Webinar: Growing Together: Understanding and Supporting Early Childhood Development

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DEVELOPMENT 0-3 RESOURCES

Readings/Research

Rutgers comprehensive data base of academic journals

- https://childhood.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/scholarly-journals/.

Readings

- Christakis, E. (2016). The Importance of Being Little: What Young Children Really Need from Grownups. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.
  Engel, S. (2015). *The Hungry Mind: The Origins of Curiosity in Childhood*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
  Medina, J. (2008). *Brain Rules*. Seattle, WA: Pear Press.

Organizations

- CEC –Council for Exceptional Children
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
- DEC – CEC's Division of Early Childhood/Special Education
- Zero to Three
- NAEYC-National Association for the Education of Young Children

Web links

https://www.dec-sped.org/

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/dap

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/infographics/place-matters-what-surrounds-us-shapes-us/

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/

https://www.zerotothree.org/

https://developmentalcascades.org/

https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/the-baby-brain-map-your-guide-to-early-brain-development/

Videos

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resource-library/

Ordinary Moments Video
Shows children involved in various activities within learning environments that support cross domain (holistic) development.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK2qD_nWoNE&ab_channel=BoulderJourneySchool

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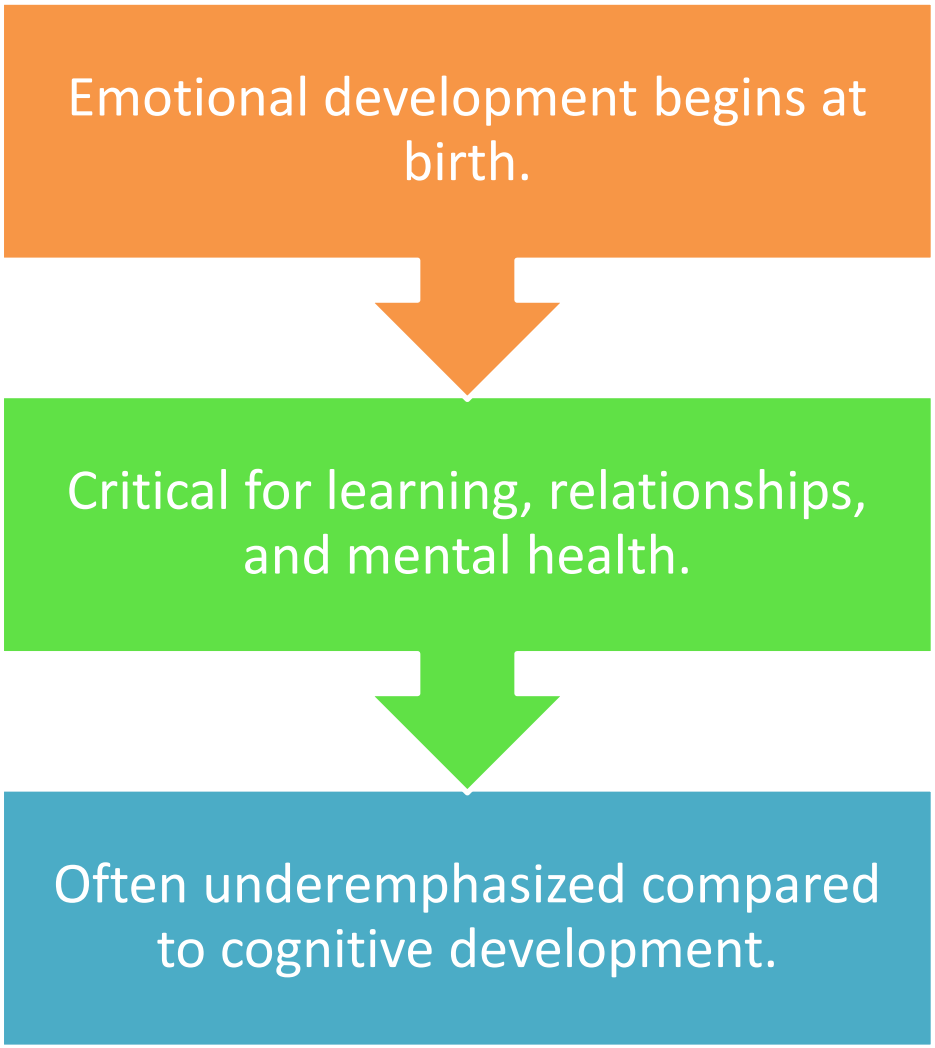
Children's Emotional Development

Built into the Architecture of Their Brains

Harvard Center on the Developing Child

Introduction



Emotions & Brain Architecture

Emotions are biologically embedded in brain circuits.

Brain structures: prefrontal cortex, amygdala, etc.

Emotional experiences shape brain development.

Developmental Stages

Infants: Emotional experiences tied to caregiver interactions.

Toddlers: Begin understanding & managing emotions.

Preschoolers: Develop empathy, social skills, complex emotions.

Emotion & Cognition

Emotion regulation and cognition are interconnected.

Executive functions influenced by emotional control.

Poor regulation affects learning and decision-making.

Temperament & Differences

Temperament is biologically rooted.

Different children need different approaches.

One-size-fits-all parenting does not work.

Risks & Resilience

Emotional trauma affects brain development.

Mental health issues can start in preschool.

Supportive environments can mitigate risks.

Policy Implications

BALANCE COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAMS.

TRAIN PROVIDERS IN EMOTIONAL HEALTH.

ENSURE ACCESS TO EARLY MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS.

Parten’s Stages of Play

Understanding Social Development in Early Childhood

Introduction

- Developed by Mildred Parten in 1932
- Focuses on how children's play changes with age and social development
- Observed children aged 2–5 to define six distinct stages

Why Play Matters

- Essential for:

- Cognitive development

- Social skills

- Emotional growth

- Helps children learn roles, cooperation, and conflict resolution

1. Unoccupied Play (Birth–3 months)

- Child is relatively still
- Random movements with no clear purpose
- Exploring the body and surroundings
- Foundation for later play

2. Solitary Play (0–2 years)

- Playing alone
- No interest in or awareness of others
- Builds focus, independence, and creativity

3. Onlooker Play (2 years+)

- Watches others play but does not join
- Learns by observing
- Begins to understand social rules

4. Parallel Play (2–3 years)

- Plays next to others but no direct interaction
- Same activity, separate play
- Transition toward social engagement

5. Associative Play (3–4 years)

- Playing together, but with no organized goal
- May share toys or comment on each other's play
- Begins to practice cooperation and communication

6. Cooperative Play (4+ years)

- Group play with shared goals (e.g., building a fort, role-playing)
- Rules and roles are discussed
- Shows advanced social, emotional, and cognitive skills

Summary Chart

- Stage | Age Range | Key Feature
- ---|---|---
- Unoccupied | Birth–3 mo | Random movements
- Solitary | 0–2 yrs | Alone play
- Onlooker | 2+ yrs | Watches others
- Parallel | 2–3 yrs | Plays beside, no interaction
- Associative | 3–4 yrs | Some interaction, no shared goal
- Cooperative | 4+ yrs | Shared goals, rules, collaboration

Applications in Education

- Tailor play activities to the child's developmental stage
- Encourage progression through stages
- Use mixed-age group play to foster growth

Conclusion

- Play evolves as social skills develop
- Each stage is important and builds upon the last
- Supports holistic child development

References

- Parten, M. B. (1932). Social participation among preschool children.
- Child development textbooks and trusted educational sources

Cognitive Development in Children

Piaget's Framework

Learning = assimilation + accommodation

Assimilation: adding new info to existing schemas

Accommodation: adjusting schemas to new info

Piaget: 4 stages of development

Sensorimotor Stage (0–2 years)

Learning via senses and motor skills

Key milestones:

- Causality
- Object permanence (~6 months)

Example: Peekaboo

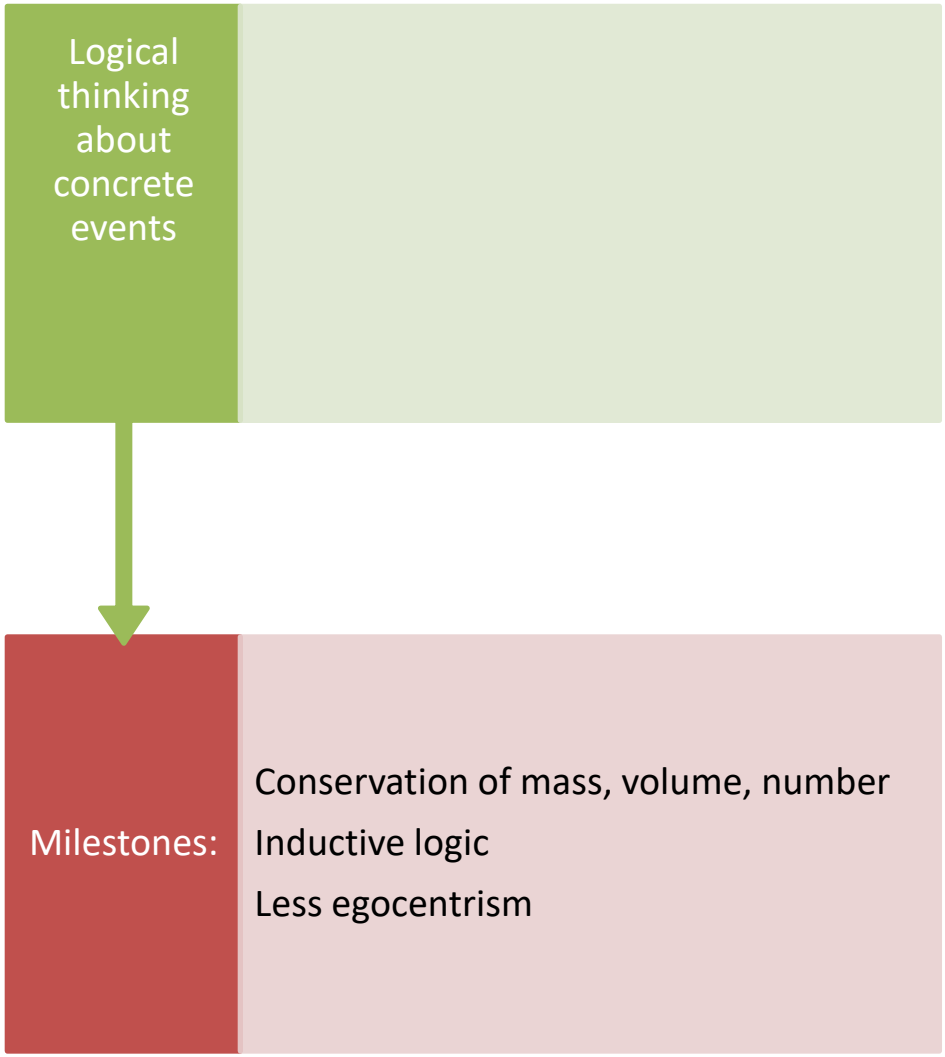
Preoperational Stage (2–7 years)

Symbolic thinking develops (language, pretend play)

Egocentrism: difficulty understanding others' views

Limitations: centration, no logical operations

Concrete Operational Stage (7–11 years)



Formal Operational Stage (12+ years)

Abstract and hypothetical reasoning

Advanced logic and moral reasoning

Concepts: justice, love, ethics, planning

Key Concepts

Schemas = mental models/frameworks

Assimilation vs. Accommodation

Equilibration = balancing new info with old schemas

References

StatPearls:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK537095/

PsychCentral, MedicalNewsToday,
BerkeleyWellbeing, PositivePsychology