considerably; in fact, the same individual may behave according to one stage at some times and according to another at other times. However, most children pass from the preconventional to the conventional level by the age of 9 (Kohlberg, 1969).



ON THE WEB

The Association for Moral Education (AME) provides an interdisciplinary forum for individuals interested in the moral dimensions of educational theory and practice at amenetwork.org. An overview of moral education theories, arranged by theorist, can be found at amenetwork.org. Also see the site for *The Journal of Moral Education*.

Stage 1, which is on the **preconventional level of morality**, is very similar in form and content to Piaget's stage of heteronomous morality. Children simply obey authority figures to avoid being punished. In Stage 2, children's own needs and desires become important, yet they are aware of the interests of other people. In a concrete sense they weigh the interests of all parties when making moral judgments, but they are still "looking out for number one." The **conventional level of morality** begins at Stage 3. Here morality is defined in terms of cooperation with peers, just as it was in Piaget's stage of autonomous morality. This is the stage at which children have an unquestioning belief that one should "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Because of the decrease in egocentrism that accompanies concrete operations, children are cognitively capable of putting themselves in someone else's shoes. They can consider the feelings of others when making moral decisions. No longer do they simply do what will not get them punished (Stage 1) or what makes them feel good (Stage 2). At Stage 4, society's rules and laws replace those of the peer group. A desire for social approval no longer determines moral judgments. Laws are followed without question, and breaking the law can never be justified. Most adults are probably at this stage. Stage 5 signals entrance into the **postconventional level of morality**, a level of moral reasoning attained by fewer than 25 percent of adults, according to Kohlberg, in which there is a realization

that the laws and values of a society are somewhat arbitrary and particular to that society. Laws are seen as necessary to preserve the social order and to ensure the basic rights of life and liberty. In Stage 6, one's ethical principles are self-chosen and based on abstract concepts such as justice and the equality and value of human rights. Laws that violate these principles can and should be disobeyed because "justice is above the law." Late in life, Kohlberg (1978, 1980) speculated that Stage 6 is not really separate from Stage 5 and suggested that the two be combined.

Kohlberg (1969) believed that moral dilemmas can be used to advance a child's level of moral reasoning, but only one stage at a time. He theorized that the way in which children progress from one stage to the next is by interacting with others whose reasoning is one or, at most, two stages above their own. Teachers can help students progress in moral reasoning by weaving discussions of justice and moral issues into lessons, particularly in response to events that occur in the classroom or in the broader society (see Sternberg, 2011).

Kohlberg found that his stages of moral reasoning ability occurred in the same order and at about the same ages in the United States, Mexico, Taiwan, and Turkey. Other research throughout the world has generally found the same sequence of stages, although there are clearly strong influences of culture on moral reasoning as well as on moral behavior (Nucci, 2009).

Criticisms of Kohlberg's Theory

Later research generally supports Kohlberg's main sequence of development (Boom et al., 2001;

Dawson, 2002; Nucci, 2009), but there have also been many critiques. One limitation of Kohlberg's early work was that it mostly involved boys. Some research on girls' moral reasoning finds patterns that are somewhat different from those proposed by Kohlberg. Whereas boys' moral reasoning revolves primarily around issues of justice, girls are more concerned about issues of caring and responsibility for others (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Haspe & Baddeley, 1991). Carol Gilligan argued, for example, that males and females use different moral criteria: Male moral reasoning is focused on people's individual rights, whereas female moral reasoning is focused more on individuals' responsibilities for other people. This is why, she argued, females tend to suggest altruism and self-sacrifice rather than rights and rules as solutions to moral dilemmas (Gilligan, 1982). Kohlberg (Levine, Kohlberg, & Hewer, 1985) revised his theory on the basis of these criticisms. However, most research has failed to find any male–female differences in moral maturity (Bee & Boyd, 2010; Jaffee & Hyde, 2000; Tangney & Dearing, 2002); nor is there convincing evidence that women are more caring, cooperative, or helpful than men (Turiel, 2006; Walker, 2004).

Another criticism of both Piaget's and Kohlberg's work is that young children can often reason about moral situations in more sophisticated ways than a stage theory would suggest (Arnold, 2000). For example, although young children often consider consequences to be more important than intentions when evaluating conduct, under certain circumstances children as young as 3 and 4 years of age use intentions to judge the behavior of others (Bussey, 1992). Also, 6- to 10-year-olds at the stage of heteronomous morality have been shown to make distinctions between rules that parents are justified in making and enforcing, and rules that are under personal or peer jurisdiction (Keenan & Evans, 2010). Finally, Turiel (2006) has suggested that young children make a distinction between moral rules, such as not lying and stealing, that are based on principles of justice, and social-conventional rules, such as not wearing pajamas to school, that are based on social consensus and etiquette. Research has supported this view, demonstrating that children as young as 2½ to 3 years make distinctions between moral and social-conventional rules.

The most important limitation of Kohlberg's theory is that it deals with moral reasoning rather than with actual behavior (Arnold, 2000). Many individuals at different stages behave in the same way, and individuals at the same stage often behave in different ways (Walker, 2004). In addition, the context of moral dilemmas matters. For example, a study by Einerson (1998) found that adolescents used much lower levels of moral reasoning when moral dilemmas involved celebrities than when they involved made-up characters. Similarly, the link between children's moral reasoning and their moral behavior may be unclear. For example, a study by Murdock, Hale, and Weber (2001) found that cheating among middle school students was affected by many factors, including motivation in school, success, and relationships with teachers, that have little to do with stages of moral development.

SUMMARY

What Are Some Views of Personal and Social Development?

Erikson proposed eight stages of psychosocial development, each dominated by a particular psychosocial crisis precipitated through interaction with the social environment. In Stage I, trust versus mistrust, the goal is to develop a sense of trust through interaction with caretakers. In Stage II, autonomy versus doubt (18 months to age 3), children have a dual desire to hold on and to let go. In Stage III, initiative versus guilt (3 to 6 years of age), children elaborate their sense of self through exploration of the environment. Children enter school during Stage IV, industry versus inferiority (6 to 12 years of age), when academic success or failure is central. In Stage V, identity versus role confusion (12 to 18 years), adolescents turn increasingly to their peer group and begin their searches for partners and careers. Adulthood brings Stage VI (intimacy versus isolation), Stage VII (generativity versus self-absorption), and Stage VIII (integrity versus despair).

What Are Some Views of Moral Development?

According to Piaget, children develop heteronomous morality (obedience to authority through moral realism) by around age 6 and later advance to autonomous morality (rational morality based on moral principles). Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning reflect children's responses to moral dilemmas. In Stages 1 and 2 (the preconventional level), children obey rules set down by others while maximizing self-interest. In Stages 3 and 4 (the conventional level), the individual adopts rules, believes in law and order, and seeks the approval of others. In Stages 5 and 6 (the postconventional level), people define their own values in terms of abstract ethical principles they have chosen to follow.

How Do Children Develop Socially and Emotionally?

During the Preschool Years

Socioemotional development in early childhood can be partly described in terms of Erikson's psychosocial stage of initiative versus guilt. Peer relationships help children overcome the egocentrism that Piaget described as characteristic of preoperational thinking. Prosocial behavior includes caring, sharing, comforting, and cooperating. Parten identified four categories of play—solitary, parallel, associative, and cooperative—that reflect increasing levels of social interaction and sophistication. Play hones children's linguistic, cognitive, social, and creative skills.

During the Elementary Years

In middle childhood, children may be seen as resolving the psychosocial crisis that Erikson described as industry versus inferiority. School becomes a major influence on development, a place where the child develops a public self, builds social skills, and establishes self-esteem on the basis of academic and nonacademic competencies. In preadolescence, between ages 9 and 12, conformity in peer relations, mixed-sex peer groupings, and challenges to adult authority become more important.

During the Middle School and High School Years

Adolescents may be seen as resolving Erikson's psychosocial crisis of identity versus role confusion. They pay attention to how other people view them, search the past, experiment with roles, act on feelings and beliefs, and gradually seek greater autonomy and intimacy in peer relations. Foreclosure occurs when the individual chooses a role prematurely, but by late adolescence, most individuals have developed a state of identity achievement. Many factors, such as dropping out, substance abuse, and AIDS, place adolescents at risk.