

# Parenting

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## Aims -

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- **Understand the various stages of development in a child's life and identify the needs to be met across these stages.**
- **Understand what is required from parents to promote a healthy development for their children.**
- **Identify the right parenting style to be adopted with the child in order to facilitate positive interaction between parents and the child and encourage prosocial behaviour.**
- **Develop good communication skills and promote a conducive family environment.**
- **Understand the emotionally disturbed child and how to meet their needs.**
- **Identify the causes underlying aggressive behaviour and how to deal with it.**
- **Understand the existing conflicts between the adolescent and parents and the right parental approach to be adopted in such situations.**
- **Practice stress management techniques in order to deal with stressors in their life that may affect their family relationship and help them become good parents.**

# Unit 1: The developmental stages of the child

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### 1. **Overview**

Parenting is the process whereby parents raise a child and also educate him or her in the best possible manner. The aim of parenting is to create a socially responsible and productive individual who make not only his or her parents proud but also the society proud with his/her endeavors. Each child's progress is individual to them and that different children develop at different rates. A child does not suddenly move from one phase to another, and they do not make progress in all areas at the same time. However, there are some important 'steps' for each child to take along their own developmental pathways. In this unit, the different stages of development during childhood and the role of parents during these stages in facilitating development of the child will be examined.

### 1. **Learning objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Understand the role of parents as first teachers.
2. Understand the development and various changes occurring during different stages in the child's life
3. Understand how to facilitate development during these stages

### 1. **Parents as teacher**

It is believed that parents have the sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness. Burton White of Harvard University writes that “the informal education that the family provides for their children makes more impact on a child’s total education than the formal education system. If a family does its job well, the teacher can then provide effective training. If not, there may be little a professional can do.” Being the child’s first teacher, a parent is in a unique position to influence early learning in multiple ways.

The basic parental duty is to meet the needs of the child; his physical, emotional and psychological needs. Parents have to see to it that their child or children are emotionally, intellectually and physically secure in the society. At the same time parents should ensure that their children can face the world when left on their own. Parenting is the responsibility of both the mother and the father. However in some cases, in the absence of the biological parents, foster parents or near relatives undertake this care. Parenting is a long process spread over years and it starts from the birth of the child.

## **Goals of basic parenting**

The goal of Basic Parenting is to nurture in parents the capacity to engage in mindful parenting and decision making in six areas: care for self, understanding, nurturing, guiding, motivating, and advocating.

**This model emphasizes six critical areas or pathways for parents:**

1. Care for self emphasizes the parent's personal well-being, e.g., managing personal stress.
2. Understanding emphasizes parent's knowledge about children, e.g., observing and understanding one's children and their development.
3. Guiding involves the use of influence and authority, e.g., establishing and maintaining reasonable limits.
4. Nurturing emphasizes emotional support for children, e.g., expressing affection and compassion.
5. Motivating focuses on more intellectual pursuits, e.g., teaching children about themselves, others, and the world around them.
6. Advocating emphasizes reaching out beyond one's resources to benefit one's children and the community of children.

### **1.3 Developmental stages**

Every child is a unique person with an individual temperament, learning style, family background, and pattern and timing of growth. There are, however, universal predictable sequences of growth and change that

occur during the first early years of life. As children develop, they need different types of stimulation and interaction to exercise their evolving skills and to develop new ones. As a child grows up there are certain competencies that he/she has to acquire at specific stages in his life in relation to his /her environment. If the child fails to accomplish these tasks adjustment problems may occur because of which he/ she can experience difficulties in establishing contact with the society and developing interpersonal relationships. For example we all expect that by the age of two a child should be able to start walking without any assistance and if he cannot achieve this developmental task at this stage such a child is considered to be having a problem.

There are four broad stages of development: **Infancy, early childhood, later childhood,** and **adolescence**. At these stages there are different levels of development: biological, cognitive, emotional and social. Each level is linked with the other and these developments are influenced by other factors such as the child's environment, his/her culture and family milieu.

### **Infancy**

Infancy is a time of change in the youngster's ways of perceiving and interacting with the world. It is a period of transition from the total dependency of prenatal life to a more independent, creative existence. Neonates are born with abilities to perceive and respond to some parts of their world in an organized and effective way; certain reflexes are innate, such as groping for the breast, sucking when an object is placed in the mouth. Other such reflexes are breathing, blinking, coughing, sneezing, vomiting and withdrawing from painful stimuli. Another class of reflex is the Moro reflex: when support is removed suddenly from the back of its head, the infant flings its arms to the side, extend his fingers and bring its arms in a sort of embracing movement

The neonate is also capable of imitating. Babies as young as 2-3 weeks can mimic certain facial expressions.

In the first few weeks after birth, babies display temperament that gives a clue to the kind of personality trait they may develop when they grow up. For e.g. some babies display sleep disturbances, irregularity in feeding and elimination patterns etc. They are easily distressed and cry a lot. Researches have shown that such infants are more likely to develop behavior disorders later on in life. Such characteristics of temperament are influenced by genetic and other biological factors. However, by responding to the difficult child calmly and in good humor the risk of later behavior problems can be minimized. It is to be noted that babies are born with certain psychological characteristics of their own and are not simply the result of what their parents do to them. Parents respond to these characteristics thus contributing their own input. In this way the baby's development is shaped by the interplay of its own characteristics and its parents' behavior

### ***Motor development***

Motor control increases considerably during early childhood and is dependent on four factors

- physical maturation of the brain and body systems
- achievement of control over various body parts through exercise
- acquisition of an accurate body image
- development of bilateral control [coordination of the left and right halves of the body]

The development of walking involves a predictable series of milestones; however the age at which each milestone will be reached is hard to predict for a given child. For e.g. some infants walk alone by the age of 9 months and some by the age of 18 months. This developmental sequence can be speeded up or slowed down depending on the infants experience, For e.g. infants in certain institutions who haven't had sufficient opportunities to practice their motor skills show retarded motor development and delayed walking, and infants given a few minutes a day of "practice walking" during the first 2 months of their life walk earlier than infants given no such practice.

"Prehension", the use of hands as tools, begins with infants thrusting their hands in the direction of a target object followed by grasping using only the palm of the hand. Then there are increasingly well-coordinated finger and thumb movements. By the end of the first year of life most

infants can use the thumb and the finger simultaneously into a pincer motion.

### ***Development of perception***

One of the most important infant perceptual activities is looking at adult faces, especially when there is eye contact. By the fourth or fifth month infants can perceive parts of a face into a meaningful whole. By five months babies develops the ability to distinguish between two dissimilar faces

### ***Cognitive Development***

Cognitive development for the infant is illustrated through perceptual and motor activity

When a baby looks intently at her father's face she is manifesting one of her means of "thinking" about the face. Infancy is generally known as the sensorimotor stage [as coined by Piaget.] There are many specific cognitive changes that occur during this stage. One of the changes is demonstrated in the following example:

When young infants [less than 8 month] see an object and the object is then hidden, they seem unaware that the object continues to exist. However if the same experiment is repeated with them some 3 months later they would search for the hidden object. By this stage the baby has attained object permanence- i.e. the idea that objects continue to exist even when they are out of our sight. At this point it is important to draw out that even the mother and the father are objects in the baby's world. Infants tend to attain object permanence with respect to people before they do with respect to inanimate objects. Also they attain it with respect to their mothers before they do with respect to other people

### ***Social development***

The first and most important social relationship most infants form is with a parent and in most cultures that parent is the mother. This relationship has a considerable psychological significance. Sensorimotor intelligence is illustrated in the infant's ways of relating to parents and others. Infants typically form intimate attachments to their mothers. Mother-infant interaction forms the basis for the baby's conflict between trust and distrust of the world. To be able to understand social development we must understand how these attachments are formed.

### ***Attachment***

Attachment is an early, stable, affectional relationship between a child and another person, usually the parent. Various studies have been conducted to demonstrate its importance. Children who are separated from their mothers quite early and live in institutions where no stable mother substitute are available demonstrate adjustment problems; they are unable to relate to other people and afraid to explore or play. Infant and young children should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with their mothers or surrogate mothers for normal development to take place. This is essential for mental health.

Attachment is developed in the following sequence:

Initially the infants develops an attraction to social objects in general and to humans in particular; The baby displays proximity maintaining behavior such as crying, clinging and other behaviors than would keep humans close by.

Next the baby distinguishes familiar from unfamiliar person and the primary caretaker [often the mother] from the other familiar people; then the proximity maintaining behaviors are aimed more directly at familiar persons, in particular the primary caretaker.

By 7 months of their first year most babies develop true attachment to the primary caregiver. They recognize that person and aim proximity maintaining behaviors toward that person only

By the end of their first year the attachment is so strong that children react negatively to separation from the primary caregiver. They grow fearful and insecure in absence of the parent.

A question that often arises is whether infants will grow as attached to their fathers as to their mothers. Some studies have demonstrated that in nonthreatening situations, such as play involving the mother, father and infant alone, the infant shows equal attachment to both parents; but when a stranger enters the room the infant shows stronger attachment to the mother.

This difference in his reaction may be due to the ways fathers and mothers interact with their infants. Mothers are more likely to interact verbally with their babies and to adopt the role of caregiver; Fathers are more likely to interact physically with their infants in terms of playful activities and are perceived as playmates. These differences perhaps explain why infants orient more towards their mothers in time of stress and towards fathers at playtime

***Contact comfort***

Another question that comes to mind is why attachment happens at all. One of the reasons is that infants become attached to the adults who care for them because these adults are associated with feeding and feeding has this effect because it reduces the painful tension of hunger. Another more plausible explanation is the need for contact comfort; the basic need for contact with a soft warm surface. Contact comfort may operate like a releaser. Without it attachments are not formed. Children seek contact comfort and they develop strong attachment to the parent providing this comfort. The mother acts like a psychological skin, protecting the child against the dangers of the world without which it would be difficult for the infant to survive. Children who have developed strong attachment would cling to their parent tightly in threatening situations whereas children who haven't developed attachment are likely to show strange and self-destructive behavior [biting themselves, pulling out their hair etc]. These are the adverse effects of parent deprivation in the early days of the infant's life. Such adverse effects however are reversible. [For e.g. via psychotherapy, close peer relationship]

### ***Emotional development***

Emotions like happiness develop hand in hand with a child's intellect. Simple pleasures that are not intellectually demanding may please an immature infant but as the infant develops cognitively more intellectual challenge is needed in order to experience pleasure. Babies make sense of the world around them by forming mental representations of certain objects, and when they see an object and are

able to match it to their representations [and thus recognize it] they experience pleasure which is expressed by a smile or laugh

### ***Adjustment problems in infancy***

Quite common in the first year of life are infant feeding problems such as digestive discomforts [known as colic and vomiting etc] and other problems like constipation, sleep disturbances, constant crying etc.

Towards the second year of life most parents complain of behavior problems such as stubbornness and temper. This is normally the result of a conflict between the baby's growing physical and mental processes and the parent's effort to control behavior that seems to them as aggressive.

Sometimes the stresses involved in coping with the infant problem can make a parent feel inadequate and even angry at the baby. Such feelings combined with other worries and socioeconomic problems can lead to child abuse

A number of clinical disorders make their first appearances during infancy. Among these are several that are known to be caused by genetic or other biological factors, such as Down syndrome, mental retardation, infantile autism etc

### **Early Childhood**

The term early childhood refers to the first nine years of life. During this period, rapid growth occurs in physical, emotional and intellectual development. , the primary developmental task of this stage is *skill development*.

## **Physical changes**

Physically, between birth and age three a child typically doubles in height and quadruples in weight. Bodily proportions also shift, so that the infant, whose head accounts for almost one-fourth of total body length, becomes a toddler with a more balanced, adult-like appearance. Despite these rapid physical changes, the typical three-year-old has mastered many skills, including sitting, walking, toilet training, using a spoon, scribbling, and sufficient hand-eye coordination to catch and throw a ball.

Between three and five years of age, children continue to grow rapidly and begin to develop fine-motor skills. By age five most children demonstrate fairly good control of pencils, crayons, and scissors. Gross motor accomplishments may include the ability to skip and balance on one foot. Physical growth slows down between five and eight years of age, while body proportions and motor skills become more refined.

## ***Play and preschool***

As from the age of 18 months the child is introduced to the world of peers. In the context of play that goes on in that world, children make transition from sensorimotor thinking to thinking that involves internal manipulation of symbols. The frequency and intensity of peer interaction force the child to deal with interpersonal issues, such as coping with aggressive impulses and learning how to help. As the child moves into formal settings the world becomes more structured.

## ***Cognitive development***

The physical-motor and perceptual development of preschool children is very closely linked with their cognitive development. Cognitive development in this stage is influenced by the social and cultural context and depends on the information children receive via their senses, their interpretation of the information, their activities, the knowledge they acquire and the new skills they have mastered. At this level cognitive development is characterized by the use of language; Over the first three years of life, children develop a spoken vocabulary of between 300 and 1,000 words, and they are able to use language to learn about and describe the world around them. By age five, a child's vocabulary will grow to approximately 1,500 words. Five-year-olds are also able to produce five-to seven-word sentences, learn to use the past tense, and tell familiar stories using pictures as cues.

The preschool child now functions at a symbolic level which may be seen through the child's pretend play

Piaget calls the period between two and seven years the preoperational period because the child is as yet not capable of using cognitive abilities for thinking

Some of the Characteristics of preoperational period:

1. The symbolic function:

The child imitates the behavior of a model who is no longer present in the room.[such as imitating certain behavior of a parent]

The child engages in symbolic play as he/ she represents something in the play

The child begins to draw

Language development enables the child to express his thoughts more clearly

## 2. Egocentrism:

The child views the world from his own personal perspective as he cannot as yet mentally place himself in another person's position. It refers to an intellectual limitation.

## 3. Causality concepts

Children do not view things the same way as their parents do. This is why in divorce situations they tend to believe they are the one responsible for the divorce or separation of their parents; they do not understand cause-effect relationships very well.

## 4. Realism.

The preschool child has trouble distinguishing between internal and external functions. For e.g. the four year old child sees dream as existing outside himself and cannot distinguish between reality and dreams. The five years old realizes that dreams happen inside a person's head but still believes it to be real. The seven years old realizes that dreams occur in a person's thoughts and integrate the concept of imagination.

## 5. Animism:

This is when a person has the belief that everything that exists has some kind of consciousness. children at this stage tend to see inanimate objects as being alive and conscious just like humans. An example of this is that children often believe that a car won't start because it is tired or sick, or they punish a piece of furniture when they run into it, because it must have been naughty to hurt them. A reason for this characteristic of the stage is that the Pre-operational child often

assumes that everyone and everything is like them. Therefore since the child can feel pain, and has emotions, so must everything else.

### ***Social development***

#### Parent-child relationship

At the age of two the child's increasing physical prowess, intellectual power and language skills transform the nature of the parent child relationship; the child becomes less compliant and manageable than before.

Another important task of socialization that must be considered at this stage is toilet training. In addition to teaching specific skills, the parent during this period also has to act as a disciplinarian. But how do parents go about telling their child "NO": this will be taken up in detail in unit two when discussing parenting style .

#### Sex roles.

Children's identification with their parents shapes their ideas about sex roles. Children of both sexes may initially adopt many traditionally feminine and maternal behavior patterns. By the age of 4-5 boys begin to show traditional male types behavioral about the same age girls intensify the feminine types of behavior. The main reason for the difference is that children pick up sex typed behavior through observational learning.

#### Peers and play

As children grow up their relationships with their parents are increasingly rivaled by their relationships with peers. The latter becomes more important. The nature of child to child interaction changes.

Initially children engage in solitary play; they may show an interest in what others are doing but their own individual play takes an independent course. Eventually the child indulges in parallel play; by the age of 3 children start engaging in some cooperative play that involves direct child to child interaction and require some role playing [eg pretend play]

At this age some children start showing special faithfulness to one other child when they choose playmates. It is also at this age that children begin to prefer playmates of the same gender. This is a preliminary step towards a sense of gender identity which emerges at the age of 4-5

### **Aggression**

In early childhood children start learning to express unpleasant feelings in socially acceptable ways. Often such feelings are expressed in the form of aggressive behavior. Frustration provokes aggression, and the forms it takes will depend on the child's previous learning. Aggressive behavior may be fostered not only by observational learning but also by direct reinforcement [ or reward]. In many settings where there is group play the aggressive children often triumph over others, have easier access to preferred toys and even get extra attention from adults who are encouraging them to be less combative. Also at home parents often respond to such behavior by paying special attention to the child and even by giving in to the child's demands so as to be left in peace for a while.

This tends to reinforce the aggressive behavior for the child has learned that if he behaves in this way parents will give him more attention and will give in to his demands.

## **PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Preschoolers can be aggressive, but they can also be touchingly helpful, generous and comforting. Such behavior is called prosocial behaviour. It is said that aggressive children often also display prosocial behavior; aggressive children who are themselves upset find it easier to empathize with others who are upset.

Children pass through 4 predictable stages in the development of the empathy that paves their way to prosocial behavior .In the first stage infants have trouble differentiating self from others. Their behavior is triggered by the strong emotional displays of others. They often cry when others cry. After the first year children gradually develop a sense of self that is different from others. This is the second stage. Here their egocentric thinking leads them to help the other person in ways they themselves would like to be helped.eg a girl whose mother is upset may bring her her favorite teddybear.In the third stage children recognize that a distressed person may have feelings and needs different from their own. Their efforts to help become more aimed at figuring out what the distressed person really needs.

It is only in later childhood when the 4<sup>th</sup> stage is reached that children are likely to empathize with others and seek help. However whether prosocial behavior is reproduced may depend heavily on their learning [ ie.learning by imitating models, reinforcements and rewards received in return]

## **Adjustment problems in early childhood**

In preschool years children's limited powers of reasoning make it hard for them to foresee the consequences of their physical activity. For eg they are physically able to cross the street but are unable to foresee all the dangers that crossing the street imposes.

In this stage parents' sanctions are often considered as a game.

Preschoolers also use their newfound language skills with a distinct lack of restraint. They also have a lively imagination that can get out of control at times. There is perceptual tension between the rational and irrational use of imagination. A common fear among this age group is that something under the bed will grab a hand if it hangs free. Fears are among the most common behavior problems of early childhood. Fears involving thought and imagination increase sharply during the preschool years. Other problems such as overactivity, show offs, temper, resisting bedtime etc are quite common during this period. Some of these problems in certain children become exaggerated that require clinical interventions. Two of the most common problems are unsocialised behavior and phobias. In some cases speech problem can also become a cause for concern. Stuttering can begin in early childhood. The cause can be psychological .In some cases it fades out with development and in some cases intense anxiety can lead to elective mutism; the child can stop speaking altogether.

## **Implications for in-school learning**

The time from birth to eight-nine years is a critical period in the development of many foundational skills in all areas of development. Increased awareness of, and ability to detect, developmental delays in very young children has led to the creation of early intervention services that can reduce the need for special education placements when children reach school age. For example, earlier detection of hearing deficits sometimes leads to correction of problems before serious language impairments occur. Also, developmental delays caused by premature birth can be addressed through appropriate therapies to help children function at the level of their typically developing peers before they begin school.

Early childhood development lays the foundation for future learning. By the time children reach kindergarten, they are expected to have specific social, cognitive and motor skills to handle the demands of classroom learning. Each stage of development connects to the next. For example, your two-year-old should be able to hold a marker or pencil and scribble. By the time she's three, she should begin drawing simple shapes like circles and squares. Later, as a four- or five-year-old, she should be able to draw simple pictures and write some letters.

Developmental delays often appear early on, before a child enters school. Identifying and addressing developmental delays as soon as possible can help a child be on the same developmental level as peers and prevent future problems in school.

## **Later Childhood (Eight to Twelve Years)**

During later childhood children learn the values of their societies. Thus, the primary developmental task of later childhood could be called *integration*, both in terms of development within the individual and of the individual within the social context.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory labeled this period of life the *latency* stage, a time when sexual and aggressive urges are repressed. Physical development during middle childhood is less dramatic than in early childhood or adolescence. Growth is slow and steady until the onset of puberty, when individuals begin to develop at a much quicker pace. The age at which individuals enter puberty varies. In some individuals, puberty may start as early as age eight or nine

### **Cognitive development.**

This stage of development has been termed by Piaget the concrete operations that involve a major advance in the child's reasoning power. Children's reasoning at this stage is very rule based. Here a variety of mental activities are seen in relation to one another. Children begin to understand the ways the world is organized. They now understand conservation of length and other physical entities like mass, number, area etc. In this stage the child's thinking is more versatile. However though he can think clearly about things that are real he cannot think very clearly about more hypothetical propositions. It is hard for children in this stage to grasp the broad meaning of abstract concepts such as freedom, integrity or truth. Intellectual growth is still incomplete. While they are cognitively more mature now than a few years ago, children in this stage still require concrete, hands-on learning activities.

Later childhood is a time when children can gain enthusiasm for learning and task, for achievement can become a motivating factor as children work toward building competence and self-esteem.

### **Social development**

In this stage of development children's ways of thinking about people show a considerable change. A 6-7 year old child will describe others in egocentric ways referring to what the other people do to or for the child. Descriptions at this age also focus on concrete, observable characteristics of others such as their physical appearance or their outward behaviour

#### Friendship and groups

During elementary school years friendships become reciprocal; friends are seen as people who do things for each other.

Children of this age group are learning to organize themselves into groups.

Group formation is stimulated by the experience of spending time together, sharing pleasant experiences and cooperating in activities that involve shared goals.

During elementary school years friend and peers take on central importance in a child's social life. There are many situations in which children if forced to choose will opt for behavior approved by their peers rather than behavior approved by their parents .

Best friends are important at this age, and the skills gained in these relationships may provide the building blocks for healthy adult relationships.

Peers have a powerful impact in later childhood but whether this impact works for or against adult values and teachings will depend upon the previous socialization of the child.

## ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS IN LATER CHILDHOOD

In later childhood the classroom experiences play a great role in shaping the child's personality development. School experience can be exhilarating for a child who "fits in" academically and socially; but it can be sheer misery for children who do not. Person to person comparison becomes intense during the elementary school years; children who do badly in their school work begin to realise, by the third and fourth grade, where they rank in relation to their peers. This knowledge can give rise to feelings of inferiority. This is particularly difficult for children who suffer from cultural-familial mental retardation

For some children, the social demands of school are harder to satisfy than the academic demands. Often the settings call for impressing one's peers and teacher; this may help to explain some of the most commonly reported problem behaviours of this age—"argues" "brags", shows off" "self conscious". Self assertive behaviour expressed in the form of aggression is one of the most common causes for concern. At the other extreme are children who respond to the social demands of school with self consciousness that leads to social withdrawal.

Another common problem, school phobia, is an extreme form of normal school anxiety; children in this stage often panic and even show reactions such as vomiting when it is time to go to school. This phobia expresses as a fear of separation from the parents rather than a fear of school itself and that a quick reentry into school is usually the best way to tackle such situations.

Two other common causes for concern during later childhood are learning problems and hyperactivity. Learning difficulties such as dyslexia are often accompanied by hyperactivity. Children with this problem are often impulsive and overactive. In some settings these children are diagnosed as having an attention deficit disorder.

## **Implications for in-school learning**

For many children, middle childhood is a joyful time of increased independence, broader friendships, and developing interests, such as sports, art, or music. However, a widely recognized shift in school performance begins for many children in third or fourth grade (age eight or nine). The skills required for academic success become more complex. Those students who successfully meet the academic challenges during this period go on to do well, while those who fail to build the necessary skills may fall further behind in later grades. Recent social trends, including the increased prevalence of school violence, eating disorders, drug use, and depression, affect many school students. Thus, there is more pressure on schools to recognize problems in eight-to eleven-year-olds, and to teach children the social and life skills that will help them continue to develop into healthy adolescents.

## **Adolescence (Twelve to Eighteen Years)**

Adolescence can be defined in a variety of ways: physiologically, culturally, cognitively; each way suggests a slightly different definition

As individuals enter adolescence, they are confronted by a diverse number of changes all at one time. Not only are they undergoing significant physical and cognitive growth, but they are also encountering new situations, responsibilities, and people. Adolescents are trying on new roles, new ways of thinking and behaving, and they are exploring different ideas and values.

With so many intense experiences, adolescence is also an important time in emotional development. Mood swings are a characteristic of adolescence..The search for identity, the concern adolescents have about whether they are normal and variable moods and low self-esteem all work together to produce wildly fluctuating behavior.

The impact of the media and societal expectations on adolescent development has been far reaching. Young people are bombarded by images of violence, sex, and unattainable standards of beauty. This exposure, combined with the social, emotional, and physical changes facing adolescents, has contributed to an increase in school violence, teen sexuality, and eating disorders. The onset of many psychological disorders, such as depression, other mood disorders, and schizophrenia, is also common at this time of life.In unit four of this module this stage of development will be discussed in detail

#### **1.4 Factors that influence child development**

Each child is an individual person and is unique in the way that he or she develops throughout each stage of their lives. Studies have shown that general changes in child development usually occur at about the same time, or age, in each child. Each child, from the time they are

born, has the potential to develop through childhood and adolescence to become a healthy and productive adult.

There are many factors that can influence a child's development. These factors can further develop or they can hinder this process. One major factor in the development of a child is genetics. Traits are passed to an unborn child by each parent. These traits determine the hair color, eye color, body size and build of the child. These traits also contribute to the personality and the temperament of the child. The other major factor in the development of a child is the environment in which the child grows. An environment can be helpful or harmful to a child's development.

The first environment a child ever knows is in its mother's womb. The child develops in the mother's uterus and is protected for nine months. A mother's responsibility is to keep her body healthy to provide a safe place for the baby to grow. Smoking, drinking, and bad diet can all cause smaller or unhealthy babies to be born. These babies will usually have a harder time in developing both physically and mentally. The environment in which a child develops can include living conditions and location as well as the people and things that the child comes into contact with. Family members, strangers, community, and country all play a part in a child's environment. The community environment includes neighbors, day care, school, friends, and teachers.

## **1.5 Factors that influence the types of development of the child**

### **Types of Development**

There are five major types of development: physical, motor, language, thoughts and ideas, and social:

- Physical changes occur at different stages and ages of a child's life from muscle and skeletal development to the development of sex characteristics in adolescents.
- Motor skills such as eye-hand co-ordination are improved upon in a child's daily life.
- Language is learned from hearing tones and sounds originally coming from parents and other family members. Children learn to associate these tones and sounds with objects or actions.
- Thought processes turn from concrete to include abstract as a child grows and develops. Concrete thoughts are based on things that can be touched, seen, or heard. Abstract thoughts allow a child to think about themselves and their place in their environment.
- Social development is the intimate relationships which a child builds through attachment with people in his/her environment. Infants should experience warm, intimate and continuous relationship with parents for normal development to take place.

***What Affects the Physical, Speech/language, Intellectual, Social/emotional and Moral Development of a Child?***

- **Physical development:** It is the physical growth and the development of a child's gross and fine motor movement of the body. The physical development of a child depends on many

factors, however, the most influential component clearly seems to be the environmental influences during both the pre and post natal stages of growth. From the moment of conception, a growing fetus needs the proper nutrients to grow into a healthy baby. During this stage brain development occurs and can be greatly influenced by its mother's actions and practices. A malnourished mother will not only cause irreversible damage to the fetus, but can cause a termination of the pregnancy as well. A mother addicted to drugs or alcohol can cause even greater damage, causing the child to not only be underdeveloped with premature birth and low birth weight, but also have lifelong disorders as well.

Although there are genetic factors that can cause problems with development to arise at this stage, clearly the health of the mother is the key factor in developing a healthy fetus and newborn child. Once the child is born, environmental factors continue to influence the outcome of the physical development of the child. A child who does not receive proper nourishment will surely fall behind in development, as will a child born under the influence of alcohol or some other drug. As the child grows it is important to not only give the child the proper nutrition, but the proper exercise and exposure to its environment as well. A child who sits in a playpen in front of a television all day will develop less quickly than an active child will. A child who is left in the dark for most of its early life will have poor brain development that will affect its life forever. Although genetics can also play a part in

development it is ultimately up to the mother and father to ensure their child develops properly and healthily.

- **Speech and language development** is the use of visual and sound stimuli, especially in the acquisition of language, also in the exchange of thoughts and feelings. Speech and language development relies on a variety of factors as well, including environmental, cultural, and genetic factors. A child who has an attentive caregiver will be more likely to develop its speech and language practices quicker than a child whose parents don't respond to him or her at all. Moreover, if the household itself is quiet and the parents do not even speak to each other, the child will have no examples to learn by. This is where cultural factors can affect the speech and language portion of a child's development. Once a child begins to speak, it is important that the language portion of words and sounds are taught to him or her from the environment.
- **Intellectual development** is how a child thinks and reacts. The environment can affect a child's intelligence development in a variety of ways that may not seem obvious. Treating a child like a "little adult" and giving the child not only access to learning materials but a clear sense of culture and responsibility can affect the child's own motivation and desire. A lazy child who is permitted to self-indulge all day will lack the necessary drive to obtain knowledge when compared to an active, responsible child

who has learned tolerance and diversity through the wide array of stimuli.

- **Social and emotional development is the development of a child's identity, the child's relationship with others, and his/her understanding of his/her place within a social environment.** Emotional development is the child's increasing awareness and control of his feelings

A child's social and emotional development can be affected by predisposed traits. However, environmental factors certainly play a significant part. One can argue that a child may be shy because he or she inherited the characteristic from a parent, for example, but it can also be said that the child has picked up by learning by example. Opportunity for social interaction with peers as well as adults can affect the development as well. If a child is home all day interacting mainly with adults, it may be more difficult for him or her to be socially appropriate with peers when finally sent off to school. However, after the initial resistance, the child is young enough to learn appropriate social exchange through modeling and reinforcement. A child may also be superior to his or her peers having learned adult level social characteristics, and this can affect development as well. Although caregivers can affect the social actions of a child, it is imperative that the child be exposed to peers as soon as possible, as peer interaction is surely the most pertinent influential factor in a child's social development.

Emotions can also be affected by a variety of conditions. A negative home environment in which the child is subjected to harsh words or pessimistic attitudes can cause a severe reaction in the child's emotional development. As a child develops into a teenager, it is important for the caregiver to foster appropriate emotional support as the child goes through the difficult and emotional stages of puberty.

- **Moral development** is the child's ability to distinguish between what is good and bad in society. Culture is unquestionably the underlying influence of moral development, although parental regard for these standards is necessary for proper expansion of morality. Morals can be learned through a multitude of ways within any given culture, but the most influential way to ensure the child clearly internalizes a sense of ethics is to teach them.

This role can belong to the parents, older siblings and teachers. It is important to note that telling children at a young age to behave a certain way "because I said so" or for fear of punishment is not only hindering moral development but also possibly causing just the opposite. If a child is helped to pass through the stages of moral development rather than just acquiring them on his/her own, a highly moral and tolerant contributing member of society can be developed much faster. To conclude, it can be said that the role of heredity versus environmental influences on a child's development is a controversial issue, and there is much research to support one side or the other playing a larger role. Although a child may inherit a certain proposed level of intelligence, the environment during the early stages of development can alter this.

## **1.7 The eight stages of social-emotional development**

According to Erikson, the socialization process consists of eight phases - the "eight stages of man." His eight stages of man were formulated through wide - ranging experience in psychotherapy, including extensive experience with children and adolescents from low - as well as upper - and middle - social classes. Each stage is regarded by Erikson as a "psychosocial crisis," which arises and demands resolution before the next stage can be satisfactorily negotiated. These stages are conceived in an almost architectural sense: satisfactory learning and resolution of each crisis is necessary if the child is to manage the next and subsequent ones satisfactorily, just as the foundation of a house is essential to the first floor, which in turn must be structurally sound to support the second story, and so on.

### **Erikson's Eight Stages of Development**

#### **1. Learning Basic Trust versus Basic Mistrust (Hope)**

Chronologically, this is the period of infancy through the first one or two years of life. The child, well - handled, nurtured, and loved, develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Badly handled, he becomes insecure and mistrustful.

#### **2. Learning Autonomy versus Shame (Will)**

The second psychosocial crisis, Erikson believes, occurs during early childhood, probably between about 18 months or 2 years and 3½ to 4 years of age. The "well - parented" child emerges from this stage sure of himself, elated with his new found control, and proud rather than ashamed. Autonomy is not, however, entirely synonymous with assured self - possession, initiative, and independence but, at least for children in the early part of this psychosocial crisis, includes stormy self - will, tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism. For example, one sees many 2 year olds resolutely folding their arms to prevent their mothers from holding their hands as they cross the street.

### **3. Learning Initiative versus Guilt (Purpose)**

Erikson believes that this third psychosocial crisis occurs during what he calls the "play age," or the later preschool years (from about 3½ to entry into formal school). During this period, the healthily developing child learns: (1) to imagine, to broaden his skills through active play of all sorts, including fantasy (2) to cooperate with others (3) to lead as well as to follow. Immobilized by guilt, he is: (1) fearful (2) hangs on the fringes of groups (3) continues to depend unduly on adults and (4) is restricted both in the development of play skills and in imagination.

### **4. Industry versus Inferiority (Competence)**

Erikson believes that the fourth psychosocial crisis is handled, for better or worse, during what he calls the "school age," presumably up to and possibly including some of junior high school. Here the child learns to master the more formal skills of life: (1) relating with peers according to rules (2) progressing from free play to play that may be elaborately

structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as baseball and (3) mastering social studies, reading, arithmetic. Homework is a necessity, and the need for self-discipline increases yearly. The child who, because of his successive and successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crisis, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative will learn easily enough to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future. The shame - and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority.

### **5. Learning Identity versus Identity Diffusion (Fidelity)**

During the fifth psychosocial crisis (adolescence, from about 13 or 14 to about 20) the child, now an adolescent, learns how to answer satisfactorily and happily the question of "Who am I?" But even the best - adjusted of adolescents experiences some role identity diffusion: most boys and probably most girls experiment with minor delinquency; rebellion flourishes; self - doubts flood the youngster, and so on.

Erikson believes that during successful early adolescence, mature time perspective is developed; the young person acquires self-certainty as opposed to self-consciousness and self-doubt. He comes to experiment with different - usually constructive - roles rather than adopting a "negative identity" (such as delinquency). He actually anticipates achievement, and achieves, rather than being "paralyzed" by feelings of inferiority or by an inadequate time perspective. In later adolescence, clear sexual identity - manhood or womanhood - is established. The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him), and gradually develops a set of ideals (socially congruent and desirable, in the case of the successful adolescent). Erikson believes that adolescence affords a

"psychosocial moratorium," . They do not yet have to "play for keeps," but can experiment, trying various roles, and thus hopefully find the one most suitable for them.

## **6. Learning Intimacy versus Isolation (Love)**

The successful young adult, for the first time, can experience true intimacy - the sort of intimacy that makes possible good marriage or a genuine and enduring friendship.

## **7. Learning Generativity versus Self-Absorption (Care)**

In adulthood, the psychosocial crisis demands generativity, both in the sense of marriage and parenthood, and in the sense of working productively and creatively.

## **8. Integrity Versus Despair (Wisdom)**

If the other seven psychosocial crisis have been successfully resolved, the mature adult develops the peak of adjustment; integrity. He trusts, he is independent and dares the new. He works hard, has found a well - defined role in life, and has developed a self-concept with which he is happy. He can be intimate without strain, guilt, regret, or lack of realism; and he is proud of what he creates - his children, his work, or his hobbies. If one or more of the earlier psychosocial crises have not been resolved, he may view himself and his life with disgust and despair.

These eight stages of man, or the psychosocial crises, are plausible and insightful descriptions of how personality develops but at present they are descriptions only. We possess at best rudimentary and tentative knowledge of just what sort of environment will result, for example, in

traits of trust versus distrust, or clear personal identity versus diffusion. Helping the child through the various stages and the positive learning that should accompany them is a complex and difficult task, as any worried parent or teacher knows. Search for the best ways of accomplishing this task accounts for much of the research in the field of child development.

Socialization, then is a learning - teaching process that, when successful, results in the human organism's moving from its infant state of helpless but total egocentricity to its ideal adult state of sensible conformity coupled with independent creativity.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Basic Conflict (Psychosocial crisis)</b>	<b>Important Event</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>1.Oral-Sensory</b>	Birth to 12 to 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	The infant must form a first loving, trusting relationship with the caregiver, or develop a sense of mistrust.
<b>2.Muscular-Anal</b>	18 months to 3years	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Toilet training	The child's energies are directed toward the development of physical skills, including walking, grasping, and rectal sphincter control. The child learns control but

				may develop shame and doubt if not handled well.
<b>3. Locomotors</b>	3 to 6 years	Initiatives vs. Guilt	Independence	The child continues to become more assertive and to take more initiative, but may be too forceful, leading to guilt feelings.
<b>4. Latency</b>	6 to 12 years	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	The child must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence.
<b>5. Adolescence</b>	12-18 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Peer relationships	The teenager must achieve a sense of identity in occupation, sex roles, politics, and religion.
<b>6. Young Adulthood</b>	19 to 40 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love relationships	The young adult must develop intimate relationships or suffer feelings of isolation.
<b>7. Middle Adulthood</b>	40 to 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Parenting	Each adult must find some way to satisfy and support the next generation.
<b>8. Maturity</b>	65 to death	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on and acceptance of one's life	The culmination is a sense of oneself as one is and of feeling fulfilled.

## 1.8 Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

### Stages of moral development

Kohlberg proposed that children form ways of thinking through their experiences which include understandings of moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality and human welfare. According to him there exist six stages of moral development that an individual goes through in his life. He grouped the six stages of moral reasoning into three major levels..

#### level 1. Preconventional Morality

### **Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation.**

In this stage the child perceives morality as a set of rules that parents or authorities hand down which he or she must unquestioningly abide by. If faced with the question "why it's wrong to steal", the child will typically say because "It's against the law," or "because you'll get punished". Majority of children at stage 1 will respond in this way; the concern is with what authorities allow and punish. At this stage, children see rules as fixed and absolute. Obeying the rules is important because it is a means to avoid punishment.

Stage 1 is named by Kohlberg as the "preconventional" stage because children do not yet respond as members of society; they see morality as something external to themselves, as that which authority says they must do.

**Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange.** At this stage children recognize that different individuals have different viewpoints. According to their reasoning what is right for someone is what meets his own self interest

Children at both stages 1 and 2 take cognizance of punishment.

However, they perceive it differently. At stage 1, punishment according to the child is linked with wrongness; punishment reinforces the notion that disobedience is wrong. At stage 2, for the child, punishment is just a risk that one would want to avoid.

At stage 2 though, children do have some sense of right action characterized by the notion of *fair exchange* or fair deals. [eg if you hit me, I'll hit you back."] For eg when questioned about whether it is right or wrong to steal in a hypothetical situation they might just say that it is right to steal if the person is unwilling to make a fair deal; or is selling the product too expensive.

At stage 2 there is still no identification with the values of the family or community.

### **Level II. Conventional Morality**

**Stage 3. Good Interpersonal Relationships.** At this stage, entering their teens children see morality as something more than simple deals. They believe that people should live up to the expectations of the family and community. For them proper conduct means having good motives and showing love, empathy and concern for others. Children at this stage typically argue that at times it is right to steal if one has to save somebody's life; the motives, intentions here are seen as good and they

assume that this is something that any one would do given this situation.

At this stage there is a shift from unquestioning obedience to a relativistic perception and to a concern for good motives and intentions .The child ,now,is said to have expressed conventional "morality"

- **Stage 4 - Maintaining Social Order**

At this stage of moral development, people begin to consider society as a whole when making judgments. The focus is on maintaining law and order by following the rules, doing one's duty, and respecting authority.

**Level 3 Post-conventional Morality**

- **Stage 5 - Social Contract and Individual Rights**

At this stage, people begin to account for the differing values, opinions, and beliefs of other people. Rules of law are important for maintaining a society, but members of the society should agree upon these standards.

- **Stage 6 - Universal Principles**

Kohlberg's final level of moral reasoning is based upon universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning. At this stage, people follow these internalized principles of justice, even if they conflict with laws and rules.

## **1.10 Parents' role in facilitating development**

### **Developing a child's literacy**

As described before, by the age of three or four, most children are able to understand and use the spoken language around them without any formal teaching. These early years are the prime time to acquire language skills. Parents can take advantage of this learning sensitive time through aloud reading to their children and talking to them.

- Exposing the infant to books-read and talk to him though the parent is doing all the reading.

- Designate daily story time-Make it a must to read a story every day at the same time and most preferably before going to bed, as it tends to calm children.
- Make the reading as enjoyable as you can.

### **How to promote a healthy social development?**

Following are some tips for parents on how to promote social development of their child:

- Conversation with infants-Talk and make peaceful noises.  
Converse with your child everyday- share with your child your experiences as well as encourage the child to voice out about how he has spent his day.  
Arrange for play dates- it implies that parents organize playtime in which friends of the child are invited.
- Show that you as a parent you support your child- Praise the child if he has completed a task.
- Parents should avoid growing their child in an individualistic manner. The parental support must encourage group learning.
- Working parents must make an extra effort to spend fun and playful time with their children.
- The father figure has an important role to play. Research proves that the presence of a father figure encourages less trouble shooting behaviour.
- Be responsive to your child-when your child has something to show ;do not brush away.

## **Developing children's emotional skills**

- Ask your children's opinions on a daily basis. Listen attentively to what they say.
- Make paper masks of different emotions. Masks can be as simple as paper plates with happy and sad faces drawn on them.
- Have your child draw pictures of how they feel. For example, next time your child is sad, ask him to draw a picture of how he feels. When he's finished, you can talk with him about the situation.
- Respond to your children's emotions. They learn how to respond to other's emotions by the way you respond to them.

## **Promote pro-social behaviour and moral values**

- Assign simple tasks to children at an early age. Begin by having your child put away his own toys. Help him at first so the task is not overwhelming.
- Let your children help you with chores.  
Bring toys into your home that incorporates work and play. For example, buy your toddler a toy broom.
- Encourage and praise your child when he completes a task. Give him a hug and say thank you. Tell him what a great job he did.
- Create a chore chart. Include your children's names and the days of the week or month. Buy fun stickers and put one on the chart

next to a child's name each time he completes a chore. Make a goal of a certain number of chores. When his stickers add up to the goal, give him a special surprise or do something to celebrate.

- Leave room for failure. If your child fails to complete a chore or doesn't do a perfect job, don't berate or embarrass him or her.
- Narrate small stories which provide examples of what is expected and what is not appreciated in society or what is considered as good and what is bad.

## Unit 2: Encouraging Positive Parenting

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### 2.0 Overview

Parents are often confronted with seriously challenging behaviours and in such circumstances find it really difficult to control their child. Such situation can be highly stressful and tiring for parents. In this unit, the right parental approach to be adopted in order to achieve positive results with one's child will be described. Then the different existing parenting styles and their effect on child's development and the techniques applied in managing challenging behavior will be examined.

### 1. **Learning objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Identify the different parenting styles and their effects on child development
2. Understand how to manage challenging behaviour and the techniques of behaviour modification.

## **2.2 Parenting style**

When faced with a difficult situation, how do parents go about telling their child "no"? Following are certain guidelines to help parents deal with such situation. First, a combination of general parental warmth and specific explanations for specific prohibitions seems to promote effective discipline. Parental warmth help make the child eager to maintain the parents' approval and to understand the parents' reason for prohibition. Giving reasons in turn helps the child form ideas of what are appropriate-concepts that can then be generalized to new situations. Second, consistency-overtime and between parents are very important, the absence of which can result in maladjustment in children, aggression and delinquency

Another question that arises now is how controlling parents should be with their children.

Numerous studies have proved that parenting style is related to children's behaviour in several ways. A study conducted with preschool children demonstrates this. According to this study parents with an authoritative style were firm about rules and expected high levels of

maturity and achievement, but were also nurturing and responsive to their children. Children of these parents were especially energetic, friendly, curious and self reliant. Children whose parents were permissive showed little self reliance and poor self control. Many of these children were observed to be impulsive and aggressive. A highly controlling "authoritarian" parental style was associated with children who were apprehensive, withdrawn, unhappy, and distrustful.

From the above research it is quite clear that parenting which combines warmth with moderate restrictiveness and an authoritative style fosters independence and social maturity in children even as early as preschool years. From studies it has also been indicated that identical parental style may foster different behaviour patterns in boys and in girls. Boys with punishing fathers seem to have difficulty in establishing good peer relationship, but girls with such fathers seem likely to be independent and self reliant. It has been suggested that girls with very warm and tolerant fathers may be missing out on the parent-child tension that can stimulate self-assertion and autonomy.

At this point it is important to emphasize that children, according to most studies, are born with "styles" of their own in the form of basic temperament patterns; Parental style may influence the way these patterns are expressed, but parental style is also partly a response to the child's style. Parent behaviour and child behaviour influence one another in an ongoing cycle. One shouldn't view the parent as the

“cause” and the child as “the effect” and think that every troubled child is a product of poor parenting.

## **2.3 Managing challenging behaviour**

### **Toddlers and tantrums**

Tantrum is a super charged outburst of emotions, which occurs when the toddler feels out of control. It is a practical demonstration of how the toddler feels inside-chaotic and confused. Tantrums are natural, frequent and positive steps forward in the child’s development.

Tantrums prove that the toddler is beginning to develop a sense of herself, and a sense of her place in the world. Throwing a tantrum is his/her way of coping with the frustration that she feels when she can't hang on any longer to her fragile self. Toddlers begin to learn by doing things and through their relationships with parents.

It is through activities that toddlers discover their strengths and weaknesses and it is by choosing what they do [within limits] that they discover their likes and dislikes, thus discovering themselves

By the age of 2-3 activity is the best way for them to work out who they are.

Toddlers aren't able to limit what they want at first. Their only concern is to do what they want and to do it immediately. So when toddlers are faced with a "no" or are asked to wait they don't have the brain power to coolly consider their parents' point of view. All they feel is confused and terribly frustrated. Toddlers are spontaneous. For them a second is a long time and a minute impossibility. Toddlers' frustration is borne out of desire to do whatever it is in their mind immediately.

Frustration generates a lot of tension and the toddler expresses it by hurling himself to the floor, thrashing wildly and screaming as loud as he can. For him this is a way of releasing that tension immediately.

Things that will frustrate a toddler are:

1. Not being given what he wants-your attention, more sweets, or a specific toy.
2. Not being able to do things himself-getting dressed, carry all his toys at once, etc.
3. Wanting you to do something that you can't or won't do-such as allowing her to choose your groceries.
4. Not knowing what he wants- e.g. to take his tea at the table or to play with his friends and miss tea.
5. Not being able to explain what he wants.
6. Not being able to control everything-including the colour of her dress or toy and their parents. This is one reason why imaginative play is so important at this age-it allows the toddler complete control which he/she later practices in real life situations.
7. Being misunderstood-which includes being laughed at when the situation was not funny.

8. Physical conditions such as: illness, tiredness, hunger etc.

Any of these things can trigger a tantrum:

If you have to say "no" to your toddler offer him two choices so that he can still feel in control. Choices give your toddler the chance to escape with dignity. An e.g. is illustrated in the following case study.

**Case study:** Two year old John began to stroke Mary's curls with a wooden hammer, but John's father stepped in before he thinks of hitting Mary with it. He offered John a comb and a red brush and said: "here John lets swap, which would you prefer-this comb or this little brush?" John then happily dropped the hammer. Diverting and distracting the toddler is an effective way of preventing a tantrum.

Your toddler's relationship with you can also cause him to tantrum because he has yet to accept easily where he ends and you begin. By the age of 18 months, a child finally accepts that he and his mother is not one and the same person. He is delighted with the freedom this gives him and at the same time horrified by the lack of security he experiences. He wants to assert his freedom and yet to have you with her emotionally all the way through.

He may no longer needs you to feed, dress him like before but he still needs to be loved reassured and protected from himself. He needs you to order his mind as well- to use actions and words to make sense of what he feels and thinks. The most important way for you to do this is by giving your attention. The more attention your toddler gets the more

he understands himself and the more he understands herself the happier he is. For the toddler, attention equals love. But if you are busy looking after the baby or cleaning, your toddler may feel unloved and will express it by throwing tantrum. Another way to keep a toddler calm is by talking to her and describing what is going on for her.

### **When the toddler says no"**

Toddlers favourite word is "no". Even when they mean yes they would still say no. Toddlers say no because it's the only way he knows of gaining control.

In such a situation the first step is to understand why he is saying no.

May be:

1. He has been asked to do something he can't.
2. He has been held back from something he wanted to do.
3. He has been interrupted.
4. He is angry or embarrassed.

In these situations parents are advised to try the following:

Get down to his level .Be warm and compassionate. Understand what he really wants by:

1. Pulling your trousers when you are preparing dinner
2. Insisting that he wears his coat on a hot day
3. Demanding that you play with him when you are feeding the baby

In such circumstances, instead of saying an outright no to him/her, turn it into a "yes" or "later" if you can. Talk to him and make him feel that

you understand him e.g. "I can see that you are in a hurry, let me just dry my hands first [which means a bit later]".

Toddlers have to learn how to wait. But they learn best when the lesson is repeated for short spells and often. At times parents may have to say no. But they should try to keep these to a minimum and stay calm.

Signing heavily or becoming angry make your toddlers feel that:

- They have done wrong
- You expected them to do wrong
- You blame them for it

In such situations the right approach to adopt would be to:

1. Get down to his level
2. Describe what happened
3. Show you understand why
4. State the rule
5. Suggest 2 alternatives [a choice give him the chance to feel good]

e.g. if he has hit somebody while playing you could tell him

"You have hit John because you didn't like it when he came too close to you. But one shouldn't hit. Next time you could walk away"

Many toddlers revert to more infantile behavior and tantrum following the birth of a new baby in the family. They do this because the baby is getting all the attention that once used to be theirs and they think that the baby is getting what is his so in order to get the attention back he acts like a baby.

For e.g. he may start: Wetting his pants like before, waking up in the night when he has been sleeping through for months without any trouble, insisting that you feed her.

Other toddlers respond by stealing a biscuit or sweets here and there this is the toddlers way of looking for the love he feels has been stolen by his younger sibling. Toddlers with younger siblings often have to wait in order to get their mom's attention. One way of tackling this situation is to include her in what you are doing. For e.g. while changing the baby you can ask her to change her dolls. Ask her to bring baby things such as the bib or soap while you pick up his toys. It's important to know that your toddler has needs to and she needs to know that at times she comes first. The best advice for parents in such situations is treating your toddler like a baby again when she wants to be. But there need to be limits to what you will accept. Best way is to be firm about your rules

Also ensure that you spend lots of fun times together just the two of you, when she wants to be treated like a baby again communicate to her by the amount and quality of time you spend with her and tell her directly and make her feel that she is still as special to you and that you still love her just the same.

Toddlers tears can be difficult to bear and parents want them to stop. But toddlers also need to be allowed to be sad. When you are asking

him to stop crying before you have even tried to understand how she feels she may feel that:

- He was somehow wrong to cry,
- The thing she was crying for was unimportant,
- You won't love him unless he is happy,

The best approach is to listen to his howling, and tries to describe what he must be feeling; he may not stop crying immediately this time but he will learn how to understand and talk about his feelings in future. In the end he will be able to talk rather than scream.

They grow up happier and calmer if we listen to them and take seriously the little things that make them unhappy

Tantrums at 18 months differ from tantrums at 3 years. By three, toddlers have better memory ,more developed social skills, more control over their behaviour and is ready to easily accept brief separation from parents; by this time they are ready for nursery.

Tantrum at this age however, tends to last longer and is marked by behaviours such as: drumming arms and legs, shouting and screaming, banging heads, biting their arms etc. These tantrums are more difficult to ignore.

At this age, parents need to bear in mind that while giving the necessary attention to their child, efforts should also be made to teach the child alternative socially more acceptable ways to express their frustrations. Often, it so happens that when you give in to a child's demands, once or twice when he throws a tantrum, he starts believing

that every time he throws a tantrum, it will get him what he wants. He needs to learn that tantrums do not work.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

One of the major tasks that parents are confronted with by the age of two is toilet training. A set of behaviour modification techniques can be used to achieve the desired results. **Below is one example:**

Parents can make use of dolls to show their child the appropriate behaviour. The first step in this procedure is to give their child large quantities of their favourite liquids. Then encourage them to follow the doll example on the potty. As soon as the child urinates parents respond with rewards in the form of favourite treats, praises etc and references to how pleased special people in the child's life [e.g. granddad] would be.

Some times parents' expectations about their child are unrealistic and they need help in understanding what behaviour is age appropriate. The child may be seen as vulnerable because of illness or other reasons. It is crucial to assess parental feelings about their child character. Behaviour management can be carried out with such parents but they also require help in reconsidering their views about their child

The first step in planning behaviour management is to describe the context of the behaviour first; what set it off, how long it lasted, how often it happens, what is maintaining the behaviour, your reaction and respond to the child's behaviour, does it happen with you only or with others as well .Second, describe what needs to be changed; what is the desired behaviour. Finally a chart of behaviour recording is to be maintained so as to monitor change. An e.g. is illustrated below.

<b>setting conditions</b>	<b>behaviour</b>	<b>consequences</b>
Check out of supermarket	Screaming and struggling for sweets	Give him sweets to keep him quiet

Other types of chart can record the incidence of the problem to see how often it occurs:

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>7.00am</b>	<b>8.00am</b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>11.00am</b>
<b>tantrums</b>	++		+		++
<b>hitting</b>	+	+			++

Basic management strategies include”

1. Cueing or setting the scene, e.g. ensuring regular meals or bedtimes with well established routines
2. Extinction, e.g. ignoring tempers, silly or rude behaviour, preventing destructive or aggressive behaviour

3. Shaping or step by step change, e.g. helping a child to sit for increasing longer periods at mealtimes or go to bed at gradually earlier times.

4. Reinforcement for desired behaviours: this can take the form of praise and encouragement. Star charts and stickers or special treats are helpful for older children and must be chosen in line with the particular child's age and interest. 3 year's old children can understand the use of this type of strategy.

## **2.4 Taking charge of the TV**

Taking charge of your television is defined as control over what you and your children watch on television. Critical viewing skills and suggesting media literacy techniques that can change your relationship to TV, thus changing the potential impact of television on your children—and you, will demonstrate being television aware.

1. TV programs and their messages are created to achieve specific results.
2. Each person interprets programs and messages differently. Parents and children may not interpret the messages in the same way.
3. Television violence takes many forms.

- **Suggestions for Taking Charge of Your TV Viewing**

1. Make TV watching a conscious, planned-for activity. Children should ask your permission to watch TV, not be allowed to just casually “channel surf” to see if anything sparks their interest.
2. Choose programs together. Take time one day each week to review TV program guides for the week ahead.
2. Make TV watching an interactive family event.
2. Use TV as a springboard for other learning experiences.

- **Five Things to Teach Your Children about Commercials**

Incredible, indestructible toys— Many toy commercials show their toys in life-like fashion, doing incredible things. This would be fine, if the toys really did these things.

Playing with our emotions— Commercials often create an emotional feeling that draws you into the advertisement and makes you feel good.

Pictures of ideal children and teens— The child and teen actors in commercials are often a little older and a little more perfect than the target audience of the advertisement.

Products in the very best light— Selective editing is used in all commercials. Commercials show only brilliant and perfect images. That is not the way most children experience these toys.

Big names, big bucks— Sport heroes, movie stars, and teenage heartthrobs tell our children what to eat and what to wear. Children and teens listen, not realizing that the star is paid handsomely for the endorsement.

- **Television Violence Takes Many Forms**

1. Re-sensitize your children to TV violence by asking how the victim might feel. If your child is old enough, talk about real-life encounter with violence which you or other members of your family have experienced.
2. Ask your children if violence is ever funny, as in cartoons. Point out how real life doesn't work that way. Remind them that if a person gets hit on the head with a piano or falls off a cliff, he/she will be seriously hurt, even killed. Ask your child why violence is funny in cartoons but not in real life.
3. Help children interpret what they see. Many young children cannot filter or differentiate between what is real and unreal. Sometimes the best solution is simply to turn off the TV and talk.

## **2.5 Smacking**

Some parents find it hard to imagine how they could cope without smacking. They accept that the more positive discipline methods are valuable, but believe there are situations where only a smack will do.

## **The more defiant child has to be smacked**

To think that smacking is the right way to make a strong impression on a stubborn or strong willed child is wrong, even though it can be very tempting to think that.

Unfortunately strict punishments and smacking always make matters worse with a naturally strong-willed child. They are likely to display more defiance, answer you back, even hit back, and may fear but not respect you. Things can even get out of control.

- **Smacking always carries a risk**

Sometimes parents find they need to smack harder and harder in order to get a result.

For many parents in these situations a smack is a natural reaction. They are overwhelmed by emotion, shock, horror, panic and show this by the smack. The hurt or sting of a smack just adds confusion to an already confusing situation.

Sometimes parents feel a behaviour is so outrageous that they want to demonstrate to their child that it is totally unacceptable. Unfortunately, smacking or biting back gives a very confusing, contradictory message – that it is okay to use force or to hit physically when you are angry or to make a point. This does not teach the child why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Smacking may look like it has the desired effect – it stops the behaviour in its tracks, maybe your child cries or seems apologetic, it may even

release tension for parents. But it can have a downside, and some undesirable long-term consequences.

It is important to understand what is going on. Small children very rarely behave as they do just to annoy adults. The youngest toddlers don't even understand what winds you up. They are trying to get your attention. When you smack, it is to relieve your own annoyance.

### **The downside to smacking**

- Even though they may not show it at the time, children feel emotionally hurt, resentful and angry.
- Over long periods this spoils family relationships. Children who are often smacked learn that is how to behave. They may hit or bully other children.
- Children learn how to avoid the unpleasant outcome of smacking as they grow up – but the behaviours they use may not be those parents want to encourage – like lying, or hiding how they feel.
- Some children are likely to become more defiant and challenging, so discipline is increasingly harder as they grow older.
- Others may become withdrawn and not develop independence.
- When you give out love, you get it back. When you give out harsh punishments – screaming, yelling or hitting, this means you are eventually likely to get anger and resentment back.

Research shows that positive parenting keeps children out of serious trouble.

But it doesn't have to be like that. Many parents find that once they get the positive habit, they hardly need to think about discipline at all.

Ideas on bringing up children have changed. We know a great deal more now about why children behave as they do, and about the effects of smacking.

Hitting children should never be seen as excusable for some groups of parents or children. Positive parenting and discipline works best for everyone.

## **2.6 Preparing your child for school**

Definition of readiness: having the skill to learn and handle the school environment without undue stress.

### **Skills that your child will need to be ready to start kindergarten:**

- Naming the colors
- Recognizing some or all letters
- Counting to ten
- Knowing his/her age
- Counting items
- Recognizing shapes
- Holding and using scissors
- Following two-or three-part commands

- Playing cooperatively with others
- Paying attention and concentrating
- Sitting for long periods of time
- Singing the alphabet song
- Understanding simple stories
- Spending extended time away from parents
- Dressing him/herself, including shoes
- Verbally communicating his/her needs and wants
- Being eager to learn and to engage in new activities
- Being ready to learn how to share, wait, and handle situations
- Handling personal hygiene.

Your child's teacher will be ready for a range of skill levels in the classroom. You can increase your comfort level, and that of your child, by working on skills at home before school begins.

### **Is my child ready for kindergarten?**

**Answering the following questions might help you make that decision:**

- What are the school's expectations? What is the pace of the kindergarten?
- Can my child express his/her needs and wants so that others can understand them?
- Can my child take care of his/her personal needs (dressing, buttons, zippers, bathroom, eating, etc.) with little or no assistance?

- Is my child ready to explore the surrounding world?
- Does my child listen and follow directions from other adults?
- Can my child adapt to new situations?
- Will my concerns about my child's size, age, shyness, maturity, etc., be likely to change in a year, or are they factors influenced by my child's personality or genetic make-up?
- Has my child experienced any major life events (such as divorce, a death in the family, remarriage, or a move) that could have delayed or impacted his or her development?

## **2.7 Parenting for parents in paid jobs**

- A close, supportive relationship between parent and child is critically important for healthy development.
- Relationships are created around a loved one's devotion and willingness to sacrifice.
- Children at all ages must have tangible demonstrations of devotion. A relationship cannot be bought. The price of gaining a relationship with a child is the sacrifice of time.
- The best gift is a loved one's presence.

**The following suggestions may be helpful in using the time you have wisely:**

1. **Consider the time you spend with a child as an investment.**

Every friendly caring moment is a deposit in the relationship account. Every encouraging moment in the relationship should be considered as a deposit and bad moments as withdrawals. Parents should try not to go bankrupt.

2. **Think carefully about your priorities.**

Though the parents may be busy, they should find time for the priorities in their lives and their children is one of their top priorities. The challenge is to use time effectively.

3. **Create "time islands."**

Sitting and talking with a child as soon as she comes home from school, reading a story and tucking a child in at night, or taking a teenager to lunch every Monday and Friday are examples of time islands. The best time islands are predictable, something the child can count on in a regular way. Even small amounts of time can become a nurturing time island in which children discover that they are the central focus of the parent's attention.

4. **Be a tuning fork.**

During these moments, set aside all your adult worries and other mental distractions. Be responsive to the child. Listen, do not criticize. Encourage the child to talk and take the lead, do not push and direct. When you talk, express your own feelings and ideas in words the child can understand.

## **2.8 Communicating with your child**

Talking with their children is one of the most important things a parent can do. Even the busiest parents need to make time to be involved with their children.

### **Parents teach their child how to talk and listen**

- Explaining the meaning of words and how these words relate to the world around him/her.
- Encouraging him/her to put his/her thoughts and ideas into sentences.
- Listening and responding to him/her in a way that builds her sense of confidence and self-worth.
- Being patient while he/she searches for the right words and sentences to express himself/herself.

### **The following tips can help parents become better listeners:**

- Be attentive. Stop what you are doing as soon as you can, and give your child your full attention.
- Focus on your child's words, using your eyes as well as ears. A child may say nothing is wrong, when dejected looks tell you differently.

- Encourage talk. Eye contact, a smile, a nod, and short responses can and should be used to indicate understanding—even when you may not be in agreement.
- Keep questions brief.
- Try to empathize
- Listen with respect. React to your child or teenager as you would to an adult friend.
- Take time to have a relaxed conversation with your child on a regular basis, five to ten minutes each day. Frequent talks help spot difficulties before they become real problems.
- Be aware of your tone of voice. Often it's not what you say but how you say it that conveys your message.
- Be specific. Strive to consciously communicate in simple, specific terms.
- Help your teenager empathize with you by expressing your feelings. Don't be embarrassed to reveal some of your inner self.

## **2.9 Parents and decision-making**

One of the most important things parents can do for their children is to help them develop high self-esteem. Having high self-esteem is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

People with high self-esteem are more likely to have the traits that we value in adults, such as being capable of making good decisions and being proud of their accomplishments, willing to take responsibility, and able to cope with frustration.

The degree of self-esteem a child has is closely tied to his family and environment. A child knows when he is listened to and taken seriously. If he feels he is genuinely cared for, his self-esteem is more likely to be high.

### **Self-Esteem and Decision Making**

Success in school is heavily linked to a child's sense of self-esteem. High self-esteem has an even greater payoff over a lifetime of making decisions. Parents need to foster their child's self-esteem, self-discipline, and ability to make decisions about who he/she is and who he/she wants to be. In addition, parents need to find ways to let their child know he/she is respected as an individual, just as he/she is expected to give others around him/her that same kind of respect.

### **Taking decisions**

#### **Children *Can* and *Do* Make Decisions**

It is important that parents accept to let their child learn how to make decisions. Allowing a child to make decisions works best if parents set limits for such decision making. The limits set must be appropriate to the child's age and his/her ability to handle a decision. Once a decision is made, the child should be expected and allowed to deal with the consequences.

At first, decisions may be as simple as what to have for dinner, what to wear to school, or how to spend an allowance. With young children, it is often wise to limit the choices to a few options, It is essential that children be given many opportunities to develop decision-making skills.

It is critical to their own well-being and important for their futures. Making good decisions takes practice.

### **Parent Tips - Coaching Your Child on Decision Making**

One way to help your child become better at making decisions is to become the “coach” and help him/her understand how to begin doing this. “A child who helps make a decision will be more willing to make that decision work.”

- Discuss the issue of concern. Try to be thorough and objective.
- Decide what the problem is, and have him/her state it clearly.
- Find out if more information is needed in order to make the decision.
- List the choices available, making sure, nothing is overlooked.
- Discuss the possible results of each choice; the benefits and consequences.
- Discuss how he/she will feel about each decision in terms of his/her own values and expectations for himself/herself and the values of the family.
- Reach the decision together, keeping in mind that younger children need more assistance and teenagers demand more independence.

- Children must be allowed to work through and live with the consequences of their decisions. They need praise for making good decisions, and they need to know you are proud of them.

### **2.10 Discipline: be fair and consistent Expectations and Limits**

The purpose of discipline is not to punish children but rather help them make good decisions. Parents need to help children understand the expectations and limits that have been set. These should be age appropriate and not so numerous that it is impossible for a child to live up to them. Children are less likely to break rules they have helped to make.

### **Children Need to Learn Self-Discipline**

Self-discipline is one of the basic requirements for achievement in the classroom and throughout life. How parents use discipline may well determine whether a child learns to discipline himself/herself.

Punishment demoralizes and humiliates a child, causing low self-esteem and other problems. Discipline, unlike punishment, is setting limits and helping a child follow those limits. "Discipline should be consistent and given with love and respect for the child as an individual." Ways should be found to stress "do's," not "don'ts," so that praise may be given for good behavior. Discipline should be a positive way to:

- Help the child achieve self-control.

- Help him/her toward acceptable behavior.
- Teach him/her how to make decisions when faced with life's problems.

### **The Key Is to Be Selective About Punishment**

Parents need to be selective about the issues for which they punish their child. Sometimes minor problems can be ignored or worked through by setting up a contract stipulating a specific reward.

Whenever possible, set natural and logical consequences for behavior, so that living with the negative consequences of a poor decision is its own punishment.

### **2.11 Parental roles in education**

School, community, and the home are not isolated but are interconnected with each other and with the world at large. Successful parent involvement programs share several fundamental beliefs about parents:

- Parents want what is best for their children.
- Parents, regardless of their background or circumstances, can be key resources in their children's education.
- All children can learn, and the focus of educators' efforts needs to be on children's success.

- Together, educators, families, and communities can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.
- Parents must be involved in all aspects of their children's education including its governance and decision making.

**Teachers/Nurturers** focus on the parent's involvement with children's total development. Parents provide an appropriate environment that promotes learning and develops the skills and values needed to become physically, psychologically, and emotionally healthy adults.

**Communicators/Advisors** establish effective, two-way communication between the home and school. Parents also maintain open communication with their children in order to counsel them on personal and educational issues.

**Supporters/Learners** focus on the parents, obtaining skills and knowledge that will assist them with their children's education and social development. Parents can contribute their knowledge and skills to the school to enrich the curriculum and support classroom and school projects.

**Collaborators/Decision-Makers** focus on parent participation with school staff and educators to help make decisions, solve problems, and develop policies.

## **2.12 Parents' and teachers' wishes**

1. Build students' self-esteem by using praise generously and avoiding ridicule and negative public criticism.
2. Get to know each child's needs, interests, and special talents, as well as the way each child learns best.
3. Communicate often and openly with parents, contacting them early about academic or behavioral problems, being candid rather than defensive when discussing these problems.
4. Regularly assign homework that helps children learn and advise parents on working with their children on this homework.
5. Set high academic standards, expecting all students to learn and helping them to do so.
6. Care about children, since children learn best when taught by warm, friendly, caring, and enthusiastic teachers.
7. Treat all children fairly and do not play favorites.
8. Enforce a positive discipline code based on clear and fair rules that are established and fully explained at the beginning of the school year— reinforcing positive behavior as well as punishing negative behavior
9. Be aware of students' different learning styles and vary teaching methods to help each child achieve success.

10. Encourage parent participation by reaching out and involving them in their children's education.
  1. Be involved in their children's education. Parent involvement helps students learn and makes teachers' jobs easier.
  2. Provide resources at home for reading and learning. Parents need to have books and magazines for their children and read with their children each day.
  3. Set a good example. Parents need to demonstrate that they believe reading is enjoyable and useful.
  4. Encourage children to do their best in school. Children need to be guided to set obtainable goals.
  5. Confirm that academics are of primary concern, followed by their children's preparation for the adult job and involvement in athletics and other extracurricular activities.
  6. Support school rules and goals. Parents should take care not to undermine school rules, discipline, or goals.
  7. Use pressure positively. Parents need to encourage children while being careful not to apply too much pressure by setting unrealistic goals or by involving their children in too many activities.
  8. Call teachers as soon as a problem becomes apparent, so that prompt action can be taken.

9. Exercise parental responsibility, not expecting the school or teachers to take over this job. For example, teaching basic discipline is a parental rather than a school responsibility.
  
10. Understand that alcohol use and excessive partying are problems as serious as drug abuse. All take a serious toll on a student's health and classroom performance.

## Unit 3: Coping with the emotionally disturbed child

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- 3.1 Learning Objectives
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- 3.6 Communicating with the difficult child
- 3.7 Use of discipline with the problem child
- 3.8 Activities

### 3.0 Overview

Children have certain emotional and psychological needs which, if not met, may result in adjustment and behavioral problems. There are several factors leading to aggressive behaviour in a child. In this unit, the emotionally disturbed child, what his needs are and how to meet them will be discussed. The measures parents and caregivers can adopt in order to deal with aggressive behavior in a child will then be examined.

### 3.1 Learning objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Identify the basic emotional and psychological needs of the child
2. Understand the effects of deprivation of these needs on the child.

3. Identify the causes underlying aggressive behaviour in a child.
4. Understand how to communicate and discipline the difficult child.

### **3.2 The needs of children**

A child's development involves lots of psychological conflicts. To a certain extent these conflicts are resolved if they are grown up in an environment conducive to their development and if their basic needs are met. If the needs are not met they are likely to become highly aggressive or withdrawn children. For e.g. a child whose emotional needs are not met is likely to express his distress via symptoms such as psychosomatic complaints, regression in early childhood behaviours [bedwetting, wanting to be bottle fed etc]

Often parents do not realize the psychological troubles their children are facing and in ignorance they can even dramatize the situation. The best approach to adopt in such situation is to observe the child and try to figure out what needs of the child are not being met

Following are needs, which, if not met, may result in children presenting with difficult behavior:

#### **1. The need to have a clear picture of the world**

A child needs to feel that he has certain people in his life who will always be there. Certain events must always occur; certain rules must

always apply. He must know where he stands in relation to everything around him. He needs to be able to find his way.

## **2. The need to have an objective in life**

A child needs to have a level of expectation to work to. He needs to know that there are certain rules that are beyond him, that cannot be questioned. He needs to sense that there are certain objectives for him to achieve.

## **3. The need to feel part of things**

A child needs to experience a sense of relatedness. He needs to be able to see himself as part of a whole; he needs to sense that he is of value to others, that he is part of a network of relationships, a network that gives him a sense of his identity. He needs to belong

## **4. The need for stimulation**

A child needs stimulation. This will help to develop his language and his capacity for abstract thought. It will also help him to develop his inner controls. Severe boredom can lead to severe problems: children have known to mutilate themselves or even kill others in an attempt to feel a sense of their existence

## **5. The need for a sense of rootedness**

A child needs to bond with his mother. This happens in the very early stages of childhood and provides an anchorpoint for future development. With this foundation he can become a separate person with a sense of independence, free will and self control. If the bonding does not take place with the mother or surrogate mother or another significant person he may later attempt to form a similar relationship with others and either try to control them[sadism] or be controlled by

them[masochism].He may become excessively fond of himself or have a craving to destroy

## **6. The need for love**

The sense of love, of unconditional acceptance, is built into the bonding process with a child's mother. It can also be achieved in a slightly different form with others. If a child is deprived of this it may lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self esteem. These are some of the basic needs of a child which if not met will result in aggressive behaviour.

### **3.3 The importance of play**

The importance of play in a child's life cannot be denied. It is during play that a child first begins his attempt to cope with his world. He builds up fantasies and gradually tries to manage the world around him. Via play he explores his feelings and vent out his anxieties; he practices hypothetical situations and events in order to control outcomes. Via this he practices his social skills. His capacity to use language and think symbolically is developed through play and if this ability is restricted his capacity to effectively communicate will be limited and this may well lead to frustration and aggressive behaviour

The bond between mother and child gradually weakens during play and facilitates the process of separation. During this process he uses objects [toys etc] as support with which he identifies. As he grows up he let go of it and develops interpersonal relationships with others.

Often parents feel that by allowing children to have these transitional objects they are hampering their development. They often take away these objects from them prematurely [objects like their favourite blanket or teddies they want to carry everywhere with them]. Parents should realize that denying the child this support can cause problems, he will himself discard it as and when he is ready. Play is an essential part of development.

When thinking of activities for the aggressive child parents should assess his needs and provide the right kind of toys and games for him. A game that will have a stabilizing effect should be chosen.

### **3.4 The aggressive child**

Besides the above it has also been observed that children growing in an atmosphere of violence resort to aggressive behavior. Such children find it difficult to adjust to the pattern of behaviour expected in the school or community .They act in the only way they know how: they are aggressive, hostile and demand attention in an exhaustive way. They are unsettled and unhappy. They are restless and unable to concentrate. They will attack you physically or verbally if you threaten them in any way.

When a child feels threatened he may react with physical aggression. Should he be able to control this he may:

1. Use verbal aggression.
2. Lie to suit his purpose.

3. Avoid what he does not want to hear.
4. Behave in a bizarre manner.

These are his defense mechanisms which he uses to protect himself against the world.

The aggressive child may appear to be boastful or arrogant and self confident. However this display in fact indicates a lack of self esteem. The fragile child has a poor opinion of himself. He is unable to cope with aggressive behaviour, hates new experiences, and is always looking for reassurances. The defense mechanisms he uses such as being boastful and arrogant etc helps him to cope with this situation and maintain a consistent self image.

Tantrum as discussed in the previous unit is normal behaviour amongst toddlers. However it is a source of concern amongst highly aggressive children. In these instances the aggression surfacing is an "angry aggression" where the child is emotionally aroused and in extreme circumstances aggressive children react in such a way in an attempt to reaffirm their existence. The reaction of others towards his conduct reinforces his behavior and finally he begins to adopt this behaviour, i.e hurting others as a pleasurable experience of interaction. For them this is the only way in which they can communicate with others.

A child will react aggressively when:

- He feels that his objectives are being thwarted
- He or his friends are being criticized

- He finds himself in an unjust situation or when someone has been unfair to him.

This behaviour is common in all children but it persists in those who are vulnerable.

Parents or caregivers should encourage children to express their anger in an acceptable way. Otherwise their frustration will give rise to angry outburst. In many cases it is observed that parents or caregivers tend to over control children's anger rather than teaching them alternate ways to express it .One should teach a child how to express his thoughts and how to negotiate in order to avoid feelings of frustration and angry outburst. In the case of the aggressive child parents /caregivers should make sure that they regularly talk to their child, clarify objectives for both parties [parent and the child] and ensure that he does not interpret what you say as criticism

A child often begins to display aggressive behaviour when he starts school. It may be due to the teacher's attitude towards him; that he is being unfair towards him and giving more attention to others and ignoring him or he may be experiencing learning difficulties and feel inadequate when he can't be at par with his peers in this area, or he may be having difficulty coping with his siblings. Vulnerable children are very sensitive to any stresses occurring in the family dynamics.

The working mother who has to leave her child for work should try to spend as much time as possible with him ,especially during his early years. The more time she spends with him and provides these feelings

of security the more able he will be to move towards independence. However a great deal of aggression is promoted in children when parents invest too heavily in them; in such instances the separation process is thwarted. Careful consideration should be given by parents in this position for too much indulgence may do more harm than good and the child in the long run will be unable to learn how to delay gratification of needs.

Attending playgroup or nurseries is quite helpful for the aggressive child. By being in group situation amongst children his own age he learns how to negotiate and interact with others. The child's ability to cope with his aggression in a pro-social way under the supervision of care givers will be considerably developed. Aggressive children may also be bored and seek stimulation. Such an environment will provide him the opportunity to be stimulated to the level he needs.

Parents should remember that exposing an aggressive child to aggressive activities, aggressive stories, aggressive films and competitive games will intensify his aggression. Children always tend to imitate behaviour and aggressive children who are exposed to aggressive films and scenes on TV become more aggressive. Watching scenes of aggression and violence repeatedly diminishes the child's inhibition and they begin to accept and adopt violent solutions to problems

## **Hyperactive children**

Many aggressive children are described as hyperactive. Symptoms most common in these cases are: restlessness, over activity, excitability and disruptiveness. These children may also be impulsive and aggressive. In such cases often psychotherapy and medical treatment are sought

Some of the causes of aggression amongst children are linked with parents' attitude towards their child. Often parents have high expectations from their children in terms of academic achievement and impose rigid rules on them. Children who feel they have to be perfect in order to meet their parents expectations may feel that they can never be good enough. In such situations the child may adopt the following attitude:

- Competitiveness,
- Blaming others,
- Lying,
- Nervousness,
- Bullying, etc.

### **3.5 Effects of domestic violence**

One of the causes of aggression amongst children is living in an atmosphere of violence at home. Children ,witness to or victims of domestic violence, often display aggressive patterns of behavior.

Infants who witness spousal violence often display poor health, poor sleeping habits and excessive screaming. Their basic needs for bonding with their mother may not be satisfied; the mother who lives in

constant anxiety because of her husband's threatening behavior may not be able to satisfy the demands of an infant and thus unable to meet his emotional needs. This "rejection" would be felt by the child and may have long term effects. Importance of emotions for communication is learned early in the first year of life.

Infants are aware of negative emotions in others and mirror these in their own responses.

By the second year of life children learn to relate causes to emotional expressions. Expression of anger causes distress in children. Repeated exposure to angry exchange between parents increase stress reactions in children and this in turn threatens children's sense of security.

By the age of 3 children can make the difference between warmth and anger. Exposure to aggressive adult interaction leads to greater displays of distress which is expressed in aggressive behavior with their peers. Behavioral problems that are common in these situations are: frequent illness, withdrawal, low self esteem, hitting, biting or other forms of aggressive behavior. Girls tend to be more passive, clinging and overly anxious.

Preschoolers show negative emotions during angry interactions between adults and feel sad and later develop somatic symptoms. Often they want to intervene in such situation but are unable to do so which in turn make them feel sad. These children also display high level of anxiety and distress and express their feelings in an aggressive manner. Children within this age range interpret most events in relation to his

self. They attribute the cause of anger to themselves. Their cognitive structure is limited hence they are unable to interpret the situation in their right perspective. Feelings of guilt and self blame are quite common. There is also a tendency to associate their feelings with their mother and as the mother's feeling of distress or anxiety arise so does their own. Social-cognitive competence of these children is also affected to a certain extent. They become socially withdrawn and unwilling to participate in activities with their peers

School age children who are witness to domestic violence between their parents quickly learn that violence is the right way to resolve conflicts in relationships. At this age children take their parents as their role model. Like preschoolers they also tend to feel themselves to be partly responsible for the conflicts in the family and would also experience high degree of anxiety. Such children also have difficulty in concentration and poor academic performance. Aggression and depression are quite common amongst this age group. Often they would also resort to "conflict detouring" responses in order to cope with such situations ; they develop symptoms such as chest pain, nausea etc so as to draw attention to themselves hence diverting the parents' attention from their own conflict.

### **3.6 Communicating with the difficult child**

Aggressive children experience a lot of frustration due to their inability to communicate effectively. Their emotional fragility distorts their perception of the world: innocent comments may be interpreted as

criticism or may provoke defensive reaction .It is important to understand their verbal aggression and not interpret it as an attack. It should be seen as a sign of vulnerability .One of the most effective techniques that parents can use with these children is simply to speak clearly to the child.

Express yourself clearly and choose the right time to speak to him. If he is calm he will be more receptive. Secondly parent should speak slowly and in a non threatening manner and encourage the child to express himself; verbalizing his thoughts is a necessary part in forming his identity. He cannot choose to express himself verbally. Hence he should be allowed to use other medium of communication such as drawings, acting, modeling etc Then, in the midst of activity he may be encouraged to describe what he is doing and express his thoughts.

Aggressive children when aroused can use language to a devastating effect. The degree of hostility in their language indicates how fragile they are. When the aggressive child starts talking about his feelings parents/caregivers should listen and not try to promote introspection. They must be allowed to go at their own pace.

Parents can help them develop negotiating skills.They need to be told how to ask for things they want. Parents can do this by providing role playing situations. Because of his vulnerability the child reacts with excessive defense mechanism and in the process adopts aggressive patterns of behavior .He is then labeled as bully by others. Learning to negotiate is learning how to cope with his aggression

### **3.7 Use of discipline with the problem child**

Most children who display difficult behavior have not had an appropriate measure of external control. Children need the security of having someone else in charge. The emotionally disturbed child needs it all the more.

Discipline is important for all children since it connotes boundaries for behavior. For the vulnerable child discipline enables him to grow within its safety. Children with conduct problem perceive their parents as unable to control their behaviour. There is no proper guidance on how to behave. Parents tend to avoid any confrontation and in face of problems they may shout but would not bother to apply any sanctions. This style of discipline is perceived as rejection by the child and is ineffective. Discipline is achieved in families that have shared positive experiences but this is lacking in families with problem children.

Discipline is important but one has to know how to implement it. If too much control is applied and parents refuse to listen to what the child has to say, the child may develop low self esteem and social withdrawal. Problems such as lying and stealing may also occur. If parents are permissive and too indulgent the child will develop a lack of impulse control and aggressive behaviors. If parents are indifferent to the child's conduct they are reinforcing aggressive behavior in the latter and promoting low self esteem and inability for impulse control.

However if parents adopt style where there is firm and clear rule setting and positive interaction with the child they can encourage the development of a sense of responsibility within the child and diminish his aggressive tendencies ;his self esteem will be enhanced if he knows that he has an important role to play in decision making.

## Unit 4: Parent- Adolescent Relationship

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### **4.0 Overview**

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood .

The adolescent experiences physical, emotional, biological and psychological changes to which he/she has to adjust. The first part of

this unit will describe adolescence as a stage of development; discuss the challenges and difficulties experienced by adolescents. Then, the role of parents and the right approach to be adopted in order to deal with issues arising during this period of development will be discussed.

#### **4.1 Learning objectives**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Understand the adolescent's emotional, social, moral and psychological development.
2. understand the approaches parents can adopt to handle such conflicts.
3. Identify the different theories of violence and aggression amongst adolescent.
4. Understand the impact a divorce or separation may have on the child and the approaches to adopt in such situations.

#### **4.2 Adolescence as a stage of development**

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood. It is a period during which individual becomes more sensitive to the cultural atmosphere that surrounds him. During this stage the individual becomes aware of most of the forces and institutions that shape his adult life. Adolescence is described as a period of great complexity that marks a vital stage in human development.

The adolescent experiences physical, emotional, biological and psychological changes to which he/she has to adjust. It is during this period that the adolescent arrives at a sexual maturity. This period of adjustment is marked by increased reactivity and abrupt shifts in mood.

Adolescence is known as a period of emotional turbulence and instability mainly because of the surging sexual development and identity. During this stage various elements of personality get integrated, working towards the development of a sense of individuality. Adolescents are described as egoistic. However in later life adolescents are capable of forming the most passionate love relations and devotion.

Adolescence, during this stage, are no longer viewed as children but nonetheless are considered to be too immature to be treated as adults. In this period youth are expected to reach physical, mental and emotional maturity.

Adolescents are faced with a number of challenges: they must let go of the values and beliefs they had as young children; traumas experienced in childhood are relived and mastered; they must accept their personal history and create a firm sense of their sexuality which will lead towards full autonomy and stability. As their past behavior and future aspirations get integrated, a greater degree of inconsistency is noticed amongst adolescents. Their beliefs and values will be intense and may suddenly fade; new values will replace previous ones. There may be occasions where he would regress into childhood mannerisms and behavior. He will experiment with relationships in order to clarify his sexual identity.

#### **4. 3 Cognitive development**

At this age adolescents are said to have entered the formal operational stage. This permits adolescents to reason beyond a world of concrete reality to a world of possibilities and to operate logically on symbols and

information that do not necessarily refer to objects and events in the real world. Adolescents can focus on verbal assertions and evaluate their logical validity without making reference to real-world circumstances. In contrast, concrete operational children can evaluate the logic of statements by considering them against concrete evidence only."

#### **4.4 Identity formation and self-appraisal**

Erickson describes adolescence as a crucial period for identity formation. The most remarkable characteristic of adolescence is change. The change is physiological psychological and sociological.

The adolescent is heavily involved in self-appraisal. He appraises himself in relation to his peers. He is very sensitive regarding his physical appearance. During adolescence many physiological changes take place and boys welcome these changes because for them these are signs that they are entering manhood. Those who mature early are more confident and better natured; those who do not, show a lack of self-confidence and a degree of anxiety as sexual identity is linked with physical maturation. During this process girls tend to show more anxiety and self-consciousness regarding their physical change [their height and weight etc]

Hormonal changes resulting in oily skin, pimples and acne is another cause of worry. Boys and girls who are obese experience difficulty in relating to their peers

The adolescent is very much concerned about his personality traits; he compares himself and his peers on the ability for academic achievement. Physical appearance [such as dressing up] become an important issue on which he appraises himself and others. Developing social skills is very important to him.

If the adolescent feels that in relation to his peers he is on the same footing, then his sense of identity will be positively enhanced; if he doesn't then he must have the capacity to accept this otherwise his behavior will change considerably as his defense mechanism surges. There is a risk that he assumes a negative identity and a negative approach to life.

#### **4.5 Role confusion**

Adolescents, often experience role confusion. Society does not accept them as men and women and often treat them as children who have to be directed and commanded. Adolescents are sensitive to the fact that they differ from children but are considered too immature to be treated as adults. Thus the intense conflict between the attitudes, values and ideologies of adolescents and adults is one of the reasons why adolescents experience much confusion in defining their roles, which in turn leads to emotional instability.

As puberty approaches attitudes towards people change. The adolescent who is able to resolve his identity crisis will be able to test a new identity in which he has confidence. Those who are unsuccessful in this attempt become ego diffused. As one grows up there is a kind of

role differentiation which one learns. The roles are not so well defined. The child will experience role confusion and role diffusion, that is, he is unable to decide about the kind of person he /she wants to be. Social circumstances and family upbringing has a major influence in fashioning the youth's sense of personal identity. If somehow he is not able to attain this it could lead to a sense of not being able to know "what one is" or "where one belongs" .Such instability could lead to delinquencies. A number of mal-adjustive behavior patterns can be seen in such situation that can lead to psychopathology in their adult's life if not detected and treated early.

#### **4.6 Moral development**

During this stage adolescent are said to have reached the conventional level [age 9-adolescence] in moral development. At this level children begin to understand what parents, teachers etc expect of them. For them morality is living up to these expectations.

In general adolescents:

1. Are essentially idealistic; have a strong sense of fairness in human relationships.
2. Experience thoughts and feelings of love, awe and wonder related to their expanding intellectual and emotional awareness.
3. Ask large, unanswerable questions about the meaning of life; do not expect absolute answers, but are turned off by trivial adult responses.
4. Are reflective, analytical, and introspective about their thoughts and feelings.

5. Confront hard moral and ethical questions with which they are unprepared to cope.

The basic nature of the society within which they find themselves causes many conflicts. What the youth learn from the books and from adults about what is good or bad and what should be accomplished is full of contradictions. He often finds himself surrounded by adults who in most circumstances often do not practice what they preach. Such conflicting experiences may lead to alienation from the society and confusion as he tries to integrate new values and ideologies.

#### **4.7 Adjustment problems**

The most important aspect of adolescent adjustment concerns their emotional problems. Puberty brings marked physical changes and these in turn have psychological effects on the young person. The adolescent experiences a certain degree of awkwardness and self-consciousness. Reaching the period of formal operational thought, adolescents are now able to think about abstract issues and hypothetical situations. They often reflect on how they are perceived by others and have problems adjusting to their changing physical appearance. Adolescents often contemplate how their appearance or behavior would seem to an 'imaginary' audience of others. They often become bound up or obsessed with their own feelings, constructing imaginary stories of their own life that contains fantasies. This often leads to an inability to differentiate their own feelings about themselves from that of others.

The impact of this period of transition varies from individual to individual. The following points should be taken into consideration by parents when dealing with their youngsters

1. The adolescent will gradually learn to fit into personal and social roles, which suits his self-concept as well as his concept of others.
2. The adolescent seeks an individual status; he resents parental authority and their close supervision of his activities.
3. The adolescent seeks recognition from his classmates and tries hard to conform to the standards of his peers.
4. The increased heterosexual interest amongst the adolescents may often lead to emotional conflicts
5. The Adolescent will constantly evaluate the value system.

Adolescence is a period of conflict between immature idealism and reality.

These points indicate the areas in which adolescent experiences intense anxiety. Sometimes adolescents may exhibit alienation, distrust, pessimism, meaninglessness, and powerlessness. Often this leads to a state of alienation from the objective world. The adolescent ,due to this feeling of alienation ,would often feel, unwanted, uncared for and unvalued.

It could, under certain circumstances, often lead to deviant patterns of behavior. Those adolescents who withdraw into their private worlds feel extremely lonely and are unable to form any intimacy with those surrounding them. Feelings of distrust and pessimism result in a sense of lack of attachment to society.

These extreme symptoms arise when he is experiencing gross uncertainties in his life.

Alienated teenagers continue to live in their childhood world, and gradually drift into delinquency. Such degree of alienation becomes a matter of concern when its intensity is self-destructive

#### **4.8 Adolescence and aggressiveness**

A child continually develops towards independence. During adolescence he is subjected to a great deal of stress in his quest for independence. It is a time of increased tension between parents and their children.

Adults should acknowledge the freedom to which the adolescent is aspiring:

1. He is reaching for the freedom to be himself. Now he wishes to determine his own destiny and not be guided and controlled by adults anymore;
2. He is reaching for the freedom to be independent and creative in his thought processes. He no longer wishes to accept someone else's values.
3. He wants the freedom to pray or not to pray, to be able to retreat when necessary. He wants to determine when he will play and when he will work.

Should these basic needs not be met then the adolescent is likely to become hostile and aggressive –the entire more so if he has been aggressive from an early age.

When an aggressive child reaches his teenage years his aggression appears to intensify. Between the age of ten and sixteen years there is

a surge in the intensity of the emotions. There is also a significant level of disturbance in the way young people appraise themselves. If one is to avoid conflicting situations one must perceive the adolescent as someone who needs help rather than as an awkward personality; one must try to understand his vulnerability. If one is to achieve success with the adolescent then one should reframe his opinion of the adolescent and alter his conception of his position .This will change our approach while dealing with the adolescent.

During childhood the rules and regulations governing life are usually quite clear. A child knows where he belongs. He knows who are the significant people in his life and who is in charge and his time is structured by them. In adolescence the boundaries disappear, the young adult senses a need to organize time himself. His life is full of possibilities and uncertainties. He floats between a strong sense of belonging to the child's world and the knowledge that he does not fully belong to the adult group. We therefore see behavior patterns change during adolescence. For the more vulnerable child the natural move towards independence will be extremely difficult; he cannot easily cope with change and faces lots of confusion and frustration if he fails in his attempt to assert himself and this will lead to intense episodes of aggression, as he feels thwarted in his attempt to assert himself. Adolescents wish to belong and at the same time there is the need to separate. They need the recognition and acceptance of society and at the same time they need to assert their individuality.

At this time a young adult is deciding whether he should make a complete break with his past and become somebody different or whether he should struggle to integrate his past with his future self. If he decides on the latter course he will achieve a positive identity. If he chooses to cling to his past he will achieve a negative identity and will have difficulty in establishing strong ties with significant people in his life.

During adolescence we therefore see teenagers identifying with a variety of models in relation to their dress, manner, relationships and attitudes. Most adolescents make some kind of break with their past and retain a lot from it for the future. A complete break would not enable them to survive and if they made no break at all they would remain locked in childhood. The break is necessary; how the break is made is important and this will determine the personality and identity of the adolescent.

For the vulnerable child this process is extremely difficult. He needs to belong and any period of change during which he might find himself on his own will result in aggression.

Special attention needs to be given in such situations; he should be integrated in a variety of group settings from an early age which can provide a network of supportive people to whom he can attach himself as he begins to make this transition.

Because of their behavior towards others parents often keep their aggressive children at home. This tendency should be avoided. They need to mix as much as possible, if they are to learn how to relate to others and achieve some kind of identity in adolescence.

During adolescence vulnerable children have an increased awareness of the gap between all aspects of their performance and those of their peers. The comparison of attributes has already established a truly negative effect on them. One way to prevent this is project to all children from the beginning itself that rather than being the same as others we should appreciate our differences; that we are here to improve our own performance and not just to compete.

Aggressive children have always found relationships very difficult and when during adolescence he begins to feel the strong need to relate to his peers, he will become frustrated. Because of his incapacity to form relationships he will be unable to sense his sexual identity. Problems with female relationships will reinforce this lack of sexual identity and this will lead to aggressive behavior.

Adolescence can also be marked by intergenerational conflicts arising from the generation gap. One of the main causes for intergeneration conflicts is the incorrect perceptions that adolescents and adults have of each other. The idealism of young people is often seen by adults as a lack of realism. Adults portray envy for the youngsters' physical prowess and youngsters experience resentment against the adults for the condition of the world they find themselves in. The situation is worsened by the lack of proper communication between them. Anxiety and tension caused by such other factors could be reduced by providing suitable assistance.

The degree of tension between the generations at this time is related to the path an adolescent may take when he is seeking his individual self

.He may decide to reject his past and make a complete break because of the tension arising between him and his parents. He may show ambivalence, unable to make a decision and create an interminable relationship based on stress. Alternately he may make a commitment one way or the other without much fuss.

The tendency is for adults to criticize him heavily for taking any of these steps. One should realize that these attempts are beyond his conscious control and he is not to be blamed for that. Adults resent it if he rejects his past including them and the way they have raised him; they cannot accept it when he is unable to resolve issues and when he is indecisive about everything. They worry about him if he carries on with no signs of protest and reject him because he is so weak and compliant.

The aggressive, difficult child is rejected by most adults and in adolescence he will be rejected even further as responsibility for him becomes unbearable. Since babyhood he has reacted very badly to any form of criticism; when this intensifies during adolescence, which is the second phase of separation, the tension often results in forced physical separation from his past .This will heighten his anxiety level and result in more aggression.

The aggressive adolescent who turns his aggression inwards and is liable to self mutilate will be more at risk during this period. He may attempt suicide in an effort to resolve the conflict or he may develop a psychotic condition in which his world becomes tolerable.

A great deal of tension could be allayed if parents acknowledged and understood the changing processes involved in adolescence. They have to realize that whenever an individual act he/she does so in the role of

a child, an adult or a parent. Very often children are expected to behave like adults; adults should realize that children are not at the same stage of development; their cognitive, social and emotional maturity is not the same as an adult's.

On the other hand adults will often unconsciously assume the role of a parent when they are talking to a young adult and treat him like a child. Adolescents should be respected for what they are; adults who are just beginning to learn and are making a lot of necessary mistakes. Adults should appreciate the need for a generation gap and the part they play in it. Understanding what a young adult may be feeling as he toils his path towards independence can help facilitate this process of transition.

The incidence of self injury, another form of aggression, rises sharply during adolescence particularly around the age of 14, and is more common amongst girls than boys. According to Erickson, one of the main reasons for this difference is that boys tend more towards outer aggression than inner aggression [that is making aggressive attacks on other people than self destructive attempts].

The most common form of self-injury is cutting the wrists, arms and sometimes, the stomach and face. Often the cuts are just superficial, inflicted with a piece of broken glass rather than a blade or other dangerous weapons. But they are still very frightening for parents, and some may tend to attribute this to some severe illness. However this is not the case in such situations. Usually self injury can be interpreted as an act of defiance or an expression of a need for help in trying to achieve independence. According to Dr Erickson Adolescents in general

often seem to have a disregard for their bodies which explains their attempt for self mutilation. Tattooing is also an example of self mutilation. For the adolescent, it is a means of impressing the peer group as an act of bravery, because the process is known to be painful.

In some countries suicide has shown to be the third most common cause of death after accidents and malignant disease amongst adolescents between the age of 15 and 19. The usual causes that lead young people to attempt suicide are conflicts with their parents, loneliness and broken romances. Some adolescent have a real desire for death and carefully plan it. More often however, those who attempt suicide wish to draw attention to their sufferings .It is seen as a cry for help. They do not really intend to cause their own death but to be rescued from it at the last minute.

Threats of suicide and suicide attempts should always be treated seriously

#### **4.9 Home conflicts**

However hard parents struggle to do what is best for their troubled teenager, there may come a point when their willingness to help gives way to despair and frustration. In order to help their child effectively parents themselves need support and guidance.

In all families a certain amount of conflict is normal, and inevitable. Indeed if a teenager is passive then this is something to be concerned about.

Family conflict in the home during the teenage years centers primarily on the everyday concerns such as hairstyles, dress, and staying out late at night and untidiness. Such conflict, however, can become serious if they are expressions of severe behavioral difficulties.

Conflicts become easier to resolve if there is communication between the teenager and his parents where there are frequent discussions of ideas and sharing of opinions etc. The real problems occur when relationships are so strained that confidence is lost and communication reduced to monosyllables.

As adolescents become independent from their parents they may spend more time with peers and turn to peers more for social support and identity. There is a transition from parent orientation to peer orientation during this period. Themes of anxiety and fears of rejection by friends are most common at this age.

The nature of an adolescent's social relationship with his/her parents is quite different from that with peers. Through childhood, the parental relationship is one of unilateral authority in which parents try to extend an already constructed set of knowledge and attitudes to their children. Friendship on the hand is a mutually reciprocal relationship in which different opinions may be expressed and new ideas discussed. Parent-child relations during adolescence do not become as truly reciprocal as peer relationships which explain to a certain extent the adolescent's drifting more and more towards his peers for advice and social support.

Some form of discipline in the home is necessary for both young children and adolescents. However in the case of the latter discipline is a great deal more difficult to apply. Children as discussed in unit 2 gain security from boundaries without which they feel lost and unprotected; Same is the case with the adolescent, Even though the latter will make attempts to climb the boundaries testing it for consistency, they gain security from the reassurance that it is there. Children who say 'my parents let me do exactly what I like' are really saying 'my parents don't care what I do'.

Properly applied, a wide range of disciplinary techniques seems to be reasonably effective. It is to be noted though that the consistency and efficiency of the discipline and the context within which discipline takes place are relevant. Inconsistent or haphazard discipline is more likely to lead to conduct disorders and delinquencies. In such cases there is no clear guidance to the child as to what behavior is expected of him. There is a need for all parents to set limits' beyond which the children should not go' and parents should go try their level best to maintain those limits.

Discipline is equally necessary in adolescence and without it the teenager will not develop a sense of moral responsibility, respect for the rights of others or confidence in himself.

Parenting style has to be in harmony with the parent's personality, and what works for one parent may not work for another. Parents cannot be expected to behave in unnatural or uncomfortable ways. The style of discipline must flow naturally. It is also unrealistic to think that both parents are going to have the same style. Consistency does not mean

that their methods are alike. It means that both parents act in keeping with their own personalities and that they use techniques they are comfortable with. For discipline to work smoothly each parent should accept the viewpoint and opinion of the other.

The influence that parents retain over adolescents may vary with the kind of parenting style adopted. Studies have shown that with young children different styles of parenting have different outcomes for moral development. Studies have identified three styles of parental authority that parents normally adopt:

1. 'Permissive' where parents allow adolescents unlimited freedom;
2. 'Autocratic' where parents are directive with their adolescents, telling them what to do and tend to use corporal punishment as a means of discipline;
3. 'Democratic' where parents discuss issues with adolescents and involve them in decision making.

A democratic style of authority fosters good relationships with parents and greater independence and confidence in self direction .It also increases the likelihood of choosing friends approved by parents. Rebellious adolescents are more likely to come either from highly permissive or highly autocratic family backgrounds. Parents are advised not to be over strict with their adolescents. Use of threats or attempt to dominate is also discouraged. An authoritarian style of control produces more hostility, aggressiveness and rebelliousness. It also destroys communication.

Cases of filial aggression and violence often occur in families; however only some cases are reported officially. There are many reasons explaining such behaviours on the part of the adolescent .A case of physical assault on a parent is described in the case study listed below  
If parents are physically abused by their teenager, it should be considered as a serious matter. Professional help should be sought immediately in order to prevent the situation from aggravating.

Teenagers often threaten to run away from home and in some circumstances they actually do so. There are various reasons why teenagers indulge in such acts. One of them may be the quest for adventure; other reasons may be attributed to rifts with parents or aspirations for independence etc.

As the child transits into adolescence, his world becomes less public. He begins to spend more time away from home. He builds a private life of his own and is quite reticent to share much of it with his parents. If he is asked, on returning home late, 'where have you been?' he may reply, 'I've missed the bus'. This statement may be true or entirely false. But it doesn't necessarily mean that he has been in trouble. Perhaps he is lying to protect his privacy even though his parents want to know his whereabouts not out of curiosity but rather out of concern and to be assured of his safety. Parents are normally anxious to protect their

teenagers. Sadly though, the latter often see it as an attempt to peep into their private world.

However, gradually a teenager learns to tell his parents just enough to make them at least aware of his activities. As long as parents have an idea what they are up to and so long it is safe for them, they should not insist on details. If parents do so, they may become defensive and start lying in order to avoid such situations.

Parents should try to avoid direct and awkward questions and show interest and trust rather than curiosity and suspicion. In this way, their teenagers will start confiding in them gradually.

Parents should note though, that excessive lying is not normal. When it becomes compulsive teenagers lose the sense of reality and often develop wild fantasies about their lives or their families. In such cases parents are advised to consider professional help.

The way teenagers dress, behave or wear their hair symbolizes the way they feel and the more extreme the appearance, the more likelihood there is of a confused, insecure individual who suffers from low self esteem. Teenagers use a language of externals to display an image that best expresses their feelings, and their enthusiasm at a particular moment in their lives and that disguises the lack of self-confidence they feel. The disguise is also apparent in their gestures and language.

Parents should rest assured however that even the most extreme and bizarre appearance or behavior is subject to rapid change.

Parents will stop worrying if they learn to tolerate the styles and recognize the statements underneath the appearances.

TV viewing becomes a source of concern for parents when their teens start dedicating most of their time to it. Another area of concern is the daily doses of violence and sex they are exposed to on the screen .Television can actually be harmful to both children and young adults. Studies have demonstrated that there is connection between the amount of TV viewing by adolescent boys and the extent of their aggressive behavior.

Internet surfing has also become a source of worry for parents. Children and adolescents are exposed to all kinds of information on the Internet including violent games and pornographic scenes. They can also become easy target for those looking to abuse children [e.g. child prostitution]. Parents should supervise their children when surfing the Internet so as to better control what sort of information they are exposed to.

Parents should take their adolescents' reactions to broken romances seriously. Some adolescents are unable to cope with the emotional turmoil and feelings of desolation that can accompany a broken romance. In some cases it can lead to intense anxiety or depression that may result in suicide attempts. Professional counseling should be sought in such situations to help the adolescents sail through this crisis.

#### **4.10 Special Problems**

There are certain family situations that tend to make the adolescent more vulnerable-divorce, the stepparent relationship, death, serious illness and change of environment for example; however it should also be noted that problems arising during adolescence are not unique to children in broken homes, nor does divorce or single parenthood necessarily always create the difficulties. Children are often adversely affected by change which can lead to traumatic consequences in the child's behavior. In many situations parental and marital conflicts lead to alienation from parents and the impact of such conflicts is more influential during the early years.

By helping parents gain a better understanding of themselves and their own personalities much harmony could be created and their children could be protected from harm to a certain extent.

### **The effects of divorce**

One of the most immediate effects of divorce is isolation; the family members become obsessed by the present pain and apprehension for the future. For the spouse it becomes extremely difficult to apply an already tired and anxious mind to everyday demands of children. A mother may suddenly become self absorbed and distant; a usually tolerant and gentle father can suddenly adopt a tyrannical attitude. Often, under great stress, people change and adopt different behavior patterns as a defense.

Amidst all the chaos and havoc that divorce can leave in its wake parents worry and feel intense guilt that their children's lives have been

turned upside down by their actions; they find themselves lacking the necessary mental energy or flexibility to meet with their children's demands.

Teenagers who one day will refuse to communicate with their parents, on the very next day will demand their undivided attention. But parents cannot always give them the necessary reassurance and security they need at such times, because they themselves are so extremely vulnerable. As a result, adolescents, already in the throes of great physical and emotional change, may become so insecure and anxious that instead of moving towards their independence, they cling even more fiercely to the parents. Lack of attention from their parents would be perceived as rejection and the more rejected they feel the more will they attempt to gain the reassurance that they are still loved and cared for.

During the unstable teenage years the anxiety and insecurity felt by the adolescent can lead to serious behavioral problems. In such situations parents are advised to adopt an open approach. Youngsters suffer more when they are kept in the dark concerning the breakup of their parent's marriage. They will be sensitive to the unhappiness surrounding an unstable relationship and they may blame themselves in some way for the break up if the cause of the break up is not explained to them.

Often divorce situation involve courtroom battles over children's custody, where parental motives become distorted by bitterness and

revenge. This further adds to the children's sense of confusion and anxiety.

Divorced parents should work out their differences and work together on behalf of their children so as to meet their emotional and psychological needs

Often in step family situations adolescents find it difficult to adjust; there is resentment as they perceive the stepparent stepping into the role of their biological mother or father. This often become a major cause of conflicts in the family and the adolescent tend to show more clinging attitude towards the parent, demanding more and more attention. And when the parent is unable satisfy his/her demands there are bound to be instances of reproach, resentful attitude and arguments.

Anorexia nervosa is a disorder that arises most often during adolescence and is far more common among girls and young women than boys. It is characterized by extreme dieting-limiting the amount eaten and vomiting to rid the body of food consumed.

Bulimia is a separate but similar disorder. Here self induced starvation alternates with episodes of uncontrollable eating. According to some theories one of the causes for this may be due to the fact that the successful and desirable young adult woman is portrayed in films and advertisements as slim and some young girls and women, in an attempt to achieve this often unrealistic ideal, resort to excessive dieting.

Psychologists and psychiatrists view the disorder as a sign that the adolescent is unable to accept independence and adult responsibility,

particularly sexuality and in this attempt is trying to remain a child. These adolescents regard their lack of physical development and loss of periods as a triumph. In other cases such disorders are viewed as the means by which an insecure girl is able to exert some control over her own life.

Medical help is frequently sought in such cases. Medically controlled feeding may save an anorectic's life in the short term .However since the underlying cause is psychological counseling or psychotherapeutic treatment is needed to effect a cure.

Pregnancy does occur in adolescence. A young girl who is pregnant is often assailed with feelings of apprehension ,anxiety, guilt and isolation. In such situation the adolescent needs a great deal of help in order to overcome such feelings. For the first time perhaps she is faced with a major adult decision of her life and the outcome will be crucial to her .It is important that she is involved in as much of the decision-making as possible.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of sexual abuse cases reported to the authorities. Many such assaults occur within the family and often in step families. Such cases are obscured by physical abuse in many instances and often they go undetected. Fathers or stepfathers often frighten children into doing what they want and

into keeping quiet about it in a number of ways; they often threaten to hurt something the child loves, such as a pet or instill the fear that the mother will leave home or the father will be put in prison.

Sexual abuse most commonly starts when children are quite young but if a child says nothing when the abuse starts it can go on for a very long time. When a child grows to 14 or 15, and starts going out more, a father who is abusing his daughter will try to stop her meeting other children. It is when children start comparing experiences that they realize what has been happening to them till now and the perpetrator wants to repress that at all cost. Children's complaints should always be taken seriously, but if a wife suspects that her husband has been sexually abusing a child, it may take an enormous amount of courage for her to report him to authorities. The risk of ensuing family breakup may frighten her into keeping quiet. However the effect of the abuse on the child could well be more catastrophic than the trauma involved in being removed from the home or the disintegration of the marriage. Parents should realize that children are vulnerable and without defense. They depend on them for all kinds of support. It is the first and foremost duty of all parents to protect their children at all cost.

Children and youngsters can also be victims of sexual abuse by someone outside the family. It is most important for parents to accept the problem and be supportive and encourage the victim to talk about the experience. No blame should be attached to the youngster nor should the parents take blame for the outrage on themselves. Professional counseling is usually necessary in these situations. This will help pave the way towards acceptance.

## **4.11 Coping with stress**

There are much better and fairer ways to reduce your stress. Try some of the following:

- **Talk and listen**

Communication is the key to all good relationships. Unless you ask for what you need, you probably won't get it. Unless you say what you think, you'll end up feeling frustrated.

- **Get organized**

Make lists of things to remember.

- **Plan ahead**

Work out the possible stress points in your day and think about what you can do about them.

- **Take time off**

Make sure you have some time to yourself – every day if possible.

- **Try to relax**

Find ways to help yourself relax. Exercise, peaceful music, a quiet cup of tea alone, some gardening – whatever works for you. Visualize a

beautiful, peaceful scene, or your own idea of paradise. This can help to calm you down.

- **Plan a treat for yourself**

When things really get you down, choose something that makes you feel good – a hot bath, a visit to the shops, a night out with your partner or friends.

- **Congratulate yourself**

If you have coped with something difficult, you have a right to feel proud of it.

- **Look on the bright side**

Concentrate on what you like most about being a parent, and the good times in your life.

- **Remember that stress is catching**

If your children see you getting upset and angry when things don't go right, they will probably react in a similar way in their own lives.

- **Get help ;get enrolled into a stress management programme**

This is a positive, useful step to take – not a sign of weakness.

Remember that you're not the only parent who feels that outside help would be useful. Ring your partner or someone you can talk to. The problem may not seem so bad once you've shared it with another adult.

Also don't assume that just because you're a parent you are the only one capable of meeting your child's needs.

References: Introduction to Psychology by Morgan & King  
Helping the aggressive child

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