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HANDOUT

ECE301

Psycho Social Development of the Child

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ECE301

Psycho Social Development of the Child

Lecture Handouts

Prepared for the students of Virtual University of Pakistan

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1. Foundations: What Is Psychosocial Development?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define psychosocial development
- Explain the nature-nurture interaction
- Identify domains of child development

Psychosocial development is the unfolding of a child's personality, emotions, social relationships and self-understanding through interaction with the social environment. While physical and cognitive development concern the body and mind, the psychosocial domain concerns **who the child becomes as a person**: their temperament, attachment, self-concept, moral reasoning and ability to relate to others. Development is **multidimensional** (these domains interact), **multidirectional** (gains and losses), and **plastic** (early experience matters, but change remains possible).

The **nature-nurture debate** is resolved today as interaction: genes set temperamental tendencies (e.g. reactivity), but caregiving, culture and schooling shape their expression - **epigenetics** shows experience can switch genes on/off. Bronfenbrenner's **ecological systems theory** maps the influences: microsystem (family, classroom), mesosystem (family-school links), exosystem (parents' workplace), macrosystem (culture, religion) and chronosystem (time, e.g. growing up in the digital age). In Pakistan, the extended family and religious socialization are powerful microsystem/macrosystem forces.

Temperament

A child's biologically based, early-appearing style of reacting to the world - e.g. easy, difficult or slow-to-warm-up (Thomas and Chess). Goodness-of-fit between temperament and parenting predicts adjustment.

SECTION SUMMARY

Psychosocial development = becoming a person through social interaction. Nature and nurture interact within ecological systems; temperament meets parenting in 'goodness of fit'.

2. Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- List Erikson's eight stages with their crises
- Focus on the childhood stages in depth
- Apply Erikson to early-childhood classrooms

Erik Erikson proposed eight lifespan stages, each a **crisis** (turning point) between a virtue-gaining resolution and a maladaptive outcome: (1) **Trust vs. Mistrust** (0-1 yr): consistent

care -> hope; neglect -> mistrust. (2) **Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt** (1-3): toilet training, self-feeding - encouragement -> will; over-control -> shame. (3) **Initiative vs. Guilt** (3-6): purposeful play and questioning - freedom to try -> purpose; harsh punishment of initiative -> guilt. (4) **Industry vs. Inferiority** (6-12): school competence -> competence; repeated failure -> inferiority. (5) **Identity vs. Role Confusion** (adolescence): fidelity.

For early-childhood educators, stages 2-4 are daily work: toddlers need safe choices ('red shirt or blue shirt?') to build autonomy; preschoolers need open-ended play and 'why' questions welcomed to build initiative; primary children need achievable challenges and recognition of effort to build industry. Later stages: (6) Intimacy vs. Isolation, (7) Generativity vs. Stagnation, (8) Integrity vs. Despair. Each virtue builds on earlier resolutions - a child who never gained basic trust struggles with later intimacy.

■ VERY IMPORTANT

Memorize as pairs with ages: Trust (0-1), Autonomy (1-3), Initiative (3-6), Industry (6-12), Identity (teens). Exam questions often give a classroom scenario and ask which crisis the teacher should support.

SECTION SUMMARY

Erikson's crises map the lifespan; trust, autonomy, initiative and industry are the teacher's stages. Each resolution becomes the foundation for the next.

3. Attachment: Bowlby and Ainsworth

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain attachment theory
- Describe the Strange Situation and attachment styles
- Discuss attachment in Pakistani caregiving contexts

John Bowlby argued infants are biologically programmed to attach to caregivers for survival; the caregiver is a **secure base** for exploration. **Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation** (brief separations/reunions in a lab playroom) revealed three styles: **secure** (~60%: distress at separation, comforted at reunion, then returns to play), **avoidant** (ignores caregiver, little distress), **ambivalent/resistant** (extreme distress, not comforted, angry). Later work added **disorganized** attachment (linked to frightening caregiving).

Attachment forms an **internal working model** - the child's template for relationships ('am I worthy of care? are others reliable?') - predicting later peer competence and emotion regulation. Sensitive, responsive caregiving builds security; in Pakistan's joint families, children often form **multiple attachments** (mother, grandmother, aunts) - research shows a hierarchy with one primary figure, and alloparenting can be protective. Teachers become secondary attachment

figures: greeting rituals, comfort on distress and predictable routines rebuild security for insecurely attached children.

SECTION SUMMARY

Secure attachment - built by sensitive responsiveness - is the emotional foundation of exploration and learning. Teachers can serve as corrective secondary attachment figures.

4. Emotional Development

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Trace the development of emotions
- Explain emotion regulation
- Describe the teacher's role in emotional coaching

Basic emotions (joy, anger, fear, sadness, disgust) appear in the first year; **self-conscious emotions** (shame, guilt, pride, embarrassment) emerge around age 2-3 with self-awareness; **emotion understanding** - reading others' feelings from faces and situations - grows rapidly in preschool (theory-of-mind work). By middle childhood, children grasp **mixed emotions** ('happy and sad about moving') and display rules (smiling when disappointed).

Emotion regulation - managing arousal to meet goals - develops from co-regulation (caregiver soothes infant) to self-regulation (preschooler uses words, distraction, deep breaths). Gottman's **emotion coaching** (notice, name, validate, problem-solve) versus dismissing ('stop crying') predicts better outcomes. Classroom tools: feelings charts, calm corners, naming emotions in stories, and teacher modeling ('I'm frustrated, so I'll take three breaths'). Chronic dysregulation signals stress or trauma needing referral.

Emotional intelligence (Goleman)

Recognizing one's own and others' emotions and managing them: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills - highly predictive of life outcomes, and teachable.

SECTION SUMMARY

Emotions differentiate from basic to self-conscious to mixed; regulation moves from co-regulation to self-regulation. Emotion-coaching adults raise emotionally intelligent children.

5. The Self: Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish self-concept from self-esteem
- Trace self development in childhood
- Explain how to build healthy self-esteem

Self-concept is what the child believes about themselves ('I am good at drawing, I have brown eyes'); **self-esteem** is the evaluative judgment ('I am a good/worthy person'). Infants gain self-recognition (rouge test ~18 months); preschoolers' self-descriptions are concrete and unrealistically positive; school-age children compare socially and differentiate domains (academic, athletic, social self-esteem - Harter's model); adolescents integrate these into identity.

Healthy self-esteem comes from **contingent, earned success** plus unconditional worth: specific praise ('you worked hard on that puzzle'), achievable challenges, and acceptance after failure. **Inflated praise** ('you're the smartest!') backfires - creating fragile narcissism and fear of challenge (Dweck's **fixed vs. growth mindset**: praise effort and strategy, not traits). In collectivist Pakistani culture, self-esteem is interwoven with family honor and belonging - shaming discipline ('tum ne naak katwa di') wounds the self deeply.

SECTION SUMMARY

Self-concept describes, self-esteem evaluates. Earned competence + unconditional acceptance builds it; trait-praise and shaming damage it. Foster a growth mindset.

6. Moral Development: Piaget and Kohlberg

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain Piaget's stages of moral reasoning
- Explain Kohlberg's levels and stages
- Critique and apply to classrooms

Piaget saw morality develop with cognition: **heteronomous morality** (4-7: rules are fixed, handed down by authority; wrongness = size of damage) -> **autonomous morality** (10+: rules are social agreements, changeable; intentions matter). His marble-game studies showed children move from 'rules are sacred' to 'rules are negotiable'.

Kohlberg extended this into three levels: (1) **Preconventional** - obedience for punishment-avoidance (stage 1), then instrumental self-interest (stage 2); (2) **Conventional** - 'good boy/nice girl' approval-seeking (stage 3), then law-and-order duty (stage 4); (3) **Postconventional** - social contract (stage 5), universal ethical principles (stage 6). Most children are preconventional; conventional reasoning dominates adolescence/adulthood. Critiques: Gilligan argued it undervalues care-based morality; the stages reflect Western justice reasoning

more than Islamic/collectivist ethics, where **divine command and community welfare** anchor morality. Classroom application: discuss dilemmas one stage above the child's level (+1), use restorative rather than purely punitive discipline.

SECTION SUMMARY

Piaget: heteronomous -> autonomous. Kohlberg: preconventional -> conventional -> postconventional. Teach morality one stage up, through dilemmas and restorative discipline.

7. Prosocial Behavior and Aggression

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define prosocial behavior and its development
- Classify aggression types
- Describe interventions for aggression

Prosocial behavior - helping, sharing, comforting - appears in toddlerhood (comforting a crying peer by age 2) and grows with empathy and perspective-taking. It is nurtured by warm inductive parenting ('see how sad she is'), modeling, and cooperative classroom structures. **Empathy** has affective (feeling with) and cognitive (understanding) components; both are teachable through stories, role-play and discussing characters' feelings.

Aggression types: **instrumental** (to get something - typical of preschoolers), **hostile** (to hurt), **physical** -> **verbal** -> **relational** (social exclusion, rumor-spreading - rises in middle childhood, especially among girls). Causes: harsh/coercive parenting (Patterson's coercive cycle), media violence, peer rejection, poor emotion regulation. Interventions: teach alternative problem-solving (social-skills training), reinforce prosocial acts, use consistent non-violent consequences, involve families; chronic bullying needs whole-school programs.

SECTION SUMMARY

Prosocial behavior grows from empathy, modeling and cooperation. Aggression shifts from physical to relational with age; break the coercive cycle with skills training and consistent calm consequences.

8. Peer Relationships and Play

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain the functions of play
- Describe play stages and peer status
- Address bullying and friendship

Play is the child's work: Parten's stages - unoccupied, solitary, onlooker, parallel, associative, cooperative - show social play maturing with age; Smilansky's types - functional, constructive, dramatic/pretend, games-with-rules - show cognitive deepening. Pretend play builds theory of mind, language and self-regulation (Vygotsky: in play the child acts 'a head taller than himself'). Depriving children of play for early academics is developmentally harmful.

Peer statuses: **popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, average**. Rejected-aggressive children face cascading risks; rejected-withdrawn children need social-skills scaffolding. **Friendship** evolves from shared activity (preschool) to loyalty and intimacy (middle childhood). **Bullying** (repeated, power-imbalanced aggression) needs adult-led intervention - bystander training, clear reporting, protection of victims, and reform (not mere punishment) of bullies.

■ VERY IMPORTANT

Vygotsky's line - 'in play a child always behaves beyond his average age' - is the classic justification for play-based ECE curricula. Expect it as a quote-identification question.

SECTION SUMMARY

Play develops socially (Parten) and cognitively (Smilansky); it is the engine of early learning. Peer status shapes trajectories - teachers must engineer inclusive, bully-free classrooms.

9. Gender Development

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Trace gender identity development
- Explain major theories of gender typing
- Discuss gender in Pakistani classrooms

By age 2-3 children label genders; by 3-4 show **gender stability** (sex doesn't change with clothes) and stereotyped preferences; by 5-7 reach **gender constancy** (Kohlberg: understanding sex is permanent - after which children actively socialize themselves into gender roles). Theories: **social learning** (reinforcement, modeling - 'boys don't cry'), **cognitive-developmental** (self-socialization after constancy), **gender-schema theory** (Bem: children filter the world through gender schemas), plus biological influences on activity preferences.

In Pakistan, gender socialization is strong - differential chores, mobility and expectations. Teachers should: avoid gendered task assignment, stock counter-stereotypic books/materials, intervene in 'girls can't play cricket' talk, and give equal wait-time and leadership roles. Research is clear: ability differences within each gender dwarf average between-gender differences; stereotypes, not biology, limit most classroom outcomes.

SECTION SUMMARY

Gender identity consolidates by age 5-7; socialization then runs largely on schemas and reinforcement. Teachers must actively counter stereotypes - ability is individual, not gendered.

10. Family, Parenting Styles and Culture

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe Baumrind's parenting styles
- Explain family transitions' effects
- Discuss cultural and religious socialization

Baumrind's styles (responsiveness x demandingness): **authoritative** (warm + firm: rules explained, autonomy respected) -> the best outcomes across cultures; **authoritarian** (cold + rigid: 'because I said so') -> obedience but anxiety/low initiative; **permissive** (warm + lax) -> impulsivity; **neglectful/uninvolved** -> worst outcomes. Pakistani research finds the common 'strict but loving' pattern functions as authoritative when warmth is genuinely felt.

Family structure matters less than family **process**: divorce, remarriage, parental conflict and economic stress affect children through disrupted parenting and insecurity - stable routines and shielded conflict protect them. **Religious socialization** (prayer routines, Qur'anic stories, moral exemplars) is a central Pakistani macrosystem influence, providing moral vocabulary and community belonging. Teachers partner with families: regular communication, respecting cultural values, and never undermining parental authority while gently modeling alternatives to harsh discipline.

SECTION SUMMARY

Authoritative parenting (warm + firm) wins everywhere. Family process beats family structure. Work with - never against - families' cultural and religious values.

11. Developmental Psychopathology: Early Warning Signs

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify red flags in psychosocial development
- Describe common childhood difficulties
- Explain referral and inclusive practices

Red flags: no social smile by 3 months, no response to name by 12 months, no pretend play by 3 years, persistent extreme shyness/aggression, regression of skills, cruelty to animals, chronic sadness or anxiety interfering with play/learning. Common difficulties: **separation anxiety**

(normal at 1-2, concerning if severe at school age), **ADHD** (inattention/hyperactivity impairing function across settings), **autism spectrum** (social-communication differences + restricted interests - early intervention transforms outcomes), and effects of **adverse childhood experiences** (abuse, neglect, domestic violence).

The teacher's role: observe and document, create predictable safe environments, differentiate instruction, partner with parents sensitively, and **refer** to psychologists/pediatricians - never diagnose. Inclusive classrooms: visual schedules, sensory breaks, buddy systems, and celebrating neurodiversity. In Pakistan, stigma keeps many families from seeking help; the teacher's gentle, normalizing guidance ('many bright children need extra support') can open doors.

SECTION SUMMARY

Know the red flags, document observations, support inclusively - and refer. Early identification plus early intervention changes developmental trajectories.

12. Exam Pointers

High-yield topics

- Erikson's stages with ages and virtues (trust, autonomy, initiative, industry).
- Ainsworth's Strange Situation: secure, avoidant, ambivalent (+ disorganized); secure base; internal working model.
- Baumrind's four parenting styles; authoritative outcomes.
- Piaget (heteronomous/autonomous) vs Kohlberg (3 levels, 6 stages); Gilligan's critique.
- Parten's play stages; Vygotsky on play; functions of play.
- Emotion regulation development; Gottman's emotion coaching; Goleman's EI components.
- Self-concept vs self-esteem; Dweck's growth mindset; effects of praise type.
- Aggression types (instrumental/hostile/relational); Patterson's coercive cycle; prosocial development.
- Gender constancy ages; gender-schema theory; countering stereotypes.
- Red flags and referral - the teacher observes and refers, never diagnoses.

SECTION SUMMARY

Scenario questions dominate: given a child's behavior, name the stage/style/type and prescribe the adult's response. Learn every theory as 'behavior -> concept -> teacher action'.