

IMPACT OF PARENTAL CARE ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

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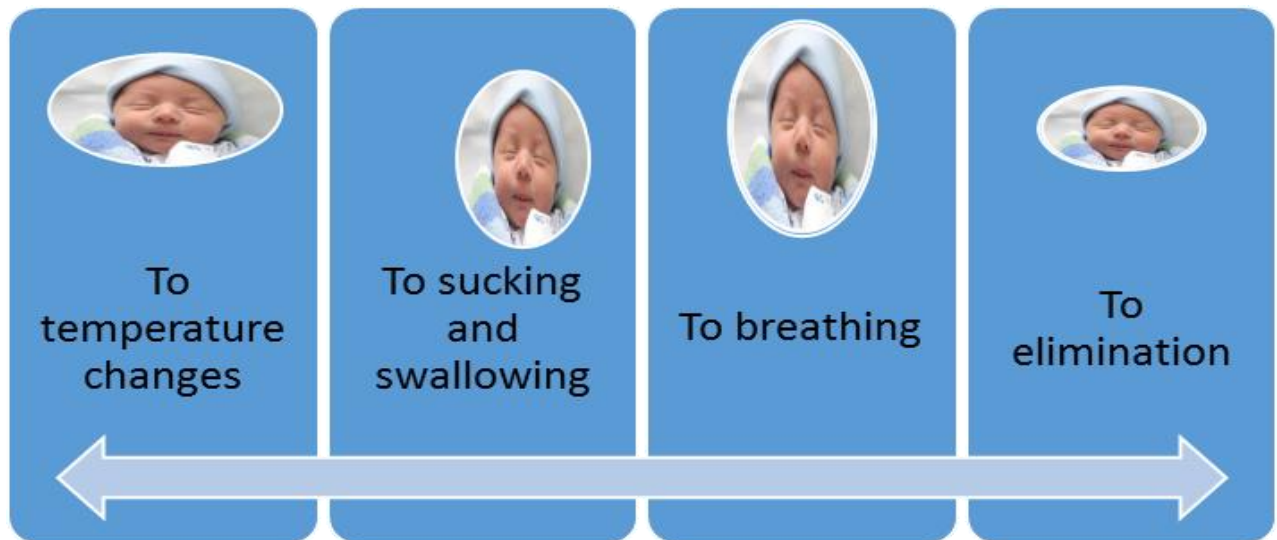
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Abstract

Parents are the first care takers and teachers of a child. Health and habits much depend upon the way how they are brought up in their childhood. The impact begins from the infancy stage to adolescence stage. During this period an individual develops the qualities of trust, sharing, confidence and good citizenship. In the lack of proper care and nourishment, he develops weak health and habits. This paper presents the different stages of development in a child and the factors affecting different periods of development.

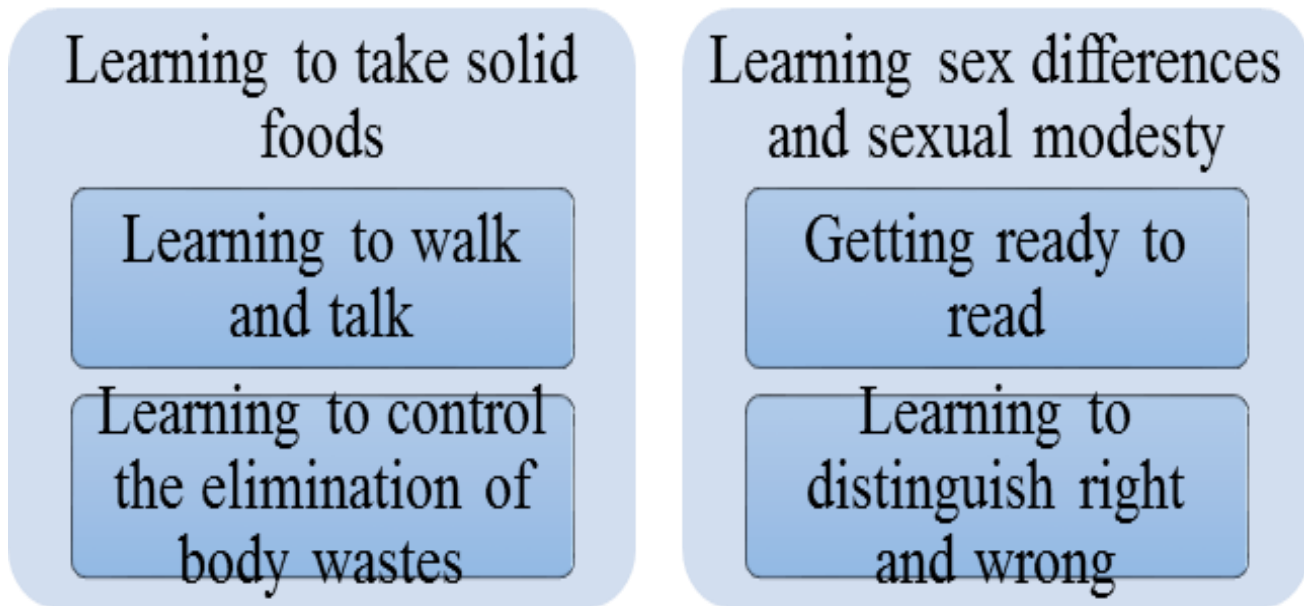
Infancy period extends from birth to eighteen months of age. This is called the age of trust v/s mistrust. The infant who comes to the new environment, from mother's womb needs only nourishment. If the child's caretaker, the mother anticipates and fulfills these needs consistently, the infant learns to trust others, develops confidence. If the infant fails to get needed support and care, it develops mistrust which affects the personality in later stages of life. It is a time for radical adjustment. This is a time for developing the bonds that will last a lifetime providing the child with the inner resources to develop self-esteem and the ability to relate positively with others. Each child is unique and it is imperative that parents learn to understand, respect, support and encourage the unique characteristics and abilities of each child. The new born infant must make four major adjustments to post natal life:



Early childhood ranges from eighteen months to three years. By second year of life, the muscular and nervous systems are developed markedly, and the child is eager to acquire new skills, is no longer content to sit and watch. The child moves around and examines its environment, but judgement develops more slowly. The child needs guidance. In the crisis of autonomy v/s doubt faced during this period, the critical issue is the child's feeling of

independence. In an extremely permissive environment, the child encounters difficulties that it cannot handle, and the child develops doubt about its abilities. Similarly if the control is severe, the child feels worthless and shameful of being capable of so little. The appropriate middle position, respecting the child's needs and environmental factors, requires the caretaker's careful and constant attention.

Babyhood and Early Childhood development includes:



Middle childhood_ extends from 3-5 years. The crisis faced during this period is initiative v/s guilt. Once a sense of independence has been established, the child wants to try out various possibilities. It is at this time the child's willingness to try new things is facilitated or inhibited. If the care taker recognises the child's creative effort in attempting to do some activities is encouraged, the crisis will be resolved in favourable direction and this outcome, if repeated, should influence the future initiative. Otherwise the child develops feelings of guilt.

When a child takes the first step on his or her own, a new phase in development begins. At this stage children are now free to roam around their world. It is a time for active exploration of their environment. Language development takes major leaps which leads to learning the names of objects of interest, the ability to ask for things and as they discover their independent nature, yes, they develop the ability to say "NO!"

During this developmental stage, a major challenge is developing what psychologists call emotional regulation. "Meltdowns" are common during this period but parents can use the bond developed during infancy to help the child learn to modulate their emotional expression and begin to grasp the difficult concept of delay of gratification. While they instinctively seem to be able to say "NO" toddlers also need help in learning how to accept "No" from others.

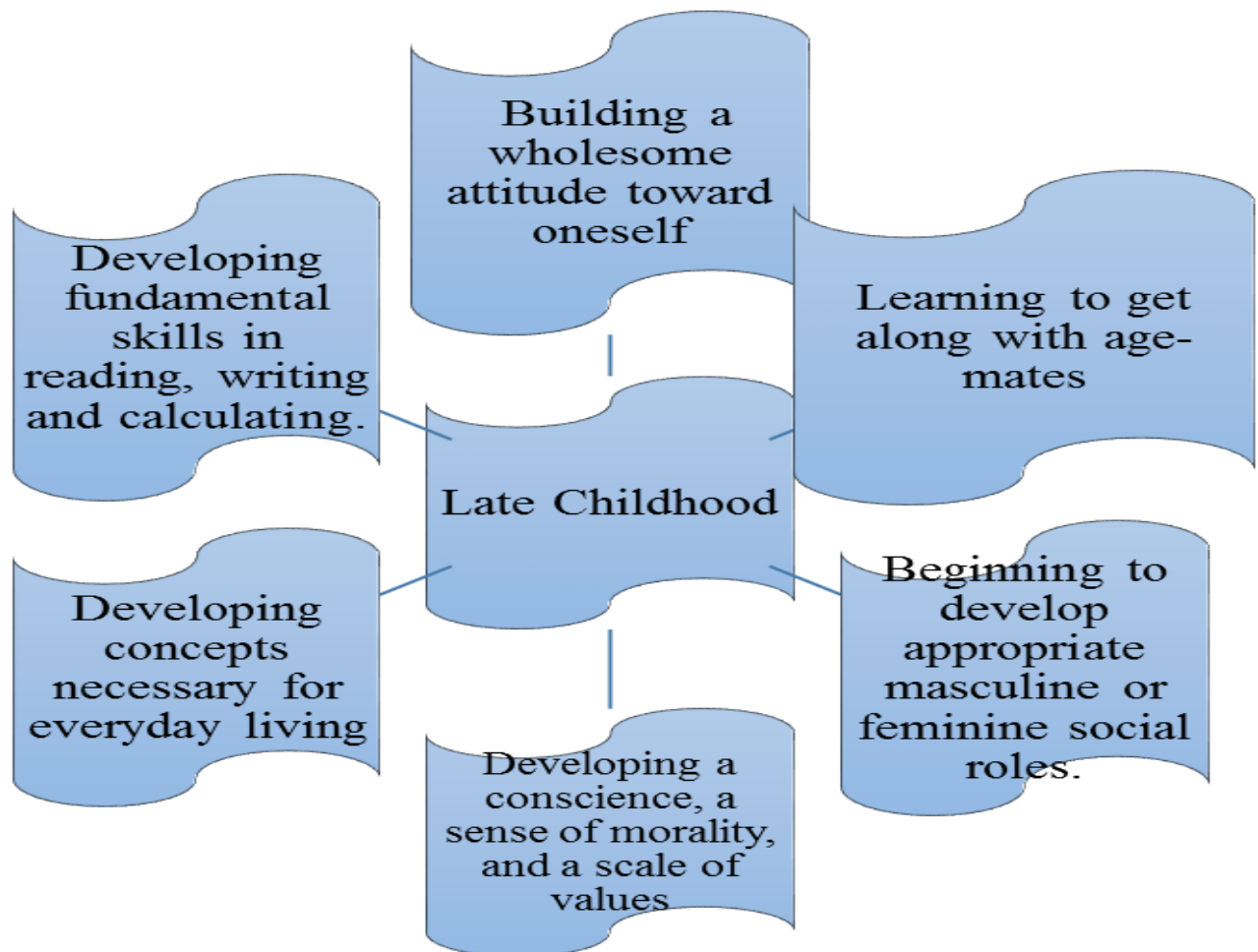
This is also a stage of rapid physical and intellectual development preparing these children for starting school which includes interacting cooperatively with peers while at the same time being able to compete physically and intellectually. A child's parent is in the position to be a coach

providing just the right combination of encouragement, support and guidance. Parents also need to serve as primary teacher for the mastery of basic learning skills and encourage active discussion and experimentation of new concepts and skills.

Late childhood ranges from 5-12 years. During this period the child develops greater attention span, needs less sleep, and gains rapidly in strength; therefore, the child can spend much more effort in acquiring skills, and needs accomplishment, regardless of ability. The crisis faced during this period is hard work v/s inferiority.

The child aims to develop a feeling of competence, rather than inability. The success in this endeavour leads to further productive behaviour, failure results in development of feelings of inferiority. Hence, the caretakers should guide the child to take up appropriate tasks. Raising school age children can be awesome. Watching them try new activities, cheering them on at athletic events and applauding their accomplishments at recitals are usually some of the high points for most parents. Parents need to impart a moral code that the child gradually internalizes.

As children struggle with these important tasks parents must be able to provide praise and encouragement for achievement but parents must also be able to allow them to sometimes experience the natural consequences for their behavior or provide logical consequences to help them learn from mistakes. Late Childhood includes:



Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood which extends from 12-18 years. During this period the individual attains puberty leading to many changes. These changes have enormous implications for the individual's sexual, social, emotional and vocational life; that is why Stanley Hall has rightly described this period as a "period of storm and stress". These changes make the individual to find an identity, which means developing an understanding of self, the goals one wishes to achieve and the work/occupation role. The individual craves for encouragement and support of caretakers and peer groups. If he is successful he will develop a sense of self or identity, otherwise he will suffer from role confusion/ identity confusion. There is no doubt that for most families, the teen years present a challenge for parents and children. During adolescence, kids need their parents more than ever. Research shows that a positive family environment including fun family activities, open parent-child communication and the encouragement to participate in positive extracurricular and community activities, teens are able to navigate these years with relative ease.

Adolescence includes:

- (i) Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes.
- (ii) Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.
- (iii) Accepting one's physic and using one's body effectively.
- (iv) Desiring, accepting, and achieving socially responsible behavior.
- (v) Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults.
- (vi) Preparing for an economic career.
- (vii) Preparing for marriage and family life.
- (viii) Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system.

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