Childhood Developmental Stage

Student’s Name:

Institution Affiliation:

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**Childhood (3-12 years)**

**Introduction**

One of the significant parts of parenting is understanding the growth and development of children. Children and infants may experience emotional and physical challenges as they progress through different stages of growth and development. These stages do not only include physical changes that take place from infancy to adolescence, but also changes in thinking, behaviors, emotions, as well as personality. Many theorists, such as Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud, and Erik Erikson have enabled us to understand the various stages of childhood development. Three stage of childhood development include early childhood, middle, and adolescence. The idea regarding childhood in society changes from time to time and research studies have resulted in new understanding of changes that occur in each stage.

**Physical, Emotional, Cognitive, and Social development**

Childhood is a stage of tremendous development in all areas of a child’s life. Physically, children between birth and three years double their heights as well as weight. They become more balanced and have adult-like appearances. Apart from physical changes, they master other skills, such as using the toilet, walking, sitting, using spoon, and adequate coordination between eyes and hands to catch and throw a ball. The development of fine motor skills begins between three and five years. They tend to have sufficient control of crayons, scissors, and pencils. Gross motor development may involve skipping or balancing on one foot. The rate of physical development decreases between five and eight years of age, whereas motor skills and body proportions continue to advance. Rapid language and cognitive development accompany physical changes during the early childhood stage. Children are able to speak between three hundred and one thousand words within the first three years.

The number of words increase by the age of five years. Language is essential because it facilitates cognitive development(Fink & Rockers, 2014). They use language to solve problems, communicate with others, and develop fundamental understanding of less concrete ideas like money and time by eight years of age. Similarly, they develop socio-emotional skills, such as forming peer relationships, developing the sense of what is right and wrong, and gender identification. The middle childhood stage occurs between eight and twelve years of age. Physical growth in the stage is less rapid than in the early childhood phase. The growth rate is slow until the adolescence stage. Also, cognitive development takes place at a slow and steady pace. Children in middle stage utilize the skills they gained in the early childhood period as they prepare themselves for the next stage of cognitive development (Fink & Rockers, 2014). Concrete and hand-on learning practices are critical for children in this period. They also become competent in their social and interpersonal relationships.

**Developmental Theories**

Renowned theorists of childhood development have enabled us to understand various changes that children experience. Jean Piaget is among the most known growth and development theorists. His theory, cognitive development, deals with the cognitive abilities that children develop in a sequential and step-wise style. According to Piaget, cognitive development follows a natural order of progression. The theory also explains the construction of a mental model among children, which enables them to understand the surrounding world. The primary elements of Piaget’s theory include schemas, adaptation processes, and cognitive development stages. Schemas are essential in constructing the mental model because they help children to recognize knowledge. They consists of units of knowledge and each unit relates to a single aspect of the world. The first adaptation process is assimilation, where children utilize the current schemas to handle new situations.

The second process is accommodation, which occurs when the present knowledge does not work. The last one is equilibrium, which takes place when children’s schemas handle emerging knowledge through assimilation. According to Piaget, the first stage of cognitive development is sensorimotor, then toddlerhood, concrete operational, and the last one is formal operational. Another theorist, Sigmund Freud, argues that childhood development consists of five stages(Bucx, 2018). The first psychosexual stage is oral, where children get libido satisfaction from putting things in the mouth. The second phase is anal; children derive pleasure from defecating. Phallic stage is the third one, where the source of pleasure occurs in children’s genitals through masturbation. Latency stage is the fourth one and children in this period channel their sexual energy to other activities like friendships, cooking, and hobbies(Bucx, 2018). The last phase is the genital stage, which begins at puberty.

I think Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development theory is the most useful in explaining childhood stage(Schachter&Galliher, 2018). This theory suggests that individuals go through eight psychosocial stages. First stage is trust versus mistrust; infants develop trust or mistrust depending on the quality of care givers. The second one is autonomy versus shame; children begin to gain independence and perform actions on their own. The third stage is initiative versus guilt, which involves asserting power and controlling the children’s world through social interactions. The fourth one is industry versus inferiority, where kids use social interactions to develop pride in their abilities as well as accomplishments. The fifth one is industry versus confusion; children develop a sense of individual identity, which influences their behaviors and development(Schachter&Galliher, 2018). The sixth stage involves young adults, where they begin to form loving and intimate relationships. It deals with intimacy versus isolation. The seventh phase is generativity versus stagnation and it deals with the creating or nurturing things. The last stage of psychosocial development is integrity versus despair, where individuals reflect back on their lives.

References

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