



## 10

**CHILDHOOD**

Childhood is a beautiful phase of life for most of us. It is a period associated with play, fantasy, and innocence. It is the crucial phase in life and involves important aspects of growth and development which are critical for the entire life span.

The childhood period can be further classified into four sub-stages:

- (a) Infancy (birth to 2 years),
- (b) Early childhood (2 to 6 years),
- (c) Middle childhood (6 to 11 years), and
- (d) Adolescence (12 to 19 years).

Infancy provides the foundation for all areas of development. It is a period marked by extremely rapid physical growth and development of sensori-motor skills. Infancy is also important for cognitive, language and socio-emotional development. This stage has already been discussed. Adolescence will be taken up in the next lesson.

In this lesson, we will try to understand how various aspects of development such as physical, motor, cognitive, social and personality development proceed during childhood. We will also study the socialization process during childhood in the cultural context.

**OBJECTIVES**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe physical and motor development in childhood;
- understand cognitive development during childhood;
- explain socio-emotional and personality development in childhood; and
- understand the process of socialization within the cultural context.



## 10.1 PHYSICAL AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDHOOD

While physical growth is extremely rapid during infancy, it is comparatively slower in childhood. As the child's body size, height and weight increase, there are also changes in muscular and skeletal structure. This leads to development of several motor skills in childhood. The studies have shown certain universal trends in both physical and motor development.

The sequence of physical and motor development is fairly uniform across different cultures. Yet there are large **individual differences**. One child may walk at 10 months, while another may walk only at 24 months. The major milestones of physical and motor development in infancy and childhood are given in Table 10.1

**Table 10.1: Milestones of Physical and Motor Development**

Lifting chin up while lying on stomach	1 month
Lifting head and chest	2 months
Rolling over	4 months
Picking up objects with palm without sitting with support	5 months
Finer use of thumb and fingers	7 months
Sitting alone (without support)	8 months
Standing with support (holding on to furniture)	8-9 months
Crawling	9 months
Standing independently	9-10 months
Taking few steps without holding on and walking holding on	12-13 months
Grasping objects with thumb and forefingers	13-14 months
Walking alone	15 months
Running and climbing stairs	2 years
Walking on tip toe	2½ years
Riding a tricycle	3 years
Throwing ball over head, walking down stairs with one foot to a step	4 years
Copying a complex figures	6 years

Understanding of physical and motor development is extremely important as it provides the basis for the development of child's personality, social and emotional development. It helps establish emotional bonding between the child and the mother figure. It also helps mastery over the child's own body and movements.



## A. Gross and Fine Motor Development

Motor development is usually classified into ‘gross motor’ and ‘fine motor’ categories. **Gross motor development** refers to control over large muscle groups that enable the child to get around, e.g. crawling, standing and walking. They usually involve the limbs or the whole body. **Fine motor development** refers to control over smaller muscle movements e.g. grasping, pinching etc. Fine motor skills are necessary to engage in smaller, more precise movements, generally using the hands and fingers. Fine motor skills are different than gross motor skills which require less precision to perform the daily tasks.

**Table 10.2: Gross and Fine Motor Development Milestones**

Child's age	Activities involving Fine Motor Skills
0 and 3 months	Holding an object
3 and 6 months	Trying to reach out for objects, putting things in mouth
6 months and 1 year	Trying to hold food, using hand and fingers to play games
1 year and 1-1/2 years	Scribble on paper, trying to play throw and catch with the ball
1-1/2 and 2 years	Drawing lines with pencil, using a spoon to eat food with little help
2 and 3 years	Brushing teeth and buttons cloths with help
3 and 5 years	Builds using building blocks, uses a pencil to draw, turn pages of a book
5 and 7 years	Draws various shapes very easily, brushes and combs without support, cuts shapes very clearly

### 10.1. 3 Physical and Motor Development in Early Childhood (2-6 years)

Early childhood covers the period from 2 to 6 years. It is also known as the preschool stage. The child who has become mobile is now able to widen the sphere of activities beyond the immediate family. Through interaction with the wider society and the environment the child learns the rules of appropriate social behavior of and develops mental abilities which prepare him/her for formal education and schooling. Most infants appear to be quite clumsy in their physical and motor activities. But gradually their locomotion skills become refined and graceful. Body balance while walking and running improves noticeably. A 3-year-old can run in a straight line and jump smoothly without falling down. A 4-year-old can skip, jump on one foot and catch a large ball thrown from a distance.



### Development of Fine Motor Skills during Childhood

- **2-3 years:** Undresses self and assists with dressing, Copies a circle and a cross, Strings four large beads, Turns a single page, Snips with scissors on a line, Buttons/unbuttons large buttons.
- **3-5 years:** Copies a square, Prints own name – tripod pencil grasp, Ties shoelaces, Cuts on line continuously, Prints some capital letters.
- **5-7 years:** Copies a triangle, Cuts out simple shapes, Copies first name, Prints numerals 1 to 5, Color within lines, Pastes and glues appropriately

Between 2 and 3 years, young children stop “toddling,” and develop a smoother gait. They also develop the ability to run, jump, and hop. They can participate in throwing and catching games with larger balls.

Children who are 3 to 4 years old can climb up stairs using a method of bringing both feet together on each step before proceeding to the next step. However, they may still need some assistance to prevent fall as they are likely to be unsteady in this new skill. Children of this age can jump and hop higher as their leg muscles grow stronger.

During this period, children become better at catching and throwing, can hit a stationary ball with a bat, learn to ride a tricycle, and can kick a ball placed directly in front of their bodies. They can create things with their hands, such as building towers out of blocks, molding clay into rough shapes, and scribbling with a crayon. Children of this age often begin showing a preference for using one hand more often than the other, which is the beginning of becoming left or right-handed.

Between 3 and 4 years, children improve in eating food themselves and can use utensils like forks and spoons. They can now hold a crayon or pencil by the writing hand rather than just grasping it with the fist. They can also make twisting motion with their hands, useful for opening door knobs or twisting lids to open jars. Most children are toilet trained by 4 years of age.

As children reach the age of schooling, the rate of physical growth becomes slower until puberty when there is a rapid ‘growth spurt’.

By the age of six, the child is physically capable of coordinated actions which require body balance. Small muscle coordination required for fine motor activities, such as putting on shirt buttons or copying a simple figure, improves quite dramatically during the early childhood years. Children can also complete other self-care tasks beyond dressing and undressing, such as brushing their teeth and combing their hair. Children of this age can also independently feed themselves without an adult’s immediate supervision or help.

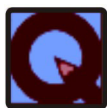
During 5 to 6 years of age, young children continue to refine the earlier skills. They can run faster and can start to ride bicycle with training wheels for added stability. In addition, they can step sideways. Children of this age begin mastering new forms of physical play such as the jungle gym, and begin to use the see-saw, slide, and swing on their own.

### Development in Middle Childhood (6-11years)

During this period physical growth becomes more gradual and rate of overt change becomes slower until puberty at about 11-13 years when there is again a rapid 'growth spurt'. There are changes in height, weight and muscular strength and swiftness. During this period, there are large gender differences. Girls are slightly shorter than boys during 6 to 8 years but then the trend reverses. Girls start putting on weight. A 10 year old girl may look taller and heavier than a boy of the same age. The growth spurt for boys comes later than for girls.

During this period, children achieve greater control over large and small muscle groups. They keep getting stronger, faster and attain better motor co-ordination. School children are energetic and enjoy all types of outdoor games. Increase in cognitive capacity also helps them learn the rules of new games.

The 6-7 year-old children can copy complex figures such as a diamond, color patterns and figures and assemble tools and model toys. They also become more skillful in games requiring skillful eye-hand coordination such as throwing, catching and hitting targets. They continue to refine fine motor skills and build upon earlier skills.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

Write short answers to the following questions:

1. Give names of any 3 gross motor skills developed in childhood.

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2. Give names of any 3 fine motor skills developed in childhood.

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### 10.2 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

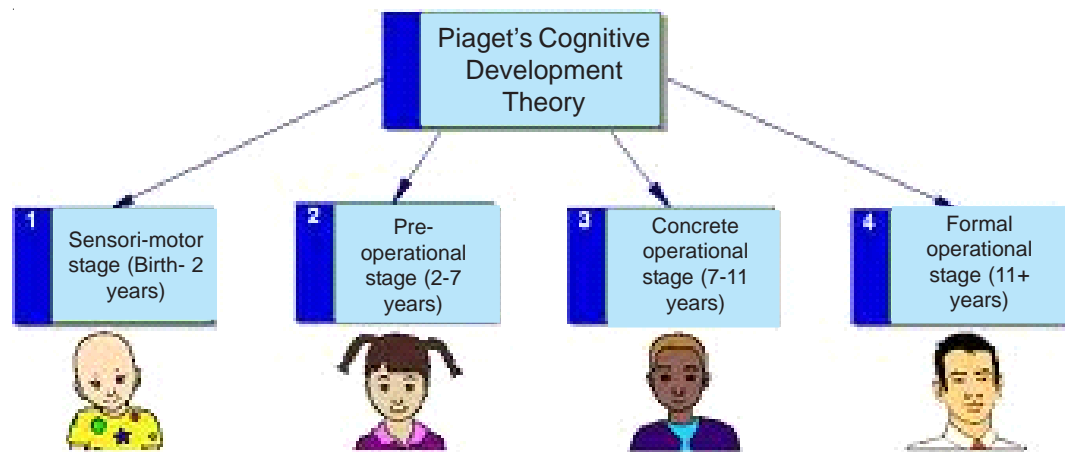
Cognitive development refers to the way children learn and process information. It includes improvement in attention, perception, language, thinking, memory and reasoning.





According to Piaget's cognitive developmental theory, our thoughts and reasoning are part of adaptation. Cognitive development follows a definite sequence of stages. Piaget described four major stages of cognitive development:

- Sensori-motor stage (Birth- 2 years)
- Pre-operational stage (2-7 years)
- Concrete operational stage (7-11 years)
- Formal operational stage (11+ years)



**Fig 10.1: Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory**

The following section takes a look at cognitive development through childhood as indicated by Piaget's theory.

### Cognitive Development in Early Childhood (2 to 6 years)

During this period children become increasingly proficient in using symbols such as words and images to represent a variety of objects, situations and events. By the time children enter school they have a reasonably good vocabulary. In fact, children are very receptive at learning language when they are exposed to multiple languages in different contexts. They often grow up as bilingual or multilingual children. They have better understanding of language compared to monolingual children who use only one language.

Capacity for sustained attention improves during the early childhood. A 3-year-old child may persist on a task such as coloring with crayons, playing with toys or watching television for not more than 15-20 minutes at a stretch. By contrast, a 6-year-old can be found to be working on an interesting task for an hour or more. Children also become more selective in their attention. As a result their perceptual skills also improve.



Thinking becomes more logical and capacity to remember and process information also improves. Through interaction with the environment the child learns the rules of appropriate social behavior which prepare him/her for schooling.

Early childhood, from 2 to 6 years, is the phase when the child progresses through the **Pre-operational stage**. There are 2 sub-stages of the Pre-operational Stage:

a) Symbolic Function (2 to 4 years)

b) Intuitive Thought (4 to 7 years)

During the Symbolic Function sub-stage, children can create mental images of objects and store them in their minds for later use. For example, such a child can draw a picture of or pretend to play with a puppy that is no longer present there.

Children can talk about people who are traveling, or who live somewhere else. They can also talk about or draw places they visited, as well as create new scenes and creatures from their imagination. Children can also use their mental images of things to role-play in games.

Piaget also believed that pre operational children have a style of thinking characterized by **Egocentrism**, or the inability to see the world from someone else's point of view. According to Piaget, children with egocentrism explain situations from their own perspective and understanding.

The next sub-stage in Piaget's Preoperational cognitive development stage is the **Intuitive Thought sub-stage**, which spans ages 4-7 years. Children in this sub-stage of development learn by asking questions such as, "Why?" and "How come?" Piaget labeled this "intuitive thought" because he believed that children at this stage tend to be so certain of their knowledge and understanding that they are unaware of how they gained this knowledge in the first place. These children show "**Centration**". They focus on one characteristic of object and base their decisions or judgment on that only.

During early childhood, children's ability to understand, process, and to produce **language** also improves rapidly. There is a 'language explosion' between 3 and 6 years. At age 3, their spoken vocabularies consist of roughly 900 words. By age 6, spoken vocabularies expand dramatically to anywhere between 8,000 and 14,000 words.

As children move beyond using two word sentences, they start to learn and understand grammar rules. Beyond growing their vocabularies, young children start expanding their ability to use different forms of words (e.g., irregular verbs such as "She brought" rather than "She brang")? They also begin to form more complex sentences.

## B. Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood

Children at the middle childhood level are full of curiosity and are keen to explore the environment. Memory and conceptual knowledge improve, facilitating logical





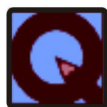
## Notes

thinking beyond the immediate situation. Children can also engage in aesthetic activities such as music, art and dance and develop hobbies of their own.

In Piaget's theory, characteristics of the **Concrete Operational Stage** during middle childhood are as follows:

- Understanding of logical principles.
- Improvement in spatial reasoning.
- Logical thinking limited to real and concrete situations.

In middle childhood years, **language development** proceeds in many ways. More than just learning new words, children are acquiring more adult definitions of the words they know. They create relationships among words, understand synonyms and antonyms, and understand how prefixes and suffixes affect word meaning.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

1. Write short answers to the following questions:
  - a. List any 3 major features of the pre-operational stage.
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Describe any 3 major achievements of the concrete operational stage.
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## 10.3 SOCIO-EMOTIONAL AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Infancy is a period when basic emotions are established, and the child progresses in both emotional expression as well as recognition of emotions in others. During early childhood, children typically start to develop self-conscious emotions like shame and guilt as they start evaluating themselves, instead of simply reacting to caregivers' or other adults' evaluations.

As children become increasingly self-aware, more effective at communicating, and better at understanding the thoughts and feelings of others, their social skills improve. They become skilled at modifying and expressing their emotions to fit different social situations. For example, one child may feel angry, but he/she knows that having a tantrum at school is inappropriate. Another child learns that acting pleasant and happy, even though she is actually feeling shy, is a better way to meet people in a birthday party when she does not know many of the other children. Changing or





controlling one's emotions in social situations is an important skill that allows children to fit in with groups and helps in creating interpersonal relationships.

Another emotional capacity that develops during early childhood is empathy, which is an important component of positive social behavior. As with other emotions, the development of empathy depends on cognitive and language development.

Learning how to appropriately express and deal with anger, aggression, and fear is a valuable life and social skill. Young children often need plenty of guidance and positive discipline in order to learn how to control their anger. Parents and caregivers not only directly teach ways of controlling emotions, but also indirectly influence children's behaviour by acting as role models.

As infants grow, they begin to mature in their ability to interact with others socially. A child's main developmental task is to create bonds and connect with primary caregivers. In contrast, young children branch out and began to create other social relationships. When interacting with other children of their age, such as peers at day care or preschool, they engage in parallel play in which they play beside each other without truly interacting with each other.

Young children begin to play more cooperatively. In cooperative play, they engage in the common activity in a small group. Often, these first forms of cooperative play include pretend or symbolic play. As they continue to develop socially with peers, they often enter a stage of rough and tumble play which includes running, racing, climbing, or competitive games. This is the stage when social skills such as learning to take turns and follow simple group rules and norms are practiced.

### **B. Middle Childhood**

During this period children show fast change in social relationships. They use social comparison to distinguish themselves from others. They start seeing things from other's perspective. A child begins to weigh self-worth and increasingly compares himself/herself with peers.

Children are now able to understand emotions of pride and shame and can experience more than one emotion in a given situation. They can suppress or conceal emotions more effectively and use self-acquired strategies to cope. In this period, children internalize or begin to control their values and feelings from within. They start making judgments at this age that impact moral development.

Gender differences are observed during middle childhood. Girls may attach greater importance to good interpersonal relationships and the family while boys may emphasize the importance of social prestige.

A prevalent problem among children of this age group is of bullying. Researchers have found that bullies display certain characteristics, such as being intrusive, having

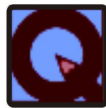


demanding but unresponsive parents. Victims are often depressed and have lower self-esteem.



**Fig 10.2:** *Girls at play*

In middle childhood, self-concept changes from a focus on observable characteristics and typical behavior and emotions to an emphasis on personality traits, positive and negative characteristics, and social comparisons. The child begins to see his or her own strengths and limitations. This helps the move towards achievement of an identity.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.3

1. Fill in the blanks in the following statements:

- The development of empathy depends on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ development.
- Girls in middle childhood attach more importance to good \_\_\_\_\_ relations while boys give more importance to own social \_\_\_\_\_.
- A child who is liked by some but disliked by other peers is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- When two children are playing without interaction, it is called \_\_\_\_\_ play.
- An internal determiner of emotional development is the child's \_\_\_\_\_.

### 10.4 SOCIALIZATION

The process of acquiring norms, values and beliefs, which are considered significant in a society, is called socialization. It is the process of transmitting cultural values, preferences and patterns of behavior to children. This is done by various processes,



institutions and people. Socialization involves regulating children's behavior and disciplining their undesirable or inappropriate behavioral tendencies.

Parents, families, children's peer groups, schools, religious institutions and mass media such as television are some important agents of socialization. They influence the process of child rearing directly as well as indirectly and reinforce culturally appropriate modes of thought and behaviour.

Early childhood is a crucial period of development because during this period children learn a great deal about the norms, conventions and practices in their families, society and culture. They acquire language and learn the fundamentals of culture. The primary socializing agents during this period are the family members.

Middle childhood is the time when influence of peers and school becomes prominent, though family context remains important. The effect of media such as television and computers is undeniable. This is the time when social stereotypes and prejudices are most likely to develop.

Much research has been done on the impact of **parenting styles** on the socialization of the child. There are 4 main types of parenting styles:

1. **Authoritarian style:** demanding, controlling, insensitive parenting
2. **Permissive style:** indulgent, non-demanding parenting
3. **Authoritative style:** firm, consistent parenting, reasons given for discipline.

Neglectful or uninvolved style disinterested uncaring, low control and communication.

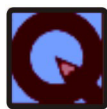
Besides family, peers, media and school, there are other factors which influence the socialization process. Ethnicity and socio-economic status of the parents makes an impact on the child's development directly and indirectly. Ethnicity is linked to family size, structure, education, income, composition, extended networks.



**Fig 10.3:** *Children from low SES home*



**Fig 10.4:** Child in high SES family



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.4

1. Give brief answers to the following questions.
  - a. What do you understand by the term 'Socialization'?
  - b. State the major types of parenting styles.



### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Physical development continues during early and middle childhood, but the rate is slower than in infancy.
- There are gender differences in physical growth as girls tend to have a growth spurt earlier than boys during middle childhood.
- Gross motor development is rapid during early childhood.
- During middle childhood, children continue to develop gross and fine motor skills, while there is marked improvement in muscular control and eye-hand co-ordination.
- In early childhood the child is in the pre-operational stage of cognitive development.
- In middle childhood, the child reaches the concrete operational stage, when conservation, transformation, seriation and logical thinking are acquired, but the child still finds it difficult to deal with abstract concepts.
- Emotional development in childhood involves the development of self-conscious emotions, and better self-regulation in emotional expression.

- Social development progresses during childhood from parallel play to co-operative play. In middle childhood, the focus shifts gradually from family to peers and school.
- Peer acceptance is an important determiner of a child's self-esteem and adjustment.
- Socialization is the process of acquiring behaviors, norms, values and beliefs, which are considered significant in a society.
- Parenting style influences the socialization process and personality development of the child.
- Cultural and social factors influence parenting style and attitudes towards child rearing, and hence the socialization process.

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

- a. Discuss the major features of physical development in early childhood
- b. Describe the major features of motor development in middle childhood.
- c. Discuss the main differences between the pre-operational stage and concrete stage of Piaget's theory.
- d. Explain the major features of emotional development in early childhood.
- e. Discuss how cultural factors influence the process of socialization in childhood.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****10.1**

1. a. Crawling, standing, walking  
b. grasping, pinching, holding pencil

**10.2**

1. a. Create mental images, store it, talk about events, people create new scenes from imagination  
b. understanding logical principles improvement in spatial reasoning language development

**10.3**

1. a. cognitive, language  
b. interpersonal, prestige



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- c. controversial
- d. parallel
- e. temperament

**10.4**

1. a. Acquiring norms values, beliefs, Regulation discipline of undesirable behaviour, agents of socialization.  
b. Authoritarian, permissive, authoritative and neglectful.

**Hints for Terminal Questions**

- a. Refer to unit 10.1.3
- b. Refer to unit 10.1.4
- c. Refer to unit 10.2.1 and unit 10.2.2.
- d. Refer to unit 10.3.1
- e. Refer to unit 10.4