

## Recap . . .

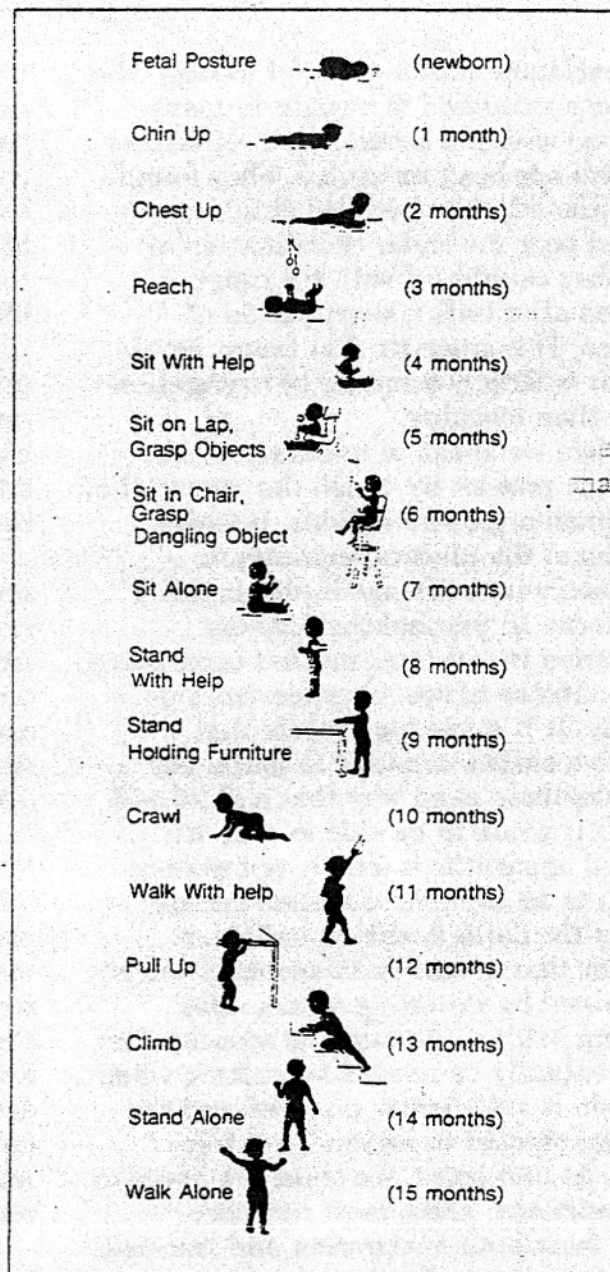
Erikson has developed a useful way of looking at psychological growth. He has divided human development into eight stages, and for each stage he has identified a major psychosocial crisis that the individual must resolve.

## INFANCY

The most obvious thing about the individual during the first 2 years of life is its growth from near helplessness into a child capable of walking, talking, and other independent behaviors. The development of an infant is an orderly process, even though the rate of growth is not the same for all individuals. During the first month after birth, a baby will develop some control over its neck and head. By 4 to 6 months, the infant can hold its head upright while lying on its stomach. Crawling and walking appear anywhere from 10 to 18 months after birth, although some babies crawl even earlier (see Figure 4-2).

The development of physical and motor abilities does not proceed in a continuous, smooth fashion. Though parents may become concerned over a less-than-average rate of physical development or may be proud when their child achieves something ahead of the average, such progress has little to do with the final result—everyone gets to the same place eventually.

Most of the physical processes that occur in the first 2 years unfold naturally, without any special encouragement from parents and despite any hindrances in the environment. It has been shown, for example, that babies who are wrapped in swaddling—restricting bands of cloth—during the first year of life still begin to walk at about age 1. Researchers compared



**Fig. 4-2** Although there are individual differences, children usually develop their motor skills in this sequence. The average ages at which these stages occur are indicated. (After Shirley, 1933)



the development of a group of infants who had been swaddled (a custom in many cultures) with the development of infants who had not been restricted. They found that although the swaddled children showed poor muscular coordination at first, they caught up with the other children after only a short period of practice. This suggests that motor development is largely a matter of maturation rather than learning.

When we speak of **maturation**, we mean the process by which the potential of the human organism unfolds. It is the ripening of the physical equipment combined with a change in the capacity to perform. In psychological terms, maturation is development that takes place in the absence of specific experience or practice. It is a genetic process that triggers a child's capacity to learn. For example, there is no way that a child of 6 months is going to be able to talk. Its physical apparatus is simply not mature enough to be capable of human speech. And yet the child is able to babble, a behavior that occurs spontaneously—it is not learned by imitating others. This babbling helps to develop the muscles that will eventually be needed for talking when the brain is sufficiently matured and the child has started to respond to adult speech. At that point, the child can begin to learn language. Thus, most behavior results from both maturation and learning. Learning is most effective when the organism is physically ready for it. In general, attempts to train children to do things before they are physically ready brings temporary results at best. Try teaching a 3-year-old to ride a two-wheeled bike and you'll see what we mean.

As the child is maturing physically and intellectually during the first 2 years, he is also growing emotionally and socially. As you will recall, Erik Erikson has identified

the development of **basic trust** as the major task of infancy. The child must learn that its basic needs will be satisfied. It is during this period that the child's attachment to its mother (or to whomever takes care of him or her) is formed. How important is this emotional attachment to the child's later development? It is difficult to answer this question, because psychologists cannot ethically set up an experiment to deprive infants of attachment just to see what happens. But such experiments *have* been done with monkeys, and the results may have some meaning for humans.

The most famous experiments on attachment in monkeys were done by Harry Harlow (see Chapter 10). He raised monkeys in a variety of conditions and observed their development. He found, for example, that when male and female rhesus monkeys were raised in total isolation for the first 2 years of life, they developed very slowly, were unable to interact well with other monkeys, could not defend themselves, and later had little interest in sex. The greater the isolation, the greater the social damage. When monkeys were raised in cages where they could see, hear, and smell—but not touch—others of their species, they, too, developed abnormal patterns of behavior (among which are self-injury, inability to mate, staring into space, and rocking motions).

Several researchers, notably John Bowlby, have suggested that human infants, too, suffer in their development if they do not have contact with others. They point out that in order for a child to develop to his or her fullest capacities, he or she must not only have all physical needs met in infancy but must also have attention, love, and contact. Without these, basic trust cannot develop, and the child will develop a sense of mistrust toward the world.



In some cultures infants are prevented from walking by being wrapped in swaddling clothes. However, this practice does not seem to interfere with their motor development.



## CHILDHOOD

Between the ages of 2 and 11, the child passes through three of Erikson's developmental stages. In the second and third years, children use their new motor and mental abilities to explore their environment—they are developing *autonomy*. At ages 4 and 5, children do all sorts of things on their own—climb stairs, throw balls, and begin to invent games and activities for themselves—they are developing *initiative*. Finally, during the elementary school years (ages 6 to 11), children become concerned with how things are made and how they work, and they begin making things themselves—they are developing a sense of *industry*.

Children also have an overall task—

that of learning the essentials of social living. This process is called **socialization**. Through socialization the child acquires certain desirable behaviors and values and is inhibited from learning undesirable ones. To teach children the essential lessons of social living, adults take advantage of several mechanisms present in the child: (1) the desire for recognition, acceptance, and affection; (2) the urge to avoid punishment and rejection; (3) identification with others; and (4) imitation of loved ones. Using the mechanisms of identification and imitation (which we will soon discuss), the child attempts to achieve a reasonable balance between dependence and independence in relationships with others. Let us look at how this balance is achieved.



## Independence and Dependence

At first, children depend on others for their well-being. But then they become independent—able to rely on their own resources, capacities, and skills. If a mother is anxious and frightened by life, unfortunately she will overprotect her child. The child, then, doesn't get the chance to call on his or her own resources. If the child is regularly rewarded and seldom punished for dependent behavior, he or she will learn to react in dependent ways.

In most families, children get a mixed and inconsistent set of messages about dependence and independence. They are urged to be independent in some situations and encouraged to be dependent in others. From these mixed communications, every child must sort out a message that is personally meaningful. This is not an easy task, and children shift between dependent and independent behavior as they grow up. The parental problem is no easier. Parents, too, waver between telling the child "You are old enough to do it yourself" and "You are too young to be allowed to do that."

## Imitation and Identification

Children consciously and unconsciously **imitate** people whom they admire and feel close to. Boys often imitate their fathers and other males, whereas girls most often imitate females. **Copying** and **matched-dependent behavior** are two forms of imitation. When children copy behavior, they deliberately try to precisely duplicate a way of responding, even though they may not understand it. They become little versions of Batman or the Fonz. With matched-dependent behavior, the child may only approximate the behavior of the model, perhaps modifying it to fit his or her own personal style.

When children imitate others, parents

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## The Only Child

Despite statistics that show only children often grow up to be outstanding, there has been a longstanding prejudice against the one-child family. The usual notion is that the only child will be "spoiled"—that he or she will be overindulged, maladjusted, egocentric, and will never learn the give and take of life. Some parents, in fact, feel they must have a second child just to save the first. Actually, most only children have striking advantages both as children and as adults. A very high number of only children become National Merit Scholars, science prize winners, astronauts, doctors, and persons listed in *Who's Who in America*.

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usually exercise control by punishing certain imitations and rewarding others. However, if parents do not supervise the child closely, or if they treat these imitations lightly, the result might be unacceptable behavior that is nearly impossible to change.

**Identification** differs from imitation. In the process of identification, the child assembles a self-picture by "becoming like" parents and other people. Apparently, the child may become "like" others without consciously imitating their mannerisms or values. Thus, the kind of person the child begins to become may reflect not only direct parental teachings, but also the characteristics of the parents and others.

There are many different kinds of identification. **Defensive identification** occurs, for example, when children pattern themselves after others in order to achieve the power and status these people possess. **Identification with the aggressor** occurs when the child becomes like a hostile, angry, punishing parent or other adult. **Developmental identification** refers to the



At age two or three children learn to do things for themselves, and their long struggle toward independence begins. If parents encourage the child's initiative, he or she is more likely to be able to make decisions and to take control when the situation requires.

affectionate bond between mother and child early in life. The various kinds of identification can blend in the developing personality. Thus the boy identifies with his father not *only* because the father is warm and nurturant but also because the father can be the main source of reward and punishment—he represents power.

### **Styles of Child Rearing**

The fate of children depends greatly on their psychological environment. Their emotional involvement with their parents and the affection and acceptance they receive are crucial for normal development. Obviously, the nature of the psychological environment is greatly determined by the parents' child-rearing methods. Psychologists have identified three basic child-rearing patterns that are common in our culture: permissive, authoritarian, and democratic.

In **permissive child rearing**, the parent tries to react in a nonpunishing, affirmative manner toward the child's impulses, desires, and actions. The parent may consult with the child about



decisions, give explanations for family rules, and make few demands for household responsibility. The parent is presented as a resource for children to use as they wish, not as an ideal for the children to imitate or as someone responsible for shaping the children's behavior. The child is allowed to regulate his or her own activities as much as possible and to exercise self-control. The permissive parent often follows an "anything goes" policy and provides few guidelines for the child.

In **authoritarian child rearing**, the parent deliberately attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child according to an absolute standard of conduct. Authoritarian parents value obedience as a virtue and use punishment to curb rebellion. The child is kept in his or her place and is taught respect for work. Order and tradition are valued, and there is little verbal give and take. "Do it because I told you to" is sufficient reason for obedience.

In **democratic child rearing**, the parent tries to lead children in a rational manner and encourages verbal give and take. The reasoning behind policies is shared with the children, and their objections are discussed. Firm control may be exercised when there is a great difference between the attitudes of parent and child, but the child is not imprisoned in such restrictions. The child's individual interests and special ways are recognized, but standards of conduct are still set.

#### Recap . . .

The major physical changes and developments of infancy—learning to walk and talk, for example—unfold in a natural process. This unfolding, which occurs without experience or practice, is called maturation. The infant also develops emotionally and socially. The development of basic trust is the major task at this stage. Experiments with monkeys

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#### How to Be a Successful Parent

If you are looking for formulas for the upbringing of an achievement-oriented son, try mixing together one fairly bright little boy, a father who is totally respected, and a mother who is devoted, intelligent, and sensitive. According to Robert Frages, this is how both Japanese and Jewish families instill high levels of ambition in young boys of average intelligence. Mothers are devoted, loving, and nurturing. They cajole rather than criticize, and nag constantly but good-naturedly. Their children are welcomed into the adult scene, but they are accepted as children. Fathers are looked up to by everyone in the family, but they leave the job of child rearing to their competent, strong wives. Both Japanese and Jewish mothers make their children aware of the great debt they owe to their parents. The children, particularly the boys, feel guilty if they make their mothers suffer by misbehaving or by failing to live up to expectations of success.

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suggest that attention, love, and contact with others are essential to normal development. In childhood, the major tasks are to develop autonomy, initiative, and industry and to undergo socialization. Through the processes of imitation and identification the child learns appropriate behaviors and develops a pattern of independence or dependence. The child's behavior is shaped by his or her parents' child-rearing style, which may be permissive, authoritarian, or democratic.

#### ADOLESCENCE

During adolescence, the individual goes through profound changes in every aspect of life. Major physical and intellectual changes are a prelude to the emotional conflicts that must be resolved in order for the individual to achieve maturity. Here we will be able to focus on only a few of the most important aspects of this turbulent period: physical changes, emotional changes, and social changes.