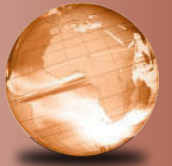# Lifespan Development

## EIGHTH EDITION

### Denise Boyd • Helen Bee

# Lifespan Development

## Eighth Edition

## Global Edition

**Denise Boyd**
*Houston Community College System*

**Helen Bee**

Pearson

physical characteristic, tell you who her friends are, or reveal who her favorite cartoon character is. These answers show that the categorical self, which first emerged during infancy, is becoming more mature. Likewise, the emotional self grows by leaps and bounds during these years, and a new component of self-concept, the *social self*, emerges.

**THE EMOTIONAL SELF** In recent years, research examining development of the emotional self during the early childhood years has focused on the acquisition of *emotional regulation*, or the ability to control emotional states and emotion-related behavior (Eisenberg & Sulik, 2012). For example, children exhibit emotional regulation when they find a way to cheer themselves up when they are feeling sad or when they divert their attention to a different activity when they get frustrated with something. Some studies have revealed relationships between the development of emotional regulation in early childhood and a variety of social variables. One study showed that the level of emotional regulation at age 2 predicted the level of aggressive behavior at age 4 in both boys and girls (Rubin, Burgess, Dwyer, & Hastings, 2003). Predictably, preschoolers who display high levels of emotional regulation are more popular with their peers than those who are less able to regulate their emotional behavior (Denham et al., 2003; Fantuzzo, Sekino, & Cohen, 2004). Emotional regulation skills appear to be particularly important for children whose temperaments include high levels of anger proneness (Diener & Kim, 2004). Furthermore, longitudinal research has demonstrated that emotional regulation in early childhood is related to children's development of emotional problems and their ability to think about right and wrong during the school years (Kim-Spoon, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2013; Kochanska, Murray, & Coy, 1997).

The process of acquiring emotional regulation is one in which control shifts slowly from the parents to the child across the early childhood years (Brophy-Herb, Zajicek-Farber, Bocknek, McKelvey, & Stansbury, 2013; Houck & Lecuyer-Maus, 2004). Here again, the child's temperament is a factor. For example, preschoolers who have consistently exhibited difficult behavior since infancy are more likely to have self-control problems in early childhood (Schmitz et al., 1999). Similarly, preschoolers who were born prematurely or who were delayed in language development in the second year of life experience more difficulties with self-control during early childhood (Carson, Klee, & Perry, 1998; Schothorst & van Engeland, 1996).

Difficult temperament and developmental delays are two important risk factors for *disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD*; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Bitter, Mills, Adler, Strakowski, & DelBello, 2011; West, Schenkel, & Pavuluri, 2008). Two to three times per week, preschoolers with DMDD exhibit tantrums characterized



All children get upset from time to time, but they vary widely in how they manage distressing feelings.

by intense rage and, often, aggressive and destructive behavior. Parents and teachers of children with DMDD typically require the assistance of a mental health professional to implement behavior management strategies that can help these children develop the capacity to regulate their emotions (West & Weinstein, 2012).

**EMPATHY** Another aspect of the emotional self involves *empathy*, the ability to identify with another person's emotional state. Empathy has two aspects: apprehending another person's emotional state or condition and then matching that emotional state oneself. An empathizing person experiences either the same feeling he imagines the other person to feel or a highly similar feeling. Empathy is negatively associated with aggression in the early childhood years; the more advanced preschoolers' capacity for empathy is, the less aggression they display (Findlay, Girardi, & Coplan, 2006; Hatakeyama & Hatakeyama, 2012). Moreover, the development of empathy in early childhood appears to provide the foundation on which a more sophisticated emotion, *sympathy* (a general feeling of sorrow or concern for another person), is built in later childhood and adolescence (Sallquist, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Reiser, et al., 2009).

### Stages in the Development of Empathy Proposed by Hoffman

The most thorough analysis of the development of empathy and sympathy has been offered by Martin Hoffman (1982,1988), who describes four broad stages.

*Stage 1: Global empathy*—Observed during the first year. If the infant is around someone expressing a strong emotion, he may match that emotion—for example, by beginning to cry when he hears another infant crying.

*Stage 2: Egocentric empathy*—Beginning at about 12 to 18 months of age, when children have developed a fairly clear sense of their separate selves, they respond to another's distress with some distress of their own, but they may attempt to "cure" the other person's problem by offering what they themselves would find most comforting. They may, for example, show sadness when they see another child hurt and go get their own mother to help.

*Stage 3: Empathy for another's feelings*—Beginning as young as age 2 or 3 and continuing through elementary school, children note others' feelings, partially match those feelings, and respond to the other's distress in nonegocentric ways. Over these years, children become able to distinguish a wider (and more subtle) range of emotions.

*Stage 4: Empathy for another's life condition*—In late childhood or adolescence, some children develop a more generalized notion of others' feelings and respond not just to the immediate situation but also to the other individual's general situation or plight. Thus, a young person at this level may become more distressed by another person's sadness if she knows that the sadness is chronic or that the person's general situation is particularly tragic than if she sees it as a momentary problem.

In addition to empathy, young children's emotional selves include an awareness of emotional states that are linked to their culture's definitions of right and wrong (Thompson & Newton, 2010). These feelings, which are sometimes called the *moral emotions*, include guilt, shame, and pride (Eisenberg, 2000). Guilt is usually thought of as the emotional state induced when a child breaks a rule. Consequently, a child who takes a forbidden cookie will experience guilt. Feelings of shame arise when she fails to live up to expectations. For instance, most parents and teachers urge young children to share their toys. Thus, when a child behaves selfishly and is reminded about the sharing rule, it is likely that he feels shame. By contrast, children feel pride when they succeed at meeting expectations.

Research suggests that the interplay among moral emotions and young children's awareness of these feelings influences the development of behavior that children's cultures regard as morally acceptable (Eisenberg, 2000). Thus, they form the foundation of later moral development. Studies suggest that these feelings evolve in the context of parent–child relationships. Young children who do not have warm, trusting relationships with their parents are at risk of failing to develop moral emotions or of developing feelings of guilt, shame, and pride that are too weak to influence their behavior (Koenig, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2004).

### Review: Hoffman's Empathy Stages

How well do you understand Hoffman's stages of empathy? This table will help you review the stages.

| Stage | Description |
|---|---|
| Stage 1: Global empathy | Infant begins to cry when he hears another infant crying. |
| Stage 2: Egocentric empathy | A child shows sadness when she sees another child hurt and asks her mother to help the hurt child. |
| Stage 3: Empathy for another's feelings | A child is distressed when he observes another child crying because he has misplaced a toy; he tries to help the child find his toy. |
| Stage 4: Empathy for another's life condition | A teen is more distressed about the conditions in refugee camps that she sees in news reports than about the anxiety that a peer feels because of a failing test grade. |

**THE SOCIAL SELF** Another facet of a child's emerging sense of self is an increasing awareness of herself as a player in the social game. By age 2, a toddler has already learned a variety of social "scripts"—routines of play or interaction with others. The toddler now begins to develop some implicit understanding of her own roles in these scripts (Case, 1991). So she may begin to think of herself as a "helper" in some situations or as "the boss" when she is telling some other child what to do.

You can see this clearly in children's sociodramatic play, as they begin to take explicit roles: "I'll be the daddy and you be the mommy" or "I'm the boss." As part of the same process, the young child also gradually comes to understand her place in the network of family roles. She has sisters, brothers, father, mother, and so forth.

Moreover, role scripts help young children become more independent. For example, assuming the "student" role provides a preschooler with a prescription for appropriate behavior in the school situation. Students listen when the teacher speaks to the class, get out materials and put them away at certain times, help their classmates in various ways, and so on. Once a preschooler is familiar with and adopts the student role, he can follow the role script and is no longer dependent on the teacher to tell him what to do every minute of the day.

**WRITING PROMPT**

**Consider This—Parental Awareness of Temperament**

If parents received a description of their child's temperament at birth (sort of like the owner's manual you get with a new appliance), do you think it would help them to be better parents? Conversely, do you think it would cause them to be overly tolerant of temperamental characteristics that might need to be modified for the child's own benefit, such as irritability?

# 8.3:  Gender Development

We noted earlier that preschoolers who are asked to describe themselves are likely to begin by stating whether they are boys or girls. In psychologists' terms, their tendency to do so suggests that "boy-ness" and "girl-ness" are *salient*, or important, categories for young children. Thus, one fascinating developmental process of the preschool period involves children's evolving sense of *gender*, the psychological and social associates and implications of biological sex.

ⵠ    **By the end of this module, you will be able to:**

**8.3.1**    **Outline the major theories of gender development**

**8.3.2**    **Characterize children's understanding of sex roles**

**8.3.3**    **Identify sex-typed behaviors exhibited by young children**

## 8.3.1: Explaining Gender Development

**OBJECTIVE:**  Outline the major theories of gender development

Developmentalists have proposed several explanations of gender development. Each of these theories is based on one of the broader theories of social and personality development—psychoanalytic, social learning, cognitive-developmental, and information-processing.

**PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLANATIONS**  Freud suggested that 3- to 6-year-olds overcome the anxiety they feel about their desires for the opposite-sex parent (the Oedipus or Electra conflict) through identification with the same-sex parent. To identify with the parent, the child must learn and conform to his or her sex-role concepts. Thus, according to Freud, children acquire gender through the process of identification.

The difficulty with Freud's theory is that toddlers seem to understand far more about gender than the theory would predict. For example, many 18-month-olds

accurately label themselves and others as boys or girls. Likewise, clearly sex-typed behavior appears long before age 4 or 5, when psychoanalytic theories claim identification occurs.

**SOCIAL-LEARNING EXPLANATIONS**  Social-learning theorists have emphasized the role of parents in shaping children's gender development (Bandura, 1977a; Mischel, 1966,1970). This notion has been far better supported by research than have Freud's ideas. Parents do seem to reinforce sex-typed activities in children as young as 18 months, not only by buying different kinds of toys for boys and girls but also by responding more positively when their sons play with blocks or trucks or when their daughters play with dolls (Fagot & Hagan, 1991; Lytton & Romney, 1991). Such differential reinforcement is particularly clear with boys, especially from fathers (Siegal, 1987).

Still, helpful as it is, a social-learning explanation is probably not sufficient. In particular, parents differentially reinforce boys' and girls' behavior less than you'd expect, and probably not enough to account for the very early and robust discrimination children seem to make on the basis of gender. Even young children whose parents seem to treat their sons and daughters in highly similar ways nonetheless learn gender labels and prefer same-sex playmates.

**THE COGNITIVE-DEVELOPMENTAL EXPLANA-TION**  Piaget's research revealed that children's ability to think logically about the physical world develops in a stage-like fashion. Thus, researchers who adopt a cognitive-developmental approach to explaining gender development focus on the logical aspects of children's thinking sequence in which their understanding of gender evolves. For example, Lawrence Kohlberg proposed a stage model of gender development that views children's gender-related behavior as a function of their understanding of the concept of gender.

---

**Kohlberg's Stage Theory of Gender Development**

Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory of gender development suggests that children's understanding of gender develops in stages (Kohlberg, 1966; Kohlberg & Ullian, 1974).

*Gender identity*—First comes *gender identity*, which is simply a child's ability to label his or her own sex correctly and to identify other people as men or women, boys or girls. By age 2, most children correctly label themselves as boys or girls, and within 6–12 months, most can correctly label others as well.

*Gender stability*—The second step is *gender stability*, which is the understanding that people stay the same gender throughout life. Researchers have measured this by asking

children such questions as "When you were a little baby, were you a little girl or a little boy?" or "When you grow up, will you be a mommy or a daddy?" Most children understand the stability of gender by about age 4 (Slaby & Frey, 1975).



SOURCE: Boyd & Boyd.

In describing this self-portrait, the 5-year-old artist said, "This is how I will look when I get married to a boy. I am under a rainbow, so beautiful with a bride hat, a belt, and a purse." The girl knows she will always be female and associates gender with externals such as clothing (gender stability). She is also already quite knowledgeable about gender role expectations.

*Gender constancy*—The final step is the development of true *gender constancy*, the recognition that someone stays the same gender even though he may appear to change by wearing different clothes or changing his hair length. For example, boys don't change into girls by wearing dresses.

Numerous studies, including studies of children growing up in other cultures such as Kenya, Nepal, Belize, and Samoa, show that children go through this sequence (Martin & Ruble, 2004; Munroe, Shimmin, & Munroe, 1984). Moreover, progression through the sequence is related to general cognitive development (Trautner, Gervai, & Nemeth, 2003). Consequently, Kohlberg asserted that gender constancy is the organizing principle that children use to acquire knowledge of gender and to bring their own behavior into conformity with cultural standards. However, critics point out that Kohlberg's theory fails to explain why children show clearly different behavior, such as toy preferences, long before they achieve gender constancy.

**THE INFORMATION-PROCESSING APPROACH**  Information-processing theorists use the term *schema* to refer to mental frameworks, such as categories, that help humans organize processes such as thinking and remembering. *Gender schema theory* assumes that the development of such a framework for gender underlies gender development. According to this perspective, the gender schema begins to develop as soon as the child notices the differences between male and female, knows his own gender, and can label the two groups with some consistency—all of which happens by age 2 or 3 (Bem, 1981; Martin & Ruble, 2002).

### Development of the Gender Schema

Children seem to understand very early that this is a key distinction, so the category serves as a kind of magnet for new information. Once the child has established even a primitive gender schema, a great many experiences can be assimilated to it. Thus, as soon as this schema begins to be formed, children may begin to show preference for same-sex playmates or for gender-stereotyped activities (Martin & Little, 1990).

| Ages 2 to 3 | Children consistently classify others and themselves as boys or girls. |
|---|---|
| Ages 3 to 4 | Preschoolers first learn some broad distinctions about what kinds of activities or behavior "go with" each gender, both by observing other children and through the reinforcements they receive from parents. They also learn a few gender *scripts*—whole sequences of events that are normally associated with a given gender, such as "fixing dinner" or "building with tools"—just as they learn other social scripts at about this age (Levy & Fivush, 1993). |
| Ages 4 to 6 | Between age 4 and age 6, the child learns a more subtle and complex set of associations for his own gender—what children of his own gender like and don't like, how they play, how they talk, and what kinds of people they associate with, along with cultural beliefs about the relative value or males and females (Halim, Ruble, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). Only between the ages of 8 and 10 does the child develop an equivalently complex view of the opposite gender (Martin, Wood, & Little, 1990). |

The key difference between this theory and Kohlberg's gender constancy theory is that gender schema theory asserts that children need not understand that gender is permanent to form an initial gender schema. When they do begin to understand gender constancy, at about 5 or 6, children develop a more elaborate rule, or schema, of "what people who are like me do" and treat this rule the same way they treat other rules—as an absolute. Later, the child's application of the gender rule becomes more flexible. She knows, for example, that most boys don't play with dolls, but that they can do so if they like.

**BIOLOGICAL APPROACHES**  For a long time, developmentalists dismissed the idea that biological differences between males and females were responsible for psychological differences between them. Today, though, they are taking another look at decades-old experimental studies with animals showing that prenatal exposure to male hormones such as *testosterone* powerfully influences behavior

after birth (Lippa, 2005). Female animals exposed to testosterone behave more like male animals; for instance, they are more aggressive than females who do not experience prenatal exposure to testosterone. Similarly, when experimenters block the release of testosterone during prenatal development of male animal embryos, the animals exhibit behavior that is more typical of the females of their species.

Hormonal influences have been proposed to explain the outcomes of cases involving boys who carry a genetic defect that causes them to develop deformed genitalia. Decades ago, a few such boys were subjected to plastic surgery to give them female-appearing genitals and were raised as girls. At that time, however, doctors did not realize that the genetic defect in question interferes only with testosterone's effects on the sex organs; the brains of these fetuses were exposed to normal amounts of testosterone throughout prenatal development (Rosenthal & Gitelman, 2002). Follow-up studies found that many of these children, when they learned of their status, sought surgery to masculinize their bodies. Moreover, even those who elected to retain the feminine identities they had been given in infancy possessed many attributes and behaviors that are more typical of males than of females (Reiner & Gearhart, 2004). Such findings support the view that hormones play some role in gender development.

---

Review: Theories of Gender Development

This table will help you differentiate the theories of gender development.

| Theory | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Psychoanalytic | Gender develops as children identify with the same-sex parent |
| Social-learning | Gender development is attributable to environmental influences |
| Cognitive-developmental | Gender concepts develop in stages |
| Gender schema | Children use a mental framework to organize information about gender |
| Biological | Hormones shape gender development |

## 8.3.2: Sex-Role Knowledge

**OBJECTIVE: Characterize children's understanding of sex roles**

Figuring out your gender and understanding that it stays constant are only part of the story. Learning what goes with being a boy or a girl in a given culture is also a vital task for a child. In every culture, adults have clear gender stereotypes. Indeed, the content of those stereotypes is remarkably similar in cultures around the world. Psychologists who have studied gender stereotypes in many different countries, including non-Western countries such as Thailand, Pakistan, and Nigeria, find that the most

clearly stereotyped traits are weakness, gentleness, appreciativeness, and soft-heartedness for women, and aggression, strength, cruelty, and coarseness for men (Eagly, Eaton, Rose, Riger, & McHugh, 2012; Williams & Best, 1990). In most cultures, men are also seen as competent, skillful, assertive, and able to get things done, while women are seen as warm and expressive, tactful, quiet, gentle, aware of others' feelings, and lacking in competence, independence, and logic.

## 8.3.3: Sex-Typed Behavior

**OBJECTIVE: Identify sex-typed behaviors exhibited by young children**

The final element in the development of gender is the actual behavior children show with those of the same and the opposite sex. An unexpected finding is that *sex-typed behavior*, or different patterns of behavior among girls and boys, develops earlier than ideas about gender (Campbell, Shirley, & Candy, 2004).





Play may provide children with opportunities to learn about gender expectations.

**Studies of Children's Sex-Role Knowledge**

Researchers have studied children's sex-role knowledge in two ways—by asking children what boys and girls (or men and women) like to do and what they are like (which is an inquiry about gender stereotypes) and by asking children if it is okay for boys to play with dolls or girls to climb trees or do equivalent cross-sex things (an inquiry about roles).

| | |
|---|---|
| **Stereotypic Traits and Occupations** | Studies of children show that these stereotyped ideas develop early. It would not be uncommon to hear a 3-year-old in the United States say "Mommies use the stove, and Daddies use the grill." A 4-year-old might define gender roles in terms of competencies: "Daddies are better at fixing things, but Mommies are better at tying bows and decorating." Even 2-year-olds in the United States already associate certain tasks and possessions with men and women, such as vacuum cleaners and kitchen utensils with women and cars and tools with men. By age 3 or 4, children can assign stereotypic occupations, toys, and activities to each gender. By age 5, children begin to associate certain personality traits, such as assertiveness and nurturance, with males or females (Parmley & Cunningham, 2008). |
| **Gendered Rules** | Studies of children's ideas about how men and women (or boys and girls) ought to behave add an interesting further element. For example, in an early study, a psychologist told a story to children ages 4–9 about a little boy named George who liked to play with dolls (Damon, 1977). George's parents told him that only little girls play with dolls; little boys shouldn't. The children were then asked questions about the story, such as "Why do people tell George not to play with dolls?" or "Is there a rule that boys shouldn't play with dolls?"<br><br>Four-year-olds in this study thought it was okay for George to play with dolls. There was no rule against it, and he should do it if he wanted to. Six-year-olds, in contrast, thought it was wrong for George to play with dolls. By about age 9, children had differentiated between what boys and girls usually do and what is "wrong." One boy said, for example, that breaking windows was wrong and bad but that playing with dolls was not bad in the same way. He described playing with dolls as something that boys usually do as opposed to breaking windows is wrong in and of itself. |
| **Recent Research** | Interestingly, more recent studies show that 21st-century children express ideas about gender-typed behavior that are quite similar to those of their 1970s counterparts (Gee & Heyman, 2007; Gelman, Taylor, Nguyen, Leaper, & Bigler, 2004). These studies suggest that a 5- to 6-year-old has figured out that gender is permanent and is searching for an all-or-none, totally reliable rule about how boys and girls behave (Martin & Ruble, 2004). The child picks up information from watching adults, from television and from listening to the labels that are attached to different activities (e.g., "Boys don't cry"). Initially, children treat these as absolute, moral rules. Later, they understand that these are social conventions; at this point, gender concepts become more flexible and stereotyping declines somewhat (Martin & Ruble, 2004). |



By 18–24 months, children begin to show some preference for sex-stereotyped toys, such as dolls for girls or trucks or building blocks for boys, which is some months before they can consistently identify their own gender (Thommessen & Todd, 2010). By age 3, children begin to show a preference for same-sex friends and are much more sociable with playmates of the same sex—at a time when they do not yet have a concept of gender stability (Corsaro, Molinari, Hadley, & Sugioka, 2003; Maccoby, 1988, 1990; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987).

**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR** Not only are preschoolers' friendships and peer interactions increasingly sex-segregated, but it is also clear that boy–boy interactions and girl–girl interactions differ in quality, even in these early years. Gender differences in social behavior emerge from these early differences and continue to characterize boys' and girls' interaction patterns later in childhood and into adolescence.

**Sex-Typed Social Behaviors Exhibited by Young Children**

One important part of same-sex interactions seems to involve instruction in and modeling of sex-appropriate behavior. In other words, older boys teach younger boys how to be "masculine," and older girls teach younger girls how to be "feminine" (Danby & Baker, 1998). However, these "lessons" in sex-typed behavior are fairly subtle.

*Enabling style*—Eleanor Maccoby, one of the leading theorists in this area, describes the girls' pattern as an *enabling style* (Maccoby, 1990). Enabling includes such behaviors as supporting the friend, expressing agreement, and making suggestions. All these behaviors tend to foster a greater equality and intimacy in the relationship and keep the interaction going.

*Restrictive style*—In contrast, boys are more likely to show what Maccoby calls a *constricting, or restrictive,*