10

Social and Personality Development in Middle Childhood

Do you remember when you learned to ride a bicycle? Perhaps your experience was similar to Leticia's. When she was 6 years old, Leticia's parents bought her a small bicycle with training wheels. Leticia loved to ride up and down her street and felt incredibly grown-up when the "big kids" allowed her to ride along with them.

One day, Leticia and her new-found "bike buddies" challenged each other to ride to the top of a dirt hill at the end of their street. Their game had one simple rule, if you couldn't make it to the top you were out. Leticia waited patiently for her turn and cheered along with the other children as each of her friends made it to the top. Finally, it was her turn. She made her way to the base of the hill and started to climb. To her dismay, though, her training wheels kept

getting stuck. Each time she would jar them loose and start over but, soon, the other children were yelling "You're out! Get off the hill! You have to go home now."

Feeling lower than she ever had in her life, Leticia rode home as fast as she could and begged her father to take the training wheels off her bike. Leticia's father wasn't sure that she was ready, but, touched by the intensity of his daughter's plea, he reluctantly removed the training wheels. "I'll help you learn to balance," he said. "No, I can do it myself," Leticia replied confidently. But on her first attempt, she tipped over sideways, and the bike landed on top of her. Humbled by her first experience, the girl agreed to accept her father's assistance.

Leticia got back on her bike and started to ride, but this time her father ran alongside and nudged her back into an upright position each time her balance started to falter. After ten days of practicing with her father, Leticia was at last able to make it all the way to the end of the driveway without falling. At the end of her fourth trip from the garage to the end of the driveway, she cautiously ventured out into the street. To her delight, Leticia found that she was at last a true "big kid" who could ride her bicycle without training wheels. Leticia couldn't wait to play "ride up the hill" with her friends.

At this point in your study of human development, you probably recognize that Leticia's story represents the intersection of several developmental pathways. Advances in physical development are vital to the acquisition of her bicycle-riding skills. Cognitive development is at work in her understanding of rule-based games such as the one that she and her friends invented in the vacant lot. But what makes Leticia's experiences unique are the emotional and behavioral responses that her personality, self-concept, and relationship history contribute to the developmental equation. These are the topics of the present chapter. We begin with a consideration of the major themes of development that uniquely mark social and personality development in the middle childhood years and the different ways in which developmentalists have explained them.

Theories of Social and Personality Development

Leticia's story shows us that the development of self-perceived competence is the overarching theme of social and personality development in the middle childhood years. How do children develop this critical attribute? Developmentalists representing different theoretical perspectives emphasize different sets of factors in their explanations of the development of self-perceived competence in these years.

Learning Objective 10.1

How did the psychoanalytic theorists characterize the middle childhood years?

Psychoanalytic Perspectives

When you think back to your middle childhood years, what kinds of experiences stand out? Most likely, you remember interacting with your peers and siblings. If Freud were called upon to explain how your feelings about your own competence developed, he would appeal to the emotional qualities of these interactions. To illustrate, think back to how Leticia responded when her peers taunted her after she failed to make it up the hill. She was disappointed and embarrassed, but these difficult emotions motivated her to learn to ride her bicycle without training wheels. According to the psychoanalytic perspective, and in line with our everyday experiences with children, children vary greatly in the ways that they respond to such situations. Some become angry and lash out at those who reject them. Others withdraw and develop a general fear of social interactions. Parents, as Leticia's father did, contribute to these responses. However, Freud thought that the challenge of the middle childhood years was to form emotional bonds with peers and to move beyond those that were developed with parents in earlier years. Thus, much of the modern-day research on peer rejection and other emotional features of middle childhood find their roots in Freud's psychoanalytic approach.

Erik Erikson accepted Freud's view of the central role of peer relationships and the emotions that accompany them in middle childhood. He went beyond Freud's perspective, though, when he further characterized middle childhood as the period during which children experience the crisis of *industry versus inferiority*. During this stage, Erikson said, children develop a sense of their own competence through the achievement of culturally defined learning goals (see Table 2.3 on page 31). The psychosocial task of the 6- to 12-year-old is development of industry, or the willingness to work to accomplish goals. To develop industry, the child must be able to achieve the goals her culture sets for all children her age. In most countries, 6- to 12-year-olds must learn to read and write. If they fail to do so, Erikson's view claims, they will enter adolescence and adulthood with feelings of inferiority. These feelings of inferiority constitute an emotional mindset that can hamper an individual's ability to achieve for the rest of her life.

Contemporary studies that stress the child's need to feel competent are in tune with Erikson's views. Many of them suggest that he was right about the link between school experiences and an emerging sense of competence. It seems that most 6- to 12-year-olds gradually develop a view of their own competence as they succeed or fail at academic tasks such as reading and arithmetic (Chapman & Tunmer, 1997; Skaalvik & Valas, 1999). Thus, their self-assessments and actual achievements are strongly correlated; that is, those who are most successful judge themselves to be competent, while those who have difficulty perceive themselves as less so. However, individual differences in children's responses to success and failure moderate the effects of the experiences themselves. Some of these differences are found in the emotional realm, as suggested earlier.

Erikson also argued that children who lack success in school can develop it by participating in culturally valued pursuits outside of academic settings. A child who is a mediocre student, for instance, may channel his need to develop self-perceived competence into athletics. Another child who gets poor grades may do so because she spends most of her time reading books that she finds to be more interesting than her school work. Outsiders may worry about her sense of competence, but, internally, she has no doubts about her abilities.

Learning Objective 10.2

What are the main ideas of the trait and social-cognitive theorists?

The Trait and Social-Cognitive Perspectives

Psychoanalytic theorists have given us some compelling ideas about how individual differences in emotional responses to childhood experiences shape development and self-perceived competence. However, they tell us little about the origins of those differences. The primary goal of *trait theories*, by contrast, is to do just that. A **trait** is a stable pattern of responding to situations. This definition should remind you of our discussions of temperament in earlier chapters because the study of infant and early childhood tempera-

trait a stable pattern of responding to situations

ment is grounded in trait theory. By middle childhood, trait theorists argue that the various dimensions of temperament have evolved into five dimension's of personality (the so-called *Big Five*) that are shown in Table 10.1.

Research suggests that trait theorists are right about the emergence of stable traits in middle childhood. Moreover, these traits are known to contribute to the development of feelings of competence. For instance, a child who is reasonably *extraverted*, or outgoing, as Leticia appears to be, responds to peer rejection by becoming more determined to be accepted by the group. One who is *introverted*, or shy, would likely be so emotionally distraught by the taunts of her playmates that she would actively avoid social situations in the future. Still, children are not simply driven by personality-generated impulses in a mechanistic way, and trait theory leaves us wondering why extraversion doesn't always lead to social competence, and some people overcome their tendency toward introversion to become competent in the social arena.

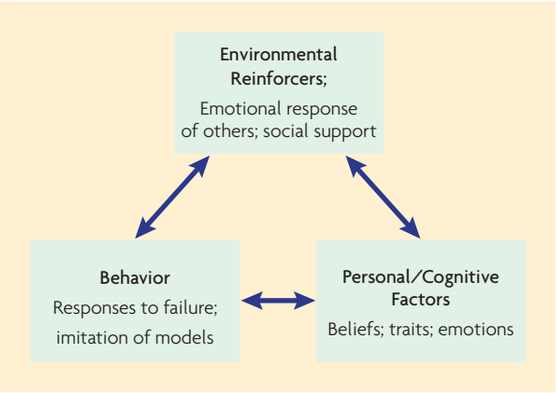


Figure 10.1
Bandura's Reciprocal Determinism

Bandura takes a social-cognitive view of personality. He suggests that three components—the external environment, individual behaviors, and cognitive factors, such as beliefs, expectancies, and personal dispositions—are all influenced by each other and play reciprocal roles in determining personality.

From the social-cognitive perspective, both the psychoanalytic theorists and the trait perspective focus on only one set of factors that shape the development of self-perceived competence in middle childhood. Albert Bandura, for instance, proposed that the emotions described by psychoanalytic theorists and the stable patterns of responding that have been identified by trait theorists, together with cognitive factors, constitute one of three interactive components that influence social and personality development (see Figure 10.1). Bandura used the term *person component* to refer to this emotional/cognitive component. The other components of his model were the developing person's *behavior* and the responses of the *environment*.

Bandura proposed that the personal, behavioral, and environmental components interact in a pattern he termed **reciprocal determinism**. Each of the three components influences, and is influenced by, the other two. For example, Leticia's emotional reaction to her failure to make it up the hill and her conclusion that removing the training wheels from her bike would solve her dilemma (the personal component) motivated her to head home and ask her father to remove the training wheels (the behavioral component). Her father responded by removing the wheels (the environmental component). His agreeing to do so affected Leticia's emotional state (the personal component) and led her to attempt to ride the bike without her father's help (the behavioral component).

reciprocal determinism Bandura's model in which personal, behavioral, and environmental factors interact to influence personality development

By organizing the various interactive influences in the way that it does, Bandura's model provides a more comprehensive explanation of how school-aged children develop ideas

Table 10.1 The Big Five Personality Traits

Trait	Qualities of Individuals Who Show the Trait	Possible Temperament Components
Extraversion	Active, assertive, enthusiastic, outgoing	High activity level; sociability; positive emotionality; talkativeness
Agreeableness	Affectionate, forgiving, generous, kind, sympathetic, trusting	Perhaps high approach/positive emotionality; perhaps effortful control
Conscientiousness	Efficient, organized, prudent, reliable, responsible	Effortful control/task persistence
Neuroticism (also called emotional instability)	Anxious, self-pitying, tense, touchy, unstable, worrying	Negative emotionality; irritability
Openness/Intellect	Artistic, curious, imaginative, insightful, original, wide interests	Approach; low inhibition

(*Sources*: Ahadi & Rothbart, 1994; John, Caspi, Robins, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1994, Table 1, p. 161; McCrae & Costa, 1990.)

Critical Thinking

1. How might you use Bandura's three-part model to create an explanation of how an event in your childhood influenced your development in the domain and personality development? What role did your emotional responses and personality traits play in the event?

about the degrees of competence they possess than either the psychoanalytic or the trait theorists do. Thus, Bandura's social-cognitive approach provides us with a way of taking into account the valuable insights of the psychoanalytic theorists relative to children's emotions with those of the trait theorists. And by integrating both into the three-part model that Bandura proposed, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that drive the development of self-perceived competence in the middle childhood years.

Self-Concept

How much insight does a school-aged child really have into her own personality? The answer to this question depends on whether we look at the child at the beginning of this period or near the end of it. Across the years from 6 to 12, children's understanding of themselves improves quite a bit and, by the end of the middle childhood period, children's self-concepts include two new components, a *psychological self* and a *valued self*.

Learning Objective 10.3

What are the features of the psychological self?

The Psychological Self

The **psychological self** is a person's understanding of his or her enduring psychological characteristics. It first appears during the transition from early to middle childhood and becomes increasingly complex as the child approaches adolescence. It includes both basic information about the child's unique characteristics and self-judgments of competency.

Personality Traits Children don't use the same terminology as the trait theories that you read about earlier in the chapter, but they do describe their own personalities with increasing degrees of precision across the middle childhood years. For example a 6-year-old might use simple psychological self-descriptors such as "smart" or "dumb." By 10, a child is more likely to use comparisons in self-descriptions: "I'm smarter than most other kids" or "I'm not as talented in art as my friend" (Rosenberg, 1986; Ruble, 1987).

This developmental trend was illustrated in the results of an older study of the self-concepts of 9- to 18-year-olds (Montemayor & Eisen, 1977). Children who participated were asked to give 20 answers to the question "Who am I?" The researchers found that the younger children were still using mostly surface qualities to describe themselves, as in this description by a 9-year-old:

> My name is Bruce C. I have brown eyes. I have brown hair. I have brown eyebrows. I am nine years old. I LOVE! Sports. I have seven people in my family. I have great! eye site. I have lots! of friends. I live on 1923 Pinecrest Dr. I am going on 10 in September. I'm a boy. I have a uncle that is almost 7 feet tall. My school is Pinecrest. My teacher is Mrs. V. I play Hockey! I'm almost the smartest boy in the class. I LOVE! food. I love fresh air. I LOVE school. (Montemayor & Eisen, 1977, p. 317)

In contrast, consider the self-description of this 11-year-old girl in the sixth grade:

> My name is A. I'm a human being. I'm a girl. I'm a truthful person. I'm not very pretty. I do so-so in my studies. I'm a very good cellist. I'm a very good pianist. I'm a little bit tall for my age. I like several boys. I like several girls. I'm old-fashioned. I play tennis. I am a very good swimmer. I try to be helpful. I'm always ready to be friends with anybody. Mostly I'm good, but I lose my temper. I'm not well-liked by some girls and boys. I don't know if I'm liked by boys or not. (Montemayor & Eisen, 1977, pp. 317–318)

This girl, like the other 11-year-olds in the study, describes her external qualities, but she also emphasizes psychological factors such as personality traits.

Thus, as a child moves through the concrete operational period, her psychological self becomes more complex, more comparative, less tied to external features, and more centered on feelings and ideas.

psychological self an understanding of one's stable, internal traits

Self-Efficacy As we noted earlier in the chapter, middle childhood is the time when children develop perceptions of the degree to which they are competent. Albert Bandura has greatly advanced developmentalists' understanding of this crucial aspect of the psychological self. He defines **self-efficacy** as an individual's belief in her capacity to cause an intended event to occur (Bandura, 1997). How does it develop?

Bandura proposed that peer models are a primary source of self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Bandura would predict that, when Leticia observed her friends riding up the hill, she probably concluded that she could do likewise. Bandura further argued that, in order to believe that she could follow her peers' example, Leticia had to see herself as similar to them. (Recall the joy she experienced from thinking of herself as a "big kid.") Thus, *social comparisons*, or the process of drawing conclusions about the self based on comparisons to others, play an integral role in the degree to which children gain insight into their own self-efficacy from observing peers. Thus, simply watching other children model success at a task is insufficient for the development of self-efficacy in a child whom outsiders see as similar to the models. The child herself must perceive that similarity in order to be influenced by the models.

Encouragement from sources of information that children value also contribute to self-efficacy. Leticia's father's willingness to let her try to ride without training wheels played a role in her feelings of self-efficacy. However, nothing influences self-efficacy more than an individual's actual experiences (Britner & Pajares, 2006). In other words, believing that you can do something is less powerful, emotionally and cognitively, than really doing it. Consequently, the final hurdle in Leticia's development of self-efficacy for bicycle-riding was surmounted when she succeeded in learning to ride on her own.

The Valued Self

Learning Objective 10.4

How does self-esteem develop?

A child can have an accurate view of her personality traits, and even have a solid sense of self-efficacy, but still fail to value herself as an individual. To find out why, developmentalists have studied another aspect of self-concept development in middle childhood, the emergence of the *valued self*.

The Nature of Self-Esteem A child's evaluative judgments have several interesting features. First of all, over the years of elementary school and high school, children's evaluations of their own abilities become increasingly differentiated, with quite separate judgments about academic or athletic skills, physical appearance, social acceptance, friendships, romantic appeal, and relationships with parents (Harter, 1990; Marsh, Craven, & Debus, 1999). Paradoxically, however, it is when they reach school age—around age 7—that children first develop a global self-evaluation. Seven- and eight-year-olds (but not younger children) readily answer questions about how well they like themselves as people, how happy they are, or how well they like the way they are leading their lives. It is this global evaluation of one's own worth that is usually referred to as **self-esteem**, and it is not merely the sum of all the separate assessments a child makes about his skills in different areas. How stable are self-esteem judgments? A number of longitudinal studies of elementary school–aged children and teenagers show that self-esteem is quite stable in the short term but somewhat less so over periods of several years. The correlation between two self-esteem scores obtained a few months apart is generally about .60. Over several years, this correlation drops to about .40 (Alsaker & Olweus, 1992; Block & Robins, 1993). So, a child with high self-esteem at age 8 or 9 is likely to have high self-esteem at age 10 or 11. But it is also true that self-esteem is subject to a good deal of variation. To some degree, self-esteem is more stable in girls than in boys (Heinonen, Raikkonen, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2003).

How Self-Esteem Develops Developmental psychologist Susan Harter (1987; 1990) has studied the development of self-esteem extensively. She has found that self-esteem is strongly influenced by mental comparisons of children's ideal selves and their actual experiences. For example, social self-esteem, the assessment of one's own social skills, is higher in popular

self-efficacy belief in one's capacity to cause an intended event to occur or to perform a task

self-esteem a global evaluation of one's own worth

Hitting a home run will raise this girl's self-esteem only if she places a high value on being good at sports or at baseball specifically.

children than in those who are rejected by their peers (Jackson & Bracken, 1998). However, each component of self-esteem is valued differently by different children. Thus, a child who perceives herself to have poor social skills because she is unpopular may not necessarily have low self-esteem. The degree to which her social self-assessment affects her self-esteem is influenced by how much she values social skills and popularity. In addition, she may see herself as very competent in another area—such as academic skills—that balances her lack of social skills.

The key to self-esteem, then, is the amount of discrepancy between what the child desires and what the child thinks he has achieved. Thus, a child who values sports prowess but who isn't big enough or coordinated enough to be good at sports will have lower self-esteem than will an equally small or uncoordinated child who does not value sports skill so highly. Similarly, being good at something, such as singing or playing chess, won't raise a child's self-esteem unless the child values that particular skill.

The second major influence on a child's self-esteem is the overall support the child feels she is receiving from the important people around her, particularly parents and peers (Franco & Levitt, 1998). Apparently, to develop high self-esteem, children must first acquire the sense that they are liked and accepted in their families, by both parents and siblings. Next, they need to be able to find friends with whom they can develop stable relationships. Since childhood friendships begin with shared interests and activities, children need to be in an environment in which they can find others who like the same things they do and are similarly skilled. Athletic children need other athletic children to associate with; those who are musically inclined need to meet peers who are also musical; and so on.

The separate influences of the perceived discrepancy between the ideal and actual self and the amount of social support are clear in the results of Harter's research on self-esteem. She asked third-, fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders how important it was to them to do well in each of five domains, and how well they thought they actually did in each. The total discrepancy between these sets of judgments constituted the discrepancy score. A high discrepancy score indicates that the child didn't feel he was doing well in areas that mattered to him. The social support score was based on children's replies to a set of questions about whether they thought others (parents and peers) liked them as they were, treated them as a person, or felt that they were important. Figure 10.2 shows the results for the third- and fourth-graders; the findings for the fifth- and sixth-graders are virtually identical to these. Both sets of data support Harter's hypothesis, as does other research, including studies of African American children (Luster & McAdoo, 1995). Note that a low discrepancy score alone does not protect a child completely from low self-esteem if she lacks sufficient social support. Similarly, a loving and accepting family and peer group do not guarantee high self-esteem if the youngster does not feel that she is living up to her own standards.

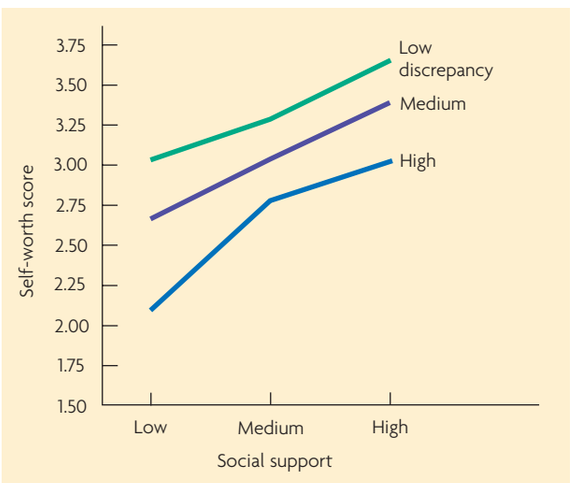


Figure 10.2
Social Support, Domain Values, and Self-Esteem

For these third- and fourth-graders in Harter's studies, self-esteem was about equally influenced by the amount of support the children saw themselves receiving from parents and peers and the degree of discrepancy between the values the children placed on various domains and the skill they thought they had in each of those domains.

(*Source:* Harter, 1987, Figure 9.2, p. 227.)

The criteria by which children learn to evaluate themselves vary considerably from one society to another (Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002; Wang & Ollendick, 2001). In individualistic cultures, like that of the United States, parents focus on helping

children develop a sense of self-esteem that is based in the children's own interests and abilities. In collectivist cultures, such as China's, children are taught to value themselves based on cultural ideals about what a "good" person is.

From all of these sources, the child fashions her ideas (her internal model) about what she should be and what she is. Like the internal model of attachment, self-esteem is not fixed in stone. It is responsive to changes in others' judgments as well as to changes in the child's own experience of success or failure. But once created, the model does tend to persist, both because the child tends to choose experiences that will confirm and support it and because the social environment—including the parents' evaluations of the child—tends to be at least moderately consistent.

Critical Thinking

1. How might Bandura's reciprocal determinism model be applied to explaining how a child could have a good understanding of her personality and strong self-efficacy and yet still have low self-esteem?

Advances in Social Cognition

To what extent did Leticia understand her peers' motivations for yelling at her when she couldn't make it to the top of the hill? Do you think she had any insight into why her father was reluctant to remove the training wheels from her bicycle? Children's ability to understand motivation is enhanced by the development of a theory of mind in early childhood. But by the end of the middle childhood period, children have developed a much broader understanding of others than they possessed at its beginning. Moreover, they are beginning to understand the moral aspects of social relationships.

The Child as Psychologist

Learning Objective 10.5

How does children's understanding of others change in middle childhood?

A number of early ground-breaking social-cognitive studies demonstrated that the child of this age looks beyond appearances and searches for deeper consistencies that will help him to interpret both his own and other people's behavior. Thus, like their understanding of the physical world, 6- to 12-year-olds' descriptions of other people move from the concrete to the abstract. If you ask a 6- or 7-year-old to describe others, he will focus almost exclusively on external features—what the person looks like, where he lives, what he does. This description by a 7-year-old boy, taken from a classic study of social-cognitive development, is typical:

> He is very tall. He has dark brown hair, he goes to our school. I don't think he has any brothers or sisters. He is in our class. Today he has a dark orange [sweater] and gray trousers and brown shoes. (Livesley & Bromley, 1973, p. 213)

When young children do use internal or evaluative terms to describe people, they are likely to use quite global ones, such as "nice" or "mean," "good" or "bad." Further, young children do not seem to see these qualities as lasting or general traits of the individual, applicable in all situations or over time (Rholes & Ruble, 1984). In other words, the 6- or 7-year-old has not yet developed a concept that might be called "conservation of personality."

Beginning at about age 7 or 8, a rather dramatic shift occurs in children's descriptions of others. The child begins to focus more on the inner traits or qualities of another person and to assume that those traits will be visible in many situations (Gnepp & Chilamkurti, 1988). Children this age still describe others' physical features, but their descriptions are now used as examples of more general points about internal qualities. You can see the change when you compare the 7-year-old's description given above with this description by a child nearly 10 years old:

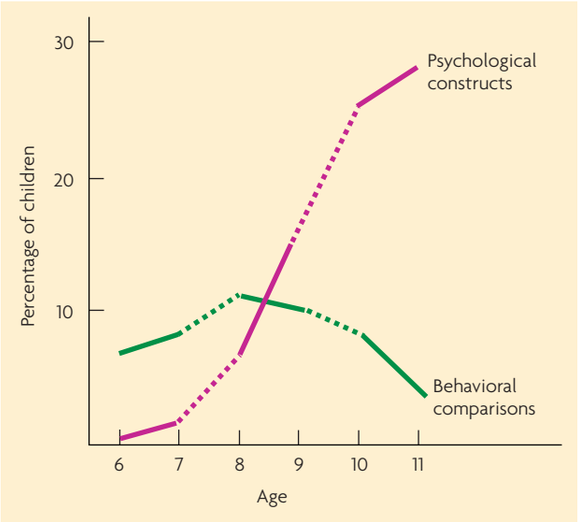
> He smells very much and is very nasty. He has no sense of humour and is very dull. He is always fighting and he is cruel. He does silly things and is very stupid. He has brown hair and cruel eyes. He is sulky and 11 years old and has lots of sisters. I think he is the most horrible boy in the class. He has a croaky voice and always chews his pencil and picks his teeth and I think he is disgusting. (Livesley & Bromley, 1973, p. 217)

This description still includes many external physical features but goes beyond such concrete surface qualities to the level of personality traits, such as lack of humor and cruelty.

Figure 10.3
Changes in Children's Descriptions of Others

These data from Barenboim's study show the change in children's descriptions of their peers during the years of middle childhood. The solid lines represent longitudinal data, the dashed lines cross-sectional comparisons.

(*Source:* Barenboim, 1981, Figure 1, p. 134.)



The movement from externals to internals in descriptions of others is well documented by research. For example, in one important early study, researchers asked 6-, 8-, and 10-year-olds to describe three other children; a year later, they asked them to do the same thing again (Barenboim, 1981). Figure 10.3 shows the results for two of the categories used in the study's data analysis. A *behavioral comparison* was any description that involved comparing a child's behaviors or physical features with those of another child or with a norm—for example, "Billy runs a lot faster than Jason" or "She draws the best in our whole class." Any statement that involved some internal personality trait—such as "Sarah is so kind" or "He's a real stubborn idiot!"—was referred to as a *psychological construct*. You can see that behavioral comparisons peaked at around age 8 but psychological constructs increased steadily throughout middle childhood.

School-aged children also understand family roles and relationships much better than younger children do. For example, by about age 9, children who live in two-parent homes understand that their parents' roles as parents are distinct from their roles as partners or spouses (Jenkins & Buccioni, 2000). Thus, a 9-year-old is better able than a 5-year-old to understand when divorcing parents say that their love for the child hasn't changed, even though their relationship with each other has ended. Emotionally, the divorce experience may be just as difficult, but school-aged children are more capable of understanding it cognitively.

moral realism stage the first of Piaget's stages of moral development, in which children believe rules are inflexible

Learning Objective 10.6

How do children in Piaget's moral realism and moral relativism stages reason about right and wrong?

Moral Reasoning

Children's growing understanding of the internal experiences of other people helps them develop a better understanding of how they and others think about actions that have moral implications. *Moral reasoning* is the process of making judgments about the rightness or wrongness of specific acts. As you learned in Chapter 8, children learn to discriminate between intentional and unintentional acts between age 2 and age 6. However, using this understanding to make moral judgments is another matter. Piaget claimed that the ability to use reasoning about intentions to make judgments about the moral dimensions of behavior appears to emerge along with concrete operational reasoning.

Piaget suggested that there is a connection between children's understanding of the rules by which games are played and their reasoning about moral issues.

Piaget's Moral Realism and Moral Relativism Piaget studied moral development by observing children playing games. As he watched them play, Piaget noticed that younger children seemed to have less understanding of the games' rules. Following up on these observations, Piaget questioned children of different ages about rules. Their answers led him to propose a two-stage theory of moral development (Piaget, 1932).

At the beginning of the middle childhood period, children are in what Piaget termed the **moral realism stage**. They believe that the rules of games can't be changed because they come from authorities, such as parents, government officials, or religious figures. For example, one 6-year-old told Piaget

that the game of marbles was invented on Noah's ark. He went on to explain that the rules can't be changed because the "big ones," meaning adults and older children, wouldn't like it (Piaget, 1965, p. 60).

Moral realists also believe that all rule violations eventually result in punishment. For example, Piaget told children a story about a child who fell into a stream when he tried to use a rotten piece of wood as a bridge. Children younger than 8 told him that the child was being punished for something "naughty" he had done in the past.

After age 8, Piaget proposed, children move into the **moral relativism stage**, in which they learn that people can agree to change rules if they want to. They realize that the important thing about a game is that all the players follow the same rules, regardless of what those are. For example, 8- to 12-year-olds know that a group of children playing baseball can decide to give each batter four strikes rather than three. They understand that their agreement doesn't change the game of baseball and that it doesn't apply to other people who play the game. At the same time, children of this age get better at following the rules of games.

Eight- to 12-year-olds also know that you don't get punished for rule violations unless you get caught. As a result, they view events like the one in which the child fell into the stream as accidents. They understand that accidents are not caused by "naughty" behavior. Children older than 8 also understand the relationship between punishment and intentions. For example, Piaget's research suggests that children over 8 can distinguish between a child who unintentionally left a store without paying for a candy bar and another who deliberately took one. Older children are likely to say that both children should return or pay for the candy, but only the one who intentionally stole it should be punished.

Research supports Piaget's claim that children over 8 give more weight to intentions than consequences when making moral judgments (Zelazo, Helwig, & Lau, 1996). However, although their thinking is more mature than that of preschoolers, 6- to 12-year-olds' moral reasoning is still highly egocentric. For example, every parent has heard the exclamation "It's not fair!" when a child fails to receive the same treat or privilege as a sibling. It is rare, if not

moral relativism stage the second of Piaget's stages of moral development, in which children understand that many rules can be changed through social agreement

THE REAL WORLD

Encouraging Moral Reasoning

Eight-year-old Marisol, much to the surprise of her mother, Andrea, was caught stealing a package of candy from a convenience store that she passed every day when she walked home from school. The manager called Marisol's mother to report what the girl had done, and by the time Andrea arrived, the little girl was crying and pledging never to steal again. "You still have to be punished," Andrea explained and told Marisol that she was taking away all of the girl's privileges for two weeks. However, like most parents, Andrea wants to be sure that Marisol understands why what she did was wrong. How can parents help children learn to reason about issues of right and wrong?

In his book *Raising Good Children*, developmental psychologist Thomas Lickona reminds readers that the development of mature moral reasoning takes many years (Lickona, 1983). At the same time, he offers parents and teachers several suggestions that will help them help their 6- to 12-year-olds prepare for movement to more mature levels. Following are some of his suggestions:

- Require kids to give reasons for what they want.
- Play developmentally appropriate games with them.
- Praise them for observing social conventions such as saying "please" and "thank you."
- When punishment is necessary, provide them with an explanation, advice on how to avoid punishment in the future, and a way of repairing any damage their misbehavior has caused.
- Teach them about reciprocity: "We do nice things for you, so you should be willing to help us."
- Give them meaningful chores so they will think of themselves as important family and community members.
- Help and encourage them to base obedience on love and respect rather than fear.
- Teach them religious and philosophical values, including the idea that some actions are right and others are wrong, regardless of circumstances.
- Challenge their egocentrism by asking questions such as, "How would you feel if someone did that to you?" when they violate others' rights.
- Include them in charitable projects, such as food drives, to extend the idea of love and caring beyond their own families.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which of Lickona's suggestions are most relevant to the situation in which Marisol's mother found herself?
2. Do you agree with Andrea that it was necessary to punish the girl? If so, what additional steps do you think Andrea should take to help Marisol learn the importance of respecting others' property?

Critical Thinking

1. Children's understanding of others' traits and behaviors and their understanding of moral dilemmas advances dramatically after age 8. How does each of these important domains of development support the other?

completely unknown, for a 6- to 12-year-old to protest the fairness of receiving something that a sibling didn't. Thus, school-aged children still have a long way to go with respect to mature moral reasoning, and we will return to this topic in the chapters on adolescent development (see The Real World on page 285).

The Social World of the School-Aged Child

School-aged children's growing ability to understand others changes their social relationships in important ways. Children continue to be attached to parents, but they are becoming more independent. Relationships with peers become more stable and many ripen into long-term friendships. In fact, the quality of 6- to 12-year-olds' peer relationships shapes their futures in many important ways.

Learning Objective 10.7

How does self-regulation affect school-aged children's relationships with their parents?

Relationships with Parents

Middle childhood is a period of increasing independence of child from family. Yet attachments to parents continue to be important, and relationships with siblings add another dimension to the social worlds of 6- to 12-year-olds who have them (see the Research Report). What does change, though, is the agenda of issues between parent and child. The parent-child agenda changes because parents of 6- to 12-year-olds recognize their children's growing capacity for **self-regulation**, the ability to conform to parental standards of behavior without direct supervision. As a result, as children get older, parents are more likely to allow them to engage in activities such as bicycle riding and skateboarding without supervision (Soori & Bhopal, 2002). However, cultures vary to some degree in the specific age at

self-regulation children's ability to conform to parental standards of behavior without direct supervision

RESEARCH REPORT

Birth Order and Children's Development

People often speculate that only children, those without siblings, are deprived of an important developmental experience and may be "spoiled" by their parents. Most research shows that only children grow up to be just as well adjusted as those who have brothers and sisters (Wang et al., 2000). Moreover, some studies have shown that only children may actually have an advantage over those who have siblings, at least with regard to cognitive development and academic achievement (Doh & Falbo, 1999; Falbo, 1992). Other studies suggest that the cognitive advantage enjoyed by only children may actually be due to birth order. First-borns, or the oldest surviving child in a family in which a first-born died in infancy, get higher scores, on average, on cognitive tests than later-borns do (Holmgren, Molander, & Nilsson, 2006; Kristensen & Bjerkedal, 2007). The *resource dilution* hypothesis explains these findings as the result of the progressive "watering down" of the parents' material and psychological resources with each additional birth (Downey, 2001). Thus, from this perspective, parents have the greatest influence on the oldest child, an advantage that is shared by only children and the oldest child in a multi-child family.

Critics of the resource dilution hypothesis point out that it places too much emphasis on what later-borns take away from the family and ignores the relationship-building opportunities that these children contribute to their older siblings' development (Gillies & Lucey, 2006). In support of their argument, critics cite research which suggests that later-borns have an advantage over their older siblings with regard to a variety of social skills, including the ability to negotiate solutions to interpersonal conflicts (Ross, Ross, Stein, & Trabasso, 2006). Likewise, first-borns who have siblings outperform only children on measures of social negotiation. First-borns with younger siblings also appear to gain self-reliance skills from serving as surrogate parents for younger siblings (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2003). Regardless of birth order, too, affectionate sibling relationships moderate the effects of stressful life events such as parental divorce, and they enable children to advance more rapidly than only children do with regard to understanding others' mental states and behaviors (Gass, Jenkins, & Dunn, 2007; McAlister & Peterson, 2006). Thus, only and firstborn children may get more of the kind of attention from parents that is critical to cognitive development, but sibling relationships appear to make positive contributions to children's social and emotional development.

Questions for Critical Analysis

1. What kinds of sibling relationships would harm rather than help a child's social and emotional development?
2. In what kinds of situations might you expect only children to show social skills that are superior to those of children who have siblings?

which they expect this to occur. For example, White and Hispanic parents in the United States differ in their beliefs about the average age at which school-aged children can carry out specific tasks on their own (Savage & Gauvain, 1998). It appears that Hispanic American parents have less confidence in the self-regulatory abilities of younger school-aged children than White parents do. In general, though, most cultures expect 6- to 12-year-olds to be able to supervise their own behavior at least part of the time.

Some studies suggest that there are sex differences in parents' expectations with respect to self-regulatory behavior. For example, mothers make different kinds of demands on boys and girls. They appear to provide both with the same types of guidance, but are likely to give boys more autonomy over their own behavior than they give girls. Nevertheless, they are likely to hold daughters to a higher standard of accountability for failure than they do sons (Pomerantz & Ruble, 1998). Developmentalists speculate that this difference may lead to stronger standards of behavior for girls in later developmental periods.

Research suggests that only children are just as well adjusted as those who have siblings.

Researchers have learned that there are several parenting variables that contribute to the development of self-regulation. First, the parents' own ability to self-regulate is important, perhaps because they are providing the child with models of good or poor self-regulation (Prinstein & La Greca, 1999). Also, the degree of self-regulation expected by parents influences the child's self-regulatory behavior. Higher expectations, together with parental monitoring to make certain the expectations are met, are associated with greater self-regulatory competence (Rodrigo, Janssens, & Ceballos, 1999).

You should recall that such parental behaviors are associated with the authoritative style of parenting. Longitudinal research has demonstrated that school-aged children whose parents have been consistently authoritative since they were toddlers are the most socially competent (Baumrind, 1991). Children rated "competent" were seen as both assertive and responsible in their relationships; those rated "partially competent" typically lacked one of these skills; those rated "incompetent" showed neither. In Baumrind's (1991) study, the majority of children from authoritative families were rated as fully competent, while most of those from neglecting families were rated as incompetent.

Friendships

Learning Objective 10.8

What changes occur in children's understanding of friendships during this period?

The biggest shift in relationships during middle childhood is the increasing importance of peers. One frequent manifestation of this trend is the appearance of "best-friend" relationships. Cross-cultural studies show that best-friend relationships, and the belief that having a best friend is important, are universal features of school-aged children's social development (Schraf & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2003). Younger children, often as early as 3 years of age, express playmate preferences (Hay, Payne, & Chadwick, 2004). Among older school-aged children, however, a best friend is much more than a playmate, reflecting these children's better understanding of the characteristics that distinguish friendships from other kinds of relationships.

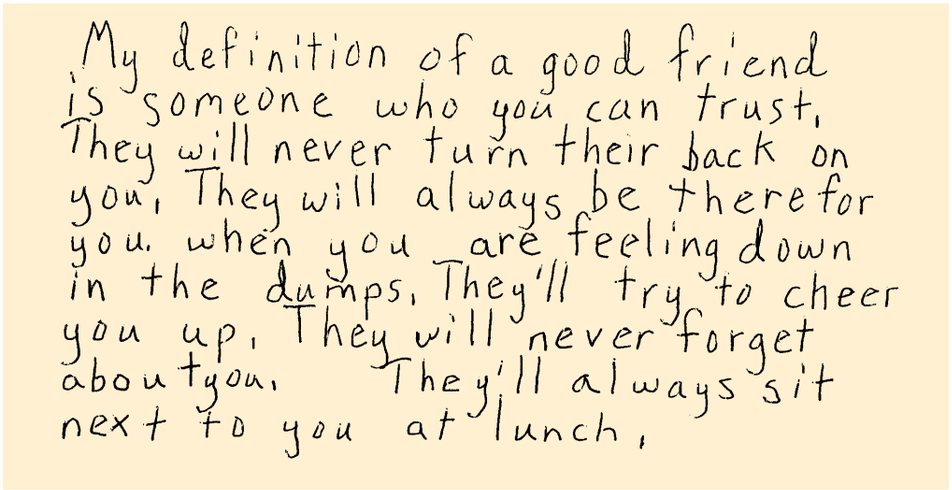
Social-cognitive researcher Robert Selman was one of the first to study children's understanding of friendships. He found that if you ask preschoolers and young school-aged children how people make friends, the answer is usually that they "play together" or spend time physically near each other (Damon, 1977, 1983; Selman, 1980).

In the later years of middle childhood, at around age 10, this view of friendship gives way to one in which the key concept seems to be reciprocal trust (Chen, 1997). Older children see friends as special people who possess desired qualities other than mere proximity, who are generous with each other, who help and trust each other, and so on. Figure 10.4 on page 288 is a 10-year-old boy's definition of a friend. His characterization of a friend—as someone "you can trust," who "will always be there for you when you are feeling down in the dumps" and "always sits by you at lunch"—illustrates the older child's understanding of dimensions of friendships such as trust, emotional support, and loyalty.

Figure 10.4
A 10-Year-Old's Explanation of Friendship

This essay on friendship written by a 10-year-old illustrates the way older school-aged children think about friends.

(Courtesy of Denise Boyd. Used with permission.)


My definition of a good friend is someone who you can trust. They will never turn their back on you. They will always be there for you. when you are feeling down in the dumps. They'll try to cheer you up. They will never forget about you. They'll always sit next to you at lunch.

Researchers have examined the relationship between children's understanding of friendship and the quantity and quality of their friendships. In one such study, researchers Amanda Rose and Steven Asher (2004) presented fifth-graders with hypothetical situations in which one friend might have an opportunity to help another. For instance, in one scenario, the researchers described a child who was teased by her classmates. Rose and Asher found that children who expressed the view that children should not help others in such situations, in order to avoid putting themselves at risk of being treated similarly by peers, had fewer friends than did children who expressed the view that friends should place their relationships above concerns about how their helping behavior would affect their own social status.

Evidence of the centrality of friends to social development in middle childhood also comes from studies of children's behavior within friendships. Children are more open and more supportive when with their chums, smiling at, looking at, laughing with, and touching one another more than they do when they are with nonfriends; they talk more with friends and cooperate and help one another more. Pairs of friends are also more successful than nonfriends are in solving problems or performing some task together. Yet school-aged children are also more critical of friends and have more conflicts with them; they are more polite with strangers (Hartup, 1996). At the same time, when conflicts with friends occur, children are more concerned about resolving them than they are about settling disagreements with nonfriends. Thus, friendship seems to represent an arena in which children can learn how to manage conflicts (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995).

Learning Objective 10.9

In what ways do boys and girls interact during the middle childhood years?

Gender Segregation

Possibly the most striking thing about peer group interactions in the elementary school years is how gender-segregated they are. This pattern seems to occur in every culture in the world and is frequently visible in children as young as 3 or 4. Boys play with boys and girls play with girls, each in their own areas and at their own kinds of games (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Harkness & Super, 1985). In fact, gender seems to be more important than age, race, or any other categorical variable in 6- to 12-year-olds' selection of friends; in addition, the strength of children's preference for same-sex associates increases substantially across middle childhood (Graham, Cohen, Zbikowski, & Secrist, 1998). Moreover, gender segregation is unrelated to sex differences in parenting, suggesting that it is a feature of 6- to 12-year-olds' social relationships that they construct for reasons of their own (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999).

Shared interests and activities are a critical part of friendship in the early years of middle childhood. For example, rough-and-tumble play is common in boy-boy interactions but is typically avoided by girls. Thus, based on activity preferences, boys gravitate to other boys

in social situations. In so doing, they learn how to socialize with other boys, but acquire few of the skills used by girls in their interactions, skills such as self-disclosure (Phillipsen, 1999). Thus, boys establish stable peer groups with dominance hierarchies that are based on rough-and-tumble play skills (Pelligrini & Smith, 1998). A similar pattern exists for girls: Gender segregation begins with shared activity preferences but leads to the development of social skills that are more useful in interactions with other girls than in interactions with boys.

However, there are some ritualized "boundary violations" between boys' and girls' groups, such as chasing games. For example, in one universal series of interactions, a girl taunts a boy with a statement like "You can't catch me, nyah nyah." Next, a boy chases and catches her, to the delight of both of their fully supportive same-sex peer groups (Thorne, 1986). As soon as the brief cross-gender encounter ends, both girl and boy return to their respective groups. On the whole, however, girls and boys between the ages of 6 and 12 actively avoid interacting with one another and show strong favoritism toward their own gender and negative stereotyping of the opposite gender (Powlishta, 1995).

In middle childhood, boys play with boys and girls play with girls. In fact, children's play groups are more sex-segregated at this age than at any other.

Gender segregation patterns are even more pronounced in friendships during middle childhood. For example, when researchers ask children to describe the kind of playmate a fictional child would prefer, school-aged children's predictions are largely gender-based (Halle, 1999). Girls' and boys' friendships also differ in quality in intriguing ways. Boys' friendship groups are larger and more accepting of newcomers than are girls'. Boys play more outdoors and roam over a larger area in their play. Girls are more likely to play in pairs or in small, fairly exclusive groups, and they spend more playtime indoors or near home or school (Benenson, 1994; Gottman, 1986).

Sex differences also characterize the interaction between a pair of friends. Boys' friendships appear to be focused more on competition and dominance than are girls' friendships (Maccoby, 1995). In fact, among school-aged boys, researchers see higher levels of competition between pairs of friends than between strangers—the opposite of what is observed among girls. Friendships between girls include more agreement, more compliance, and more self-disclosure than is true between boys. For example, "controlling" speech—a category that includes rejecting comments, ordering, manipulating, challenging, defiance, refutation, or resistance of another's attempts to control—is twice as common among pairs of 7- and 8-year-old male friends as among pairs of female friends of that age (Leaper, 1991). Among the 4- and 5-year-olds in Leaper's study, there were no sex differences in controlling speech, suggesting that these differences in interaction pattern arise during middle childhood.

Why do you think competition is such a strong feature of friendship interactions among boys? Do you think this is true in every culture?

None of this information should obscure the fact that the interactions of male and female friendship pairs have much in common. For example, collaborative and cooperative exchanges are the most common forms of communication in both boys' and girls' friendships in middle childhood. And it is not necessarily the case that boys' friendships are less important to them than girls' are to them. Nevertheless, it seems clear that there are gender differences in form and style that may well have enduring implications for patterns of friendship over the lifespan.

Furthermore, school-aged children appear to evaluate the role of gender in peer relationships in light of other variables. For example, when asked whether a fictitious boy would prefer to play with a boy who is a stranger or with a girl who has been his friend for a while, most school-aged children say the boy would prefer to play with the friend (Halle, 1999). Such results suggest that, even though gender is clearly important in

school-aged children's peer relationships, they are beginning to understand that other factors may be more important. This is yet another example of how children's growing cognitive abilities—specifically, their ability to think about more than one variable at a time—influence their ideas about the social world.

Learning Objective 10.10

What types of aggression are most common among school-aged children?

Patterns of Aggression

You may remember from Chapter 8 that physical aggression declines over the preschool years, while verbal aggression increases. In middle childhood, physical aggression becomes even less common as children learn the cultural rules about when it is acceptable to display anger or aggression and how much of a display is acceptable. In most cultures, this means that anger is increasingly disguised and aggression is increasingly controlled as children get older (Underwood, Coie, & Herbsman, 1992).

One interesting exception to this general pattern is that in all-boy pairs or groups, at least in the United States, physical aggression seems to remain both relatively high and constant over the childhood years. Indeed, at every age, boys show more physical aggression and more assertiveness than girls do, both within friendship pairs and in general (Fabes, Knight, & Higgins, 1995). Furthermore, school-aged boys often express approval for the aggressive behavior of peers (Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000). Table 10.2 gives some highly representative data from a very large, careful survey in Canada, in which teachers completed checklists describing each child's behavior (Offord, Boyle, & Racine, 1991). It is clear that boys are described as far more aggressive on all of this study's measures of physical aggressiveness.

Results like these have been so clear and so consistent that most psychologists have concluded that boys are simply "more aggressive." But that conclusion may turn out to be wrong. Instead, it begins to look as if girls simply express their aggressiveness in a different way, using what has recently been labeled *relational aggression*, instead of physical aggression. Physical aggression hurts others physically or poses a threat of such damage; **relational aggression** is aimed at damaging the other person's self-esteem or peer relationships, such as by ostracism or threats of ostracism ("I won't invite you to my birthday party if you do that"), cruel gossip, or facial expressions of disdain. Children are genuinely hurt by such indirect aggression, and they are likely to express dislike for others who use this form of aggression a lot (Casas & Mosher, 1995; Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cowan & Underwood, 1995; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Rys & Bear, 1997).

relational aggression aggression aimed at damaging another person's self-esteem or peer relationships, such as by ostracism or threats of ostracism, cruel gossiping, or facial expressions of disdain

Girls are more likely than boys to use relational aggression, especially toward other girls, a difference that begins as early as the preschool years and becomes very marked by the fourth or fifth grade. For example, in one study of nearly 500 children in the third through sixth grades, researchers found that 17.4% of the girls but only 2% of the boys were rated high in

Table 10.2 Aggressive Behavior in Boys and Girls Aged 4 to 11

	Percentages as Rated by Teachers	
Behavior	Boys	Girls
Mean to others	21.8	9.6
Physically attacks people	18.1	4.4
Gets in many fights	30.9	9.8
Destroys own things	10.7	2.1
Destroys others' things	10.6	4.4
Threatens to hurt people	13.1	4.0

(*Source*: Offord, Boyle, & Racine, 1991, from Table 2.3, p. 39.)

relational aggression—almost precisely the reverse of what is observed for physical aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Researchers do not yet know whether this difference in form of aggression has some hormonal/biological basis or is learned at an early age or both. They do know that higher rates of physical aggression in males have been observed in every human society and in all varieties of primates. And scientists know that some link exists between rates of physical aggression and testosterone levels (e.g., Susman et al., 1987). But the origin of girls' apparent propensity toward relational aggression is still an open question.

Retaliatory aggression—aggression to get back at someone who has hurt you—increases among both boys and girls during the 6- to 12-year-old period (Astor, 1994). Its development is related to children's growing understanding of the difference between intentional and accidental actions. For example, if a child drops his pencil in the path of another child who is walking by and that child happens to kick the pencil across the floor, most 8-year-olds can identify this as an accident. Consequently, the child whose pencil was kicked feels no need to get back at the child who did the kicking. However, children over 8 view intentional harm differently. For example, let's say that one child intentionally takes another's pencil off her desk and throws it across the room. Most children over 8 will try to find a way to get back at a child who does something like this. In fact, children who don't try to retaliate in such situations are more likely to be seen as socially incompetent and to be bullied by their peers in the future (Astor, 1994), as discussed in the No Easy Answers feature.

Peers may approve of retaliatory aggression, but most parents and teachers strive to teach children that, like other forms of intentional harm, such behavior is unacceptable. Research suggests that children can learn nonaggressive techniques for managing the kinds of situations that lead to retaliatory aggression. In one program, called PeaceBuilders, psychologists have attempted to change individual behavior by changing a school's overall emotional climate. In this approach, both children and teachers learn to use positive social strategies (Flannery et al., 2000). For example, both are urged to try to praise others more often than they criticize them. Research suggests that when such programs are integrated into students'

retaliatory aggression aggression to get back at someone who has hurt you

NO EASY ANSWERS

Bullies and Victims

Research shows that, across the middle childhood years, aggressive interactions become increasingly complex (Hay, Payne, & Chadwick, 2004). As children get older, they tend to take on consistent roles–perpetrator, victim, assistant to the perpetrator, reinforcing onlooker, nonparticipant onlooker, defender of the victim, and so on (Andreou & Metallidou, 2004). The occupant of each of these roles plays a part in maintaining a particular aggressive incident and in determining whether another aggressive interaction involving the same perpetrator and victim will occur in the future.

Until fairly recently, both research on and interventions aimed at reducing aggression focused on the habitual perpetrators, or bullies. However, most developmentalists now believe that changing the behavior of children who occupy other roles in aggressive interactions, especially those who are habitual victims of aggression, may be just as important as intervening with aggressive children themselves (Green, 2001). Victims have certain characteristics in common, including anxiety, passivity, sensitivity, low self-esteem or self-confidence, lack of humor, and comparative lack of friends (Egan & Perry, 1998; Hodges, Malone, & Perry, 1997; Olweus, 1995). Cross-cultural studies show that these characteristics are found among habitual victims across a wide variety of cultural settings (Eslea et al., 2004). Among boys, victims are also often physically smaller or weaker than their peers.

Teaching victims to be more assertive might seem to be a good way to reduce the prevalence of bullying among school-aged children. However, critics of such programs argue that they send the message that the victim deserves to be bullied. Moreover, by identifying habitual victims and including them in counseling sessions and the like, the adults who are responsible for victim-training programs subject these children to further stigmatization. Thus, critics argue that programs aimed at reducing bullying should focus primarily on the bullies' behavior and should include the clear message that bullying is wrong, regardless of their victims' behavior (Temko, 2005).

Take a Stand

Decide which of these two statements you most agree with and think about how you would defend your position:

1. Programs that seek to reduce bullying among school-aged children should include a component that teaches victims to be more assertive because the skills that children will learn are more important than the risk of stigmatizing or of appearing to justify bullying.
2. Programs that seek to reduce bullying among school-aged children should focus on changing the bully's behavior and helping him or her to understand how hurtful bullying is to its victims and to the emotional climate of the social setting in which it occurs.

classes every day for an entire school year or longer, aggression decreases and prosocial behavior increases. Thus, aggressive interactions between elementary school children may be common, but they do not appear to be an inevitable aspect of development.

Learning Objective 10.11

How do popular, rejected, and neglected children differ?

Social Status

Developmentalists measure popularity and rejection by asking children to list peers they would not like to play with or by observing which children are sought out or avoided on the playground. These techniques allow researchers to group children according to the degree to which they are accepted by peers—a variable often called **social status**. Typically, researchers find three groups: *popular*, *rejected*, and *neglected*.

Adults' goals for children's socialization usually include teaching them how to manage conflicts without resorting to aggression.

Some of the characteristics that differentiate popular children from those in the other two groups are things outside a child's control. In particular, attractive children and physically larger children are more likely to be popular. Conversely, being very different from her peers may cause a child to be neglected or rejected. For example, shy children usually have few friends (Fordham & Stevenson-Hinde, 1999). Similarly, highly creative children are often rejected, as are those who have difficulty controlling their emotions (Aranha, 1997; Maszk, Eisenberg, & Guthrie, 1999).

However, children's social behavior seems to be more important than looks or temperament. Most studies show that popular children behave in positive, supporting, nonpunitive, and nonaggressive ways toward most other children. They explain things, take their playmates' wishes into consideration, take turns in conversation, and are able to regulate the expression of their strong emotions. In addition, popular children are usually good at accurately assessing others' feelings (Underwood, 1997). Most are good at looking at situations from others' perspectives as well (Fitzgerald & White, 2003).

There are two types of rejected children. *Withdrawn/rejected* children realize that they are disliked by peers (Harrist, Zaia, Bates, Dodge, & Pettit, 1997). After repeated attempts to gain peer acceptance, these children eventually give up and become socially withdrawn. As a result, they often experience feelings of loneliness. *Aggressive/rejected* children are often disruptive and uncooperative and usually believe that their peers like them (Zakriski & Coie, 1996). Many appear to be unable to control the expression of strong feelings (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Pettit, Clawson, Dodge, & Bates, 1996). They interrupt their play partners more often and fail to take turns in a systematic way.

Aggression and disruptive behavior are often linked to rejection and unpopularity among Chinese children, just as they are among American children (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1995; Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). As you learned in Chapter 8, aggressive behavior persists into adulthood in some individuals. However, research suggests that aggression is most likely to become a stable characteristic among children who are *both* aggressive and rejected by peers.

Of course, not all aggressive children are rejected. Among girls, aggression, whether physical or relational, seems to lead to peer rejection consistently. Among boys, however, aggression may result in either popularity or rejection (Rodkin et al., 2000; Xie, Cairns, & Cairns, 1999). In fact, aggressiveness seems to be a fairly typical characteristic of popular African American boys.

Interestingly, too, aggressive boys and girls, although they are typically disliked by peers, are often perceived by them as having high social status, perhaps because of their ability to manipulate others and to control social situations (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004). This association holds for both physical and relational aggression. However, as children enter adolescence, the link between physical aggression and social status becomes weaker, while the association between relational aggression and perceived status increases in strength. This may

social status an individual child's classification as popular, rejected, or neglected

happen because, by age 11 or 12, children regard relational aggression as a more mature form of social manipulation than physical aggression. Consequently, they may admire peers who are skilled in the use of relational aggression, even though they don't like them and prefer not to associate with them.

In addition, irrespective of aggressive boys' general popularity, their close friends tend to be aggressive as well. Furthermore, aggressiveness seems to precede these relationships. In other words, boys who are aggressive seek out boys like themselves as friends, and being friends doesn't seem to make either member of the pair more aggressive (Poulin & Boivin, 2000). Research also suggests that children have more positive attitudes toward aggressive peers whose aggressive acts are seen as mostly retaliatory and toward those who engage in both prosocial and aggressive behavior (Coie & Cillessen, 1993; Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993; Poulin & Boivin, 1999). Social approval may not increase aggressiveness, but it does seem to help maintain it; interventions to reduce aggressive behavior typically have little effect on aggressive boys who are popular (Phillips, Schwean, & Saklofske, 1997).

Neglect seems to be much less stable over time than rejection; neglected children sometimes move to the popular category when they become part of a new peer group. However, children who experience prolonged neglect are more prone to depression and loneliness than are popular children (Cillessen, van IJzendoorn, van Lieshout, & Hartup, 1992; Rubin, Hymel, Mills, & Rose-Krasnor, 1991; Wentzel & Asher, 1995). The association between peer neglect and depression may be explained by recent brain-imaging studies showing that, among school-aged children, social exclusion stimulates the same area of the brain as physical pain does (Eisenberger, 2003). In addition, this tendency toward depression among neglected children may be fostered by unrealistic expectations about adults' ability to "fix" the social situation—"Why doesn't the teacher make them be my friends?" (Galanaki, 2004).

Critical Thinking

1. If you had to explain an important developmental outcome, such as variations in optimism among adults, as a function of childhood social experiences, what percentage of influence would you assign to each of these factors: relationships with parents, friendships, experiences with gender segregation, experiences with aggression, and social status?

Influences beyond Family and Peers

The daily life of the school-aged child is shaped by more than the hours he spends with his family and peers. The circumstances in which a child lives also affect him. For example, some parents are at home when children come home from school; others are still at work. A child is also affected by his family's economic circumstances, by the neighborhood he lives in, and by the media to which he is exposed.

After-School Care

Learning Objective 10.12
How does self-care affect girls' and boys' development?

In the United States, 7.5 million children are at home by themselves after school for an hour or more each weekday (Crockett, 2003). They are often referred to as **self-care children**. Self-care arrangements differ so much from child to child that it is impossible to say whether, as a group, self-care children differ from others. For example, some self-care children are home alone but are closely monitored by neighbors or relatives, while others are completely without supervision of any kind (Brandon, 1999). Developmentalists have learned that the effects of self-care on a child's development depend on behavioral history, age, gender, the kind of neighborhood the child lives in, and how well parents monitor the child during self-care periods (Casper & Smith, 2002; NICHD, 2004b; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Steinberg, 1986).

Research consistently demonstrates that self-care children are more poorly adjusted in terms of both peer relationships and school performance. They tend to be less socially skilled and to have a greater number of behavior problems. However, some of these differences between self-care children and others arise from the effect of self-care on children who already have social and behavioral difficulties before self-care begins. Investigators have found that children who have such problems in the preschool years, before they experience any self-care,

self-care children children who are at home by themselves after school for an hour or more each day

The effects of after-school care depend on several factors. This child appears to be following his parents' instructions about what to do after school, a factor that helps children cope with the stress associated with caring for themselves.

are the most negatively affected by the self-care experience (Pettit, Laird, Bates, & Dodge, 1997).

With respect to age, most developmentalists agree that children under the age of 9 or 10 should not care for themselves. From a developmental perspective, children younger than 9 do not have the cognitive abilities necessary to evaluate risks and deal with emergencies. In fact, most cities and/or states have laws specifying the age at which a child may be legally left at home alone for long periods of time. Children who start self-care in the early elementary years are vulnerable to older self-care children in their neighborhoods who may hurt or even sexually abuse them and are more likely to have adjustment difficulties in school (Pettit et al., 1997). High-quality after-school programs can help these younger children attain a higher level of achievement (Peterson, Ewigman, & Kivlahan, 1993; Zigler & Finn-Stevenson, 1993).

Children older than 9 may be cognitively able to manage self-care, but they, too, benefit from participation in well-supervised after-school programs. Even part-time participation in supervised activities after school seems to make a difference in the adjustment of self-care children (Pettit et al., 1997). Good programs provide children with opportunities to play, do homework, and get help from adults (Posner & Vandell, 1994).

Self-care has the most negative effects for children in low-income neighborhoods with high crime rates (Marshall et al., 1997). Self-care children in such areas may use after-school time to "hang out" with socially deviant peers who are involved in criminal activity or who have negative attitudes about school. Predictably, then, the positive effects of organized after-school programs on academic achievement are greater for children in low-income neighborhoods (Mason & Chuang, 2001; Posner & Vandell, 1994).

When everything is taken into consideration, the most important factor in self-care seems to be parental monitoring. Many parents, particularly single mothers, enlist the help of neighbors and relatives to keep an eye on their self-care children (Brandon & Hofferth, 2003). Most require children to call them at work when they get home from school to talk about their school day and get instructions about homework and chores. For example, a working mother might tell a fifth-grader, "By the time I get home at 5:00, you should be finished with your math and spelling. Don't work on your history project until I get home and can help you with it. As soon as you finish your math and spelling, start the dishwasher." Research suggests that children whose periods of self-care are monitored in this way are less likely to experience the potential negative effects of self-care (Galambos & Maggs, 1991).

Learning Objective 10.13

What factors contribute to resilience and vulnerability among poor children?

Poverty

As you can see in Figure 10.5, the child poverty rate in the United States declined from 22% in 1993 to 17% in 2005 (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2006; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999). However, the child poverty rate continues to be higher in the United States than in many other industrialized countries in the world. By way of contrast, the poverty rate for children is roughly 5% in Denmark and is less than 15% in Sweden (House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2006). Child poverty is also unequally distributed across ages, races, and family structures. With respect to age, children under 6 are more likely to live in poverty than those who are older (McLoyd, 1998). In addition, the proportions of African American, Native American, and Hispanic American children living in poverty are two to three times the overall child poverty rate (Nichols, 2006). Likewise, children reared by single mothers are far more likely to be living in poverty (Evans, 2004).

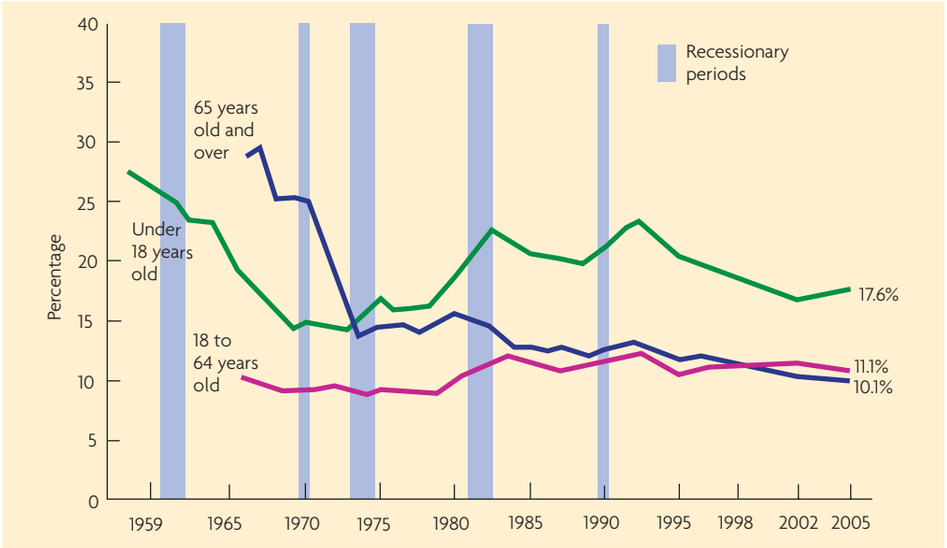


Figure 10.5
Poverty and Age

The graph shows the percentage of people in the United States living in poverty from 1959 to 2005, including children under 18. For families with at least one child, poverty is defined as annual income of less than $13,461 (in 2005 dollars).

(*Source:* DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2006.)

The Effects of Poverty on Families and Children Overall, poor families live in more chaotic environments, are more highly stressed, and have fewer psychological and social resources than those who are more economically secure (Ackerman, Brown, & Izard, 2004; Brooks-Gunn, 1995; McLoyd & Wilson, 1991). As a result, parents living in poverty tend to treat their children differently than do working-class or middle-class parents. They talk to them less, provide fewer age-appropriate toys, spend less time with them in intellectually stimulating activities, explain things less often and less fully, are less warm, and are stricter and more physical in their discipline (Dodge et al., 1994; Evans, 2004; Sampson & Laub, 1994). Some of this pattern of parental behavior is undoubtedly a response to the extraordinary stresses and special demands of living in poverty. To some extent, the stricter discipline and emphasis on obedience of poor parents may be thought of as a logical response to the realities of life in the neighborhoods in which they live.

Poverty is associated with stresses that lead some children to develop post-traumatic stress disorder.

Not surprisingly, children in low-income families differ from their better-off peers across all developmental domains. The physical effects of poverty are evident very early in life. Infants born into low-income homes have higher rates of birth defects and early disabilities. As they grow older, poor children are also more often ill and more likely to be undernourished. With regard to intellectual development, low-income children have lower average IQ scores, move through Piaget's stages of cognitive development more slowly, and perform more poorly in school (Brooks-Gunn, 1995). Social development varies with income as well. Children from low-income homes exhibit more behavior problems in school than do peers whose families have more economic resources (Qi & Kaiser, 2003).

The negative effects of poverty are exacerbated for children growing up in neighborhoods where they are exposed to street gangs and street violence, to drug pushers, to overcrowded homes, and to abuse. Surveys indicate that nearly half of inner-city elementary and high school students have witnessed at least one violent crime in the past year (Osofsky, 1995). Predictably, children who are victimized by or who witness such crimes are more likely to suffer from emotional problems than are peers who are spared these experiences (Purugganan, Stein, Johnson Silver, & Benenson, 2003).

Many children living in such neighborhoods show all the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including sleep disturbances, irritability, inability to concentrate, and angry outbursts (Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992; Owen, 1998). Many experience flashbacks or intrusive memories of traumatic events. For some, these symptoms persist into adulthood (Koenen, Moffitt, Poulton, Martin, & Caspi, 2007).

Protective Factors Of course, most poor children develop along the same lines as their more economically secure peers. For developmentalists, *resilient children* are those whose development is comparable to that of children who are not poor, and *vulnerable children* are those who develop problems as a result of living in poverty. To help sort out differences between poor children who do well and those who do not, developmentalists think of poverty in terms of accumulated stresses (McLoyd, 1998). For example, parental alcoholism added to family poverty results in a greater risk of negative developmental outcomes for a child (Malo & Tramblay, 1997). Studies of resilient and vulnerable children suggest that certain characteristics or circumstances may help protect some children from the detrimental effects of the cumulative stressors associated with poverty. Among the key protective factors are the following:

- High IQ of the child (Koenon et al., 2007)
- Competent adult parenting, such as an authoritative style (good supervision or monitoring of the child seems especially important) (Eamon & Mulder, 2005)
- Parental knowledge about child development (Seo, 2006)
- An optimistic outlook (Lam et al., 2004)
- Effective schools (Woolley & Grogan-Kaylor, 2006)
- A secure initial attachment of the child to the parent (Li-Grining, 2007)
- A strong community helping network, including friends, family, or neighbors (Barrow et al., 2007)
- Stable parental employment (Terrisse, 2000)
- Strong sense of ethnic identity (Thomas, Townsend, & Belgrave, 2003)
- Participation in early childhood programs (Smokowski et al., 2004)

Thus, the effects of poverty depend on the combined effects of the number of stressors the child must cope with and the range of competencies or advantages the child brings to the situation. Poverty does not guarantee bad outcomes, but it stacks the deck against many children. Moreover, the same kinds of factors interact to affect development in other stressful contexts, such as neighborhoods in countries torn by war.

Learning Objective 10.14

How do television, computers, and video games affect children's development?

Media Influences

Another important feature of children's environment is the wide array of informational and entertainment media that are available nowadays. Televisions, computers, and video games are found in the great majority of homes in the industrialized world. How do these media affect children's development?

Television "But the kids on TV look so happy when they eat it! Don't you want me to be happy?" the 7-year-old son of one of the authors sobbed when his request for a sugary cereal was denied. The effect of advertising on children's food preferences is well documented (Chapman, Nicholas, & Supramaniam, 2006; Livingstone & Helsper, 2006). However, this is just one of several hazards that are associated with allowing children to watch too much TV. The association between viewing and aggressive behavior is perhaps of greatest concern.

Albert Bandura demonstrated the effects of televised violence on children's behavior in his classic "Bobo doll" studies (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961, 1963). In these experiments, children were found to imitate adults' violent treatment of an inflatable clown that was depicted on film. Recent research suggests that such effects persist into the adult years. Psychologist L. Rowell Huesmann and his colleagues (2003) found that individuals who watched the greatest number of violent television programs in childhood were the most likely to engage

in actual acts of violence as young adults. Brain-imaging studies suggest that these long-term effects may be the result of patterns of neural activation that underlie emotionally laden behavioral scripts that children learn while watching violent programming (Murray et al., 2006). These patterns of neural activation may also explain the finding that repeated viewing of TV violence leads to emotional desensitization regarding violence and to the belief that aggression is a good way to solve problems (Donnerstein, Slaby, & Eron, 1994; Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004; Van Mierlo & Van den Bulck, 2004).

In the United States, children between 6 and 12 spend more time watching television than they do playing.

Of course, television isn't all bad. Researchers have found that science-oriented programs such as *Bill Nye the Science Guy* and *The Magic School Bus* are effective teaching tools (Calvert & Kotler, 2003). Likewise, programs designed to teach racial tolerance to school-aged children have consistently shown positive effects on children's attitudes and behavior (Persson & Musher-Eizenman, 2003: Shochat, 2003). However, such programs are far less popular among boys than they are among girls (Calvert & Kotler, 2003). Moreover, even among girls, their popularity declines as children progress through middle childhood years. Perhaps these findings are best summed up by adapting an old cliché: "You can lead a child to quality TV programming, but you can't make him watch it." Thus parental regulation of television viewing is the key to ensuring that exposure to TV will have more positive than negative effects on a child's development.

Computers and the Internet Television is just one of several types of media to which children are exposed. Surveys show that more than 90% of school-aged children in the United States use computers on a regular basis, and about 60% regularly use the Internet (DeBell & Chapman, 2006). Computer and Internet use rates are nearly identical for boys and girls. However, a "digital divide" exists across income and ethnic groups. Among children who live in the poorest households, only 47% are regular Internet users, compared to more than 70% of children in upper-income families. Similarly, while two-thirds of White children and 58% of Asian American children regularly access the Internet, just under 50% of Hispanic American, African American, and Native American children do so. This divide is largely due to the fact that poor families, who are found in greater numbers among Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans, are less likely to have a computer in their homes than those with more economic resources. As a result, computer usage among most children in disadvantaged groups is limited to schools. Still, the proportions of children who use computers and the Internet have increased dramatically among all groups of children over the past decade. Most children use computers for school work, to play games, and to engage in electronic communication such as email and instant messaging.

Would you be surprised to learn that, apart from teacher-directed activities such as homework, children use computers in much the same ways as they use other environments? For the most part, children play when they are on a computer. Consequently, educators and parents need to keep an eye on children who are supposed to be doing school work on their computers and to be aware of the tendency of children to test digital boundaries, such as prohibitions against visiting chat rooms, just as they do physical boundaries. Nevertheless, many developmental psychologists see children's propensity for digital play as an opportunity to learn more about the natural course of child development (Sandvig, 2006). Here's a brief overview of one such study.

Researchers at Georgetown University provided 5th- and 6th-graders with an online, instant messaging environment in which the children created animated representations of themselves (Calvert et al., 2003). Each messaging session resembled a real-time, interactive cartoon in which the children's messages appeared in their characters' speech balloons.

Some of the sessions involved children of the same gender, while others were mixed-gender sessions. Interestingly, the researchers found that, just as they do in face-to-face interactions, female pairs engaged in more verbal than physical interactions, and male pairs spent more time engaged in role play and physical interactions than they did in verbal interactions. However, the interactions of mixed-gender pairs resembled those of female pairs; in other words, boys tended to adopt girls' interaction styles in mixed-gender sessions. These findings invite the speculation that the anonymity that is offered by virtual communication frees boys from the need to behave in gender-stereotypical ways. They also show that studying children's virtual communications can help developmentalists better understand their face-to-face interactions.

Video Games Some sources claim that families spend more money on video game systems and on the games themselves than they do on any other form of entertainment ("Children spend more time . . . ," 2004). Thus, developmentalists have looked at how these games affect children's cognitive and social/emotional development. Some studies suggest that video game playing enhances children's spatial-cognitive skills and may even eliminate the well-documented gender difference in this domain (Feng, Spence, & Pratt, 2007; Greenfield, Brannon, & Lohr, 1994).

Nevertheless, research suggests even short-term exposure to violent video games in laboratory settings increases research participants' general level of emotional hostility (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Apparently, increases in emotional hostility and decreases in the capacity to empathize with others, which are engendered by violent video games, are the motivating forces behind the increases in aggressive behavior that often result from playing such games for extended periods of time (Funk, Buchman, Jenks, & Bechtoldt, 2003; Gentile, Lynch, Linder, & Walsh, 2004).

Violent video games also appear to be part of an overall pattern linking preferences for violent stimuli to aggressive behavior. The more violent television programs children watch, the more violent video games they prefer, and the more aggressively they behave toward peers (Mediascope, 1999b). This finding holds for both boys and girls; most girls aren't interested in violent games, but those who are tend to be more physically aggressive than average. Consequently, parents who notice that aggressive and violent themes characterize most of their children's leisure-time interests as well as their interactions with peers should worry about their children playing video games (Funk, Buchman, Myers, & Jenks, 2000).

Critical Thinking

1. You learned about some of the factors that determine a child's vulnerability or resilience to poverty. How do you think after-school care arrangements and media influences contribute to vulnerability and resilience among children from low-income families?

SUMMARY

Theories of Social and Personality Development

Learning Objective 10.1 How did the psychoanalytic theorists characterize the middle childhood years?

- Freud claimed that the libido is dormant between ages 6 and 12, a period he called the *latency* stage. Erikson theorized that 6- to 12-year-olds acquire a sense of industry by achieving educational goals determined by their cultures.

Learning Objective 10.2 What are the main ideas of the trait and social-cognitive theorists?

- Trait theorists propose that people possess stable characteristics that emerge during middle childhood as experiences modify the dimensions of temperament.
  Social-cognitive theories, such as Bandura's reciprocal determinism, argue that traits, and the emotional aspects of personality that were emphasized by psychoanalytic theories, represent one of three interaction sets of factors that

shape personality: person factors, environmental factors, and behavioral factors.

Self-Concept

Learning Objective 10.3 What are the features of the psychological self?

- Between 6 and 12, children construct a psychological self. As a result, their self-descriptions begin to include personality traits, such as intelligence and friendliness, along with physical characteristics.

Learning Objective 10.4 How does self-esteem develop?

- Self-esteem appears to be shaped by two factors: the degree of discrepancy a child experiences between goals and achievements and the degree of perceived social support from peers and parents.

Advances in Social Cognition

Learning Objective 10.5 How does children's understanding of others change in middle childhood?

- Between 6 and 12, children's understanding of others' stable, internal traits improves.

Learning Objective 10.6 How do children in Piaget's moral realism and moral relativism stages reason about right and wrong?

- Piaget claimed that moral reasoning develops in sequential stages that are correlated with his cognitive-developmental stages.

The Social World of the School-Aged Child

Learning Objective 10.7 How does self-regulation affect school-aged children's relationships with their parents?

- Relationships with parents become less overtly affectionate, with fewer attachment behaviors, in middle childhood. The strength of the attachment, however, appears to persist.

Learning Objective 10.8 What changes occur in children's understanding of friendships during this period?

- Friendships become stable in middle childhood. Children's selection of friends depends on variables such as trustworthiness as well as overt characteristics such as play preferences and gender.

Learning Objective 10.9 In what ways do boys and girls interact during the middle childhood years?

- Gender segregation of peer groups is at its peak in middle childhood and appears in every culture. Individual friendships also become more common and more enduring; boys' and girls' friendships appear to differ in specific ways.

Learning Objective 10.10 What types of aggression are most common among school-aged children?

- Physical aggression declines during middle childhood, although verbal aggression increases. Boys show markedly higher levels of physical and direct verbal aggression, and higher rates of conduct disorders, than girls do. Girls show higher rates of relational aggression.

Learning Objective 10.11 How do popular, rejected, and neglected children differ?

- Rejected children are most strongly characterized by high levels of aggression or bullying and low levels of agreeableness and helpfulness, but some aggressive children are very popular. Neglected children may suffer depression.

Influences beyond Family and Peers

Learning Objective 10.12 How does self-care affect girls' and boys' development?

- Self-care is associated with several negative effects. Girls, children who live in safe neighborhoods, and children whose parents closely monitor their activities after school are the least likely to be negatively affected by self-care.

Learning Objective 10.13 What factors contribute to resilience and vulnerability among poor children?

- Children in low-income families are markedly disadvantaged in many ways. They do worse in school and move through the stages of cognitive development more slowly. Protective factors, including a secure attachment, relatively high IQ, authoritative parenting, and effective schools, can counterbalance poverty effects for some children.

Learning Objective 10.14 How do television, computers, and video games affect children's development?

- Experts agree that watching violence on television and playing violent video games increases the level of personal aggression or violence shown by a child.

KEY TERMS

moral realism stage *(p. 284)*
moral relativism stage *(p. 285)*
psychological self *(p. 280)*
reciprocal determinism *(p. 279)*
relational aggression *(p. 290)*
retaliatory aggression *(p. 291)*
self-care children *(p. 293)*
self-efficacy *(p. 281)*
self-esteem *(p. 281)*
self-regulation *(p. 286)*
social status *(p. 292)*
trait *(p. 278)*

TEST YOURSELF

Theories of Social and Personality Development

10.1 According to Erikson's view of children's psychosocial development in middle childhood, what factor is instrumental in children's development of a sense of industry or inferiority?

a. their developing relationships with cross-gender friends and peers
b. their growing independence from their parents
c. their success or failure at academic tasks
d. their developing motor skills and athletic accomplishments

10.2 Trait theorists argue that

a. emotions are the primary influence on personality development.
b. temperament evolves into five dimensions of personality by middle childhood.
c. traits exert less influence on development than other factors do.
d. emotions play no role in personality development.

10.3 Bandura's reciprocal determinism model proposes that children's personalities are influenced by

a. reinforcement.
b. internal traits.
c. their own behavior.
d. interactions of a, b, and c.

Self-Concept

10.4 Which of the following is more likely to be the self-description of a 10-year-old than of a 6-year-old?

a. "I am smart."
b. "I am better at math than my friend Paul."
c. "I'm bad."
d. "My brown hair is curly."

10.5 What are the key influences on a child's self-esteem in middle childhood?

a. her skills and abilities in key developmental areas such as academics, sports, and hobbies
b. the amount of support she receives from important people around her and the discrepancy between what she has achieved and what she desires to achieve
c. her perceptions about what children of her age should be able to accomplish or achieve
d. her popularity with other children and her popularity with the adults she knows

10.6 Where do differences in self-esteem originate?

a. from parents' and peers' values and attitudes about what skills, characteristics, or qualities are important
b. from a child's success or failure in a variety of endeavors and the comparison that can be made with others
c. from the labels and judgments of others
d. from all of the above

10.7 Which of the following best represents Bandura's concept of self-efficacy?

a. a child's sense of self-value
b. a child's understanding of her personality
c. a child's belief that she can accomplish goals
d. a child's understanding of others' opinions of her

10.8 Beginning about age 7 or 8, children begin to focus on _____ characteristics in their descriptions of others.

a. observable physical
b. concrete
c. apparent behavioral
d. inner personality

10.9 Which of the following best represents the way a school-aged child might describe a friend, in comparison to the way a preschool child would be likely to describe a friend?

a. "Miguel is the fastest runner in our class."
b. "Hoshi is always kind and helpful."
c. "DeShawna has pigtails in her hair."
d. "Darryl always sits next to Ms. Jones."

10.10 According to Piaget, children who are at the beginning of middle childhood are in which stage of moral development?

a. moral emotional
b. moral realism
c. moral judgmental
d. moral relativism

Advances in Social Cognition

10.11 As a result of the development of moral reasoning in middle childhood, children are capable of understanding all except which of the following?

a. You can change the rules of a game you are playing as long as all the other players agree to play by the different rules.
b. Accidents are not caused by deliberately "naughty" behavior.
c. Intentions are more important than consequences when the behaviors of others are being judged.
d. Standards of universal fairness dictate that no child should get a treat unless all the children get a treat.

The Social World of the School-Aged Child

10.12 Which of the following would be least helpful to parents who want to facilitate their child's development of self-regulation?

a. Provide discipline through authoritarian parenting.
b. Provide the child with models of good self-regulation.
c. Monitor the child's behavior.
d. Expect the child to demonstrate self-regulatory behavior.

10.13 What is the key feature that differentiates the friendships of middle childhood from those of preschoolers?
a. having fun
b. living close to each other
c. reciprocal trust
d. practice of communication skills

10.14 Which of the following is *not* an accurate statement about the peer group interactions of middle childhood?
a. During middle childhood, gender is the most important factor in children's selection of friends.
b. Both girls and boys enjoy rough-and-tumble play in same-sex groups.
c. Boys' friendships are more focused on competition and dominance than girls' friendships.
d. Collaborative and cooperative exchanges are the most common form of communication in girls' and boys' friendships in middle childhood.

10.15 Physical aggression _____ across middle childhood.
a. becomes increasingly more common among girls
b. goes up dramatically among boys but down among girls
c. is directed more toward inanimate objects
d. becomes progressively less common

10.16 Which of the following is *not* a true statement about relational aggression?
a. Girls are especially likely to use relational aggression against other girls.
b. Children who use relational aggression are apt to be shunned by their peers.
c. Children typically are not hurt by relational aggression because it is an indirect form of aggression.
d. Relational aggression can take the form of expressions of disdain or threats of ostracism.

10.17 In middle childhood, a popular child most likely
a. would have a feature or characteristic that made her unusual, in comparison to her peers.
b. would be highly creative.
c. would be shy.
d. would be physically attractive and larger than her peers.

10.18 Which of the following is *not* generally true of children who are bullies?
a. They have experienced excessive attention from their parents.
b. They have been subjected to physical punishment.
c. They have a difficult temperament.
d. They have experienced a lack of parental limits on aggressive behavior.

Influences beyond Family and Peers

10.19 Self-care children who are monitored closely are
a. more likely to be involved in criminal behavior.
b. more likely to make poor grades.
c. less likely to experience the negative effects of self-care.
d. less likely to complete their homework.

10.20 Many children living in inner-city poverty show all the symptoms of
a. self-regulatory behavior.
b. high self-esteem.
c. conscientiousness.
d. posttraumatic stress disorder.

10.21 Which of the following is *not* a factor that seems to help protect some children from the detrimental effects of poverty?
a. high IQ
b. a large network of peers who also are poor
c. a secure initial attachment to the mother
d. stable parental employment

10.22 What effect does television viewing have on children?
a. Television has nothing but harmful effects.
b. Television can have both positive and negative effects.
c. There is no consistent evidence of television's effects.
d. The evidence suggests the effects of television are mostly positive.

10.23 Which of the following has been associated with playing violent video games?
a. greater intelligence
b. greater self-reliance
c. reduction in aggressive behavior
d. increase in social skills

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Children who play violent video games for 90 minutes or more per day

- experience higher levels of anxiety and are less able to tolerate frustration.
- have a greater sympathy for the suffering of others.
- have reduced visual acuity and reaction time.
- are more fearless and assertive than other children.

Step 2

Use MyDevelopmentLab's Multimedia Library to help strengthen your knowledge of the chapter.

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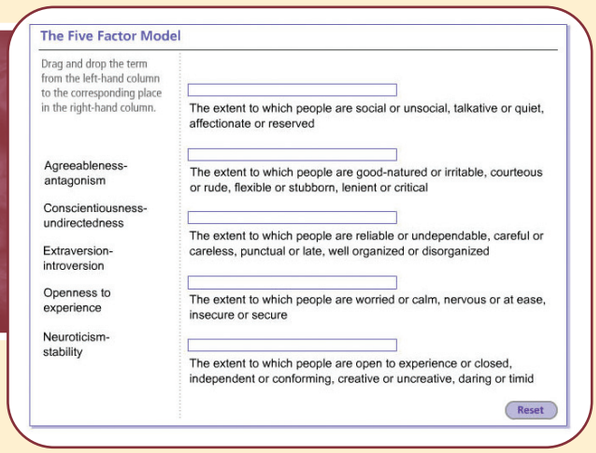

Learning Objective 10.2

What are the main ideas of the trait and social-cognitive theorists?

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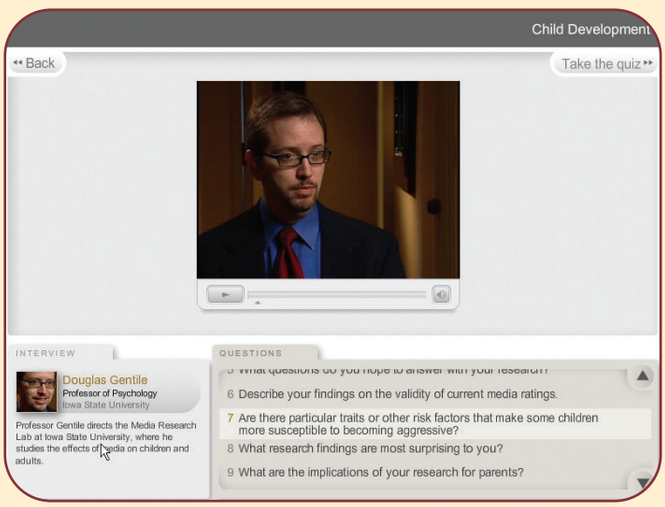
—Stephanie (student), University of Missouri—Columbia

Watch: Bullying

Learning Objective 10.10

What types of aggression are most common among school-aged children?

Watch: Violence and Video Games: Douglas Gentile



Learning Objective 10.14

How do television, computers, and video games affect children's development?

Step 3

Take the chapter post-test and compare your results against the pre-test.

The major personality dimensions that are known as the "Big Five"

- fail to capture many essential aspects of personality.
- have little similarity to infant temperament.
- are stable across time.
- are unique to Western cultures.

POST-TEST

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POLICY QUESTION

Has Test-Based Reform Improved Schools in the United States?

In 2001, a comprehensive set of educational reforms known collectively as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* became law. These reforms addressed many aspects of public education, but one overriding theme of the new legislation was that standardized testing should play an important role in school improvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Though widely touted as an innovation, the kind of testing associated with NCLB is the most recent manifestation of the *test-based school reform* movement, a series of changes in educational policy that have taken place over the past 4 decades in the United States.

High-Stakes Testing

Most historians of education say that the development of the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the 1960s marked the beginning of the test-based school reform movement (Bond, Braskamp, & Roeber, 1996). The NAEP, nicknamed the "Nation's Report Card," is designed to compare what American school children know with what the experts think they should know. At first, NAEP results were reported nationally. American students were described as performing at the advanced, proficient, basic, or below basic level (see the table).

The concept behind the NAEP, that of comparing student achievement to an "ideal" level of achievement, appealed to the public and to many educational policy analysts. Consequently, in the 1970s, many states began developing tests similar to the NAEP. By the 1980s, more than half were using them to assess both student learning and school quality.

In 1990, the federal government asked states to voluntarily participate in state-by-state NAEP score reporting. Thirty-seven states agreed to take part. This kind of reporting allowed taxpayers in each state to compare their schools to those in other states. Results were reported in local papers and on TV news programs. The public became accustomed to statements like "The Nation's Report Card shows that fourth-graders in California are scoring lower than children in most other states on math achievement tests."

NCLB requires that similar comparative testing programs be developed within local school districts (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The idea behind this requirement is that parents should be able to compare scores obtained by students in their own children's schools to those achieved by children in other district schools. Moreover, NCLB requires that local school districts allow parents to move their children out of low-scoring schools if they choose to.

However, designing tests that can be used to compare one school to another isn't as simple as it might seem. In order to develop tests of this type, standards must be stated in measurable terms. Standards are statements about what knowledge and skills should be taught in schools. For example, a standard might be "All fourth-graders should learn the multiplication tables." A measurable standard would be "Fourth-graders will be able to multiply single-digit numbers with 80% proficiency." Long before NCLB became law, federal law in the United States required that all states develop such standards (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2004). However, as you might imagine, the process of developing standards of this kind can be very costly. Thus, one argument that critics of legislation such as NCLB often make is that the federal government has a long history of failing to provide states with the necessary funding to implement its mandates (Fair Test, 2004). This lack of funding, critics say, explains why, as of 2006, only 27 of the 50 states had complied with the federal mandate to develop standards for reading, writing, mathematics, and science achievement, even though these mandates had been in place since 1994 (ECS, 2006). Critics further point out that new mandates, such as NCLB, that fail to address the funding issue are unlikely to lead to school improvement.

Criticisms of Test-Based School Reform

Test-based school reform has many critics. Educators claim that state-mandated tests encourage teachers to restrict what they teach to the content of the test (Neill, 2000). Studies showing that teachers are spending more time teaching test-taking skills than they used to lend weight to this criticism (Viadero, 2007). This problem is made worse, they say, when penalties are attached to low scores. A school in danger of losing money or being closed may force students to memorize things they really don't understand just to improve their test scores. Worse yet, in at least one state, local school officials have been caught deliberately reporting false scores to avoid penalties (Benton, 2007).

Teachers also claim that test-based reform has caused a decline in textbook quality (Neil, 1998). State agencies, educators say; force publishers to skimp on quality by demanding that they publish revisions of textbooks to fit state tests within very short periods of time. Despite textbook revisions, many school administrators still feel they need to spend thousands of dollars on materials published by test-preparation entrepreneurs (Associated Press, 1998).

NAEP Proficiency Levels

Level	Description
Basic	This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.
Proficient	This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated mastery of challenging subject matter, subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
Advanced	This level signifies superior performance.

(*Source:* National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999.)

Claims of cultural bias have also been made against test-based reform (Tippeconnic, 2003). Civil rights organizations say that the knowledge that is tested in most American schools reflects the values and experiences of members of the White, middle-class culture. Further, many states require non-English-speaking children to take tests in English. To date, civil rights groups are unsatisfied with the efforts states have made to reduce bias. Thus, many have undertaken lawsuits against state education agencies and local schools, and these have yet to be decided.

The Impact of Test-Based Reform

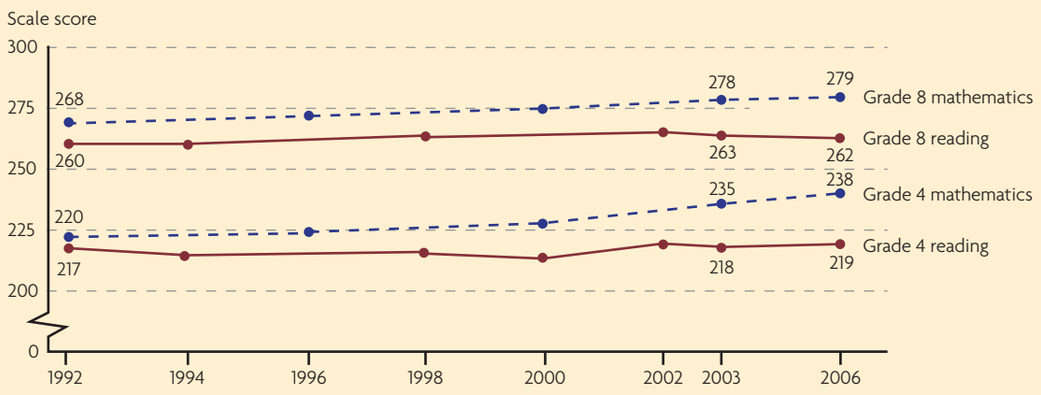
Analyses of standards that have been developed show that, because of test-based reform, states are moving toward more emphasis on fundamental reading, writing, and mathematics skills (Bausell, 2007). Moreover, experimental evidence suggests that students try harder (as evidenced by longer and more complex answers to essay questions) and get higher scores on tests when passing tests is tied to outcomes such as high school graduation (DeMars, 2000).

With regard to younger students, testing advocates point out that as the number of statewide testing programs grew in the 1990s, NAEP mathematics scores among fourth- and eighth-graders increased accordingly (see the figure below; NCES, 2003a). Critics counter that NAEP reading scores have remained virtually unchanged since the early 1990s (NCES, 2003b). Thus, they say, systematic testing programs tied to specific curriculum standards may be beneficial in mathematics instruction but be of little value in helping students learn to be better readers. However, reading researchers argue that NCLB has motivated educators to turn to more empirically based approaches to teaching than were used in the past. As a result, these researchers say, NCLB has substantially raised minority children's reading skills and reduced the prevalence of reading disabilities in many school districts (Foorman & Nixon, 2006).

Other critics suggest that test-based reform has been most beneficial to students who would have done just as well without it. Research has demonstrated that average and above-average students perform at higher levels on such tests when they are exposed to intensive instruction in test content and test-taking strategies (Fuchs et al., 2000). Low-achieving students, however, seem to benefit very little from such approaches. Furthermore, say critics, despite decades of test-based reform, American public schools continue to turn out thousands of graduates who lack the skills to do college work (Schmidt, 2000).

Your Turn

- Talk to public school teachers and administrators about your state's testing program. How has No Child Left Behind affected their schools?
- Check your state education agency's Web site for information on standards and testing.
- Locate newspaper articles that report on what your governor and state legislators think about test-based reform. Do they support a national test?
- Find links to parent organizations in your state that oppose test-based reform at http://www.fairtest.org/parents.html.
- Visit http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/statehistorypublic.asp to learn about your state's history of participation in the NAEP.



NAEP Average Scores

(*Sources*: NCES, 2004a; NCES, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b)