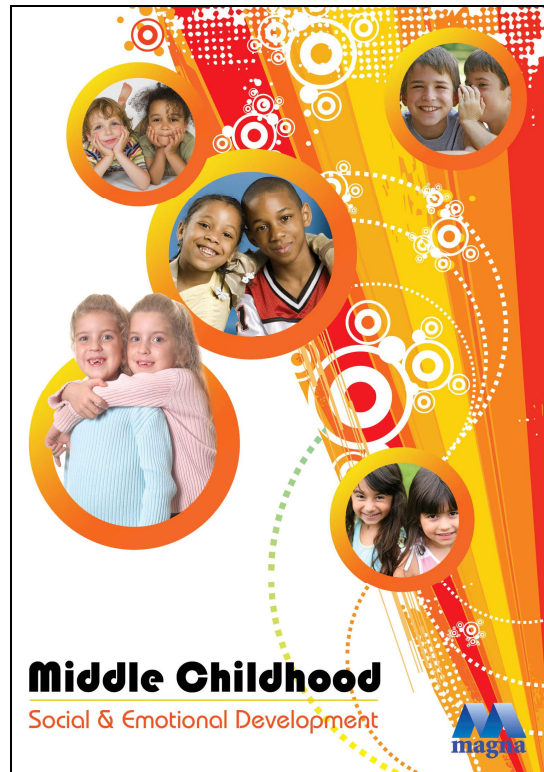


# Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development



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# Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development

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# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Using This Guide/Using This Video**

- Before watching this video, ask students to think about who their best friend was in grammar school. Ask: What were the characteristics that defined the relationship? What attracted you to that person?
- Use questions and activities for class discussions, small group activity, homework or assessment.

# Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development

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# The Program

## Summary

Middle childhood is the stage of development between the ages of 6 and 12 years of age. The overall development of children includes their physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth, which occur simultaneously and have affects on each other. In this video, we will focus on children's social and emotional development.

We will learn how children see and evaluate themselves, form new types of relationships with family and friends, and examine how children with challenging conditions can thrive socially and emotionally.

### Key points:

- During middle childhood, children begin to note their internal qualities and form self-concepts and self-esteem.
- The physical, emotional, academic, social, and global aspects combine to form a child's self-concept and the evaluation of that self-concept is self-esteem.
- Teachers and caregivers can foster self-esteem by presenting opportunities for growth and success.
- Children in middle childhood loosen their rigid views on such topics as fairness and consequences to reveal higher-level thinking about "right" and "wrong".
- Children gain a sense of increased independence from their family and the ability to make choices about their behavior.
- Siblings, divorce, and blended families all have affects on the emotional development of children.
- Friendships become important to middle childhood children, and mature to be based on psychological connections.
- Status, popularity, and social competence have affects on the amount of friendships children have.
- During middle childhood, it is important to provide opportunities to support and integrate children with challenging physical or emotional conditions with typically developing peers.

# The Self

During middle childhood, children move beyond physical achievements and begin to note their internal qualities, as well as begin to identify that while they are good at some things, they struggle with others. Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson proposed that humans move through stages of emotional development throughout their lifetime. Within each stage, the person identifies and works through a struggle to move on. Children in middle childhood struggle between industry and inferiority. In this stage children can achieve a sense of competence if they receive praise and encouragement in response to their behaviors.

Children have a strong desire to identify their place in the world as well, and in doing so they form self-concepts and self-esteem. A self-concept is one's definition or description of attributes. Self-esteem is the evaluation of attributes. There are five aspects of self-concept (physical, emotional, academic, social, and global).

A child's self-esteem is an even larger factor in social and emotional development. Global self-esteem is an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of their self worth. This evaluation is partially determined by children's specific self-esteem in areas that are most important to them, and both low and high self-esteem can become a changing cycle of continued evaluation and behaviors.

The teacher expectancy effect is the cycle of behavior in which a teacher transmits an expectation about a child, and thereby brings about the expected behavior. Teachers can provide experiences that lead to true success in the classroom to foster self-esteem.

# **Moral Development**

Moral self-worth is the perception about one's virtue defined by society. In middle childhood, children develop a conscience as they internalize moral rules and are learning to regulate their own behavior. Children take on more responsibility, and can be trusted to function more independently.

Social learning theory suggests that people learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling. In earlier stages of development children have more rigid views about such areas as fairness and consequences. As children mature during middle childhood, they realize that sometimes exceptions can be made for certain circumstances.

Caregivers and teachers can reason with children at this stage as well as become good models of moral character for children. Many schools can also implement character building programs to teach moral concepts to students to guide healthy development.

# **Family**

During middle childhood, children spend less time with their families and more time at school, with peers, and in extracurricular activities. Middle childhood is a stage of co-regulation, a period in which caregivers and children jointly control children's behavior. Within co-regulation, parents set broader standards and guidelines while children make choices about their specific behavior.

The child experiencing middle childhood has increased independence and the ability to make choices about their actions, and thus many children become self-care children. These are children who let themselves into their homes after school and wait until their caregivers return from work. 12 to 14 percent of children in the U.S. between the ages of 5 and 12 spend some time alone after school.

Having siblings has an influence on a child's emotional development. Siblings can provide support, companionship, and security. Siblings can also be a source of rivalry and jealousy ("sibling rivalry").

Divorce also has developmental effects on children. Divorce causes many children to live in single family homes, with relatives, or in foster care. Divorce may cause psychological maladjustment (such as phobias, depression, sleep disturbances, and anxiety) from 6 months to 2 years (or more) after the divorce. Children may also become part of a blended family, or a family of a remarried couple that has at least one stepchild living with them. As many as 17 percent of children in the U.S. are part of a blended family. Children of divorce and blended families adjust better if they have positive relationships with both parents, and both parents support high self-esteem and togetherness.

# Friends

During middle childhood, children receive emotional support, learn different points of view, and share their thoughts and feelings with new found friends. Children begin to test out communication and social interaction skills with their friends. Children learn how to manage their emotions and get along with others through friendships.

Developmental psychologist William Damon proposed that children's friendships go through three stages. Stage one is basing friendships on other's behavior, which is common up to about age 7. Children like each other and are friends if they play nicely together. During middle childhood, children begin to base friendships on mutual trust (second stage). Children are considered friends if they can be trusted with secrets and are supportive of one another. Toward the end of middle childhood, around age 11, friendships enter the third stage and are beginning to be based on psychological closeness. In this stage friends are able to share personal feelings and ideas.

Friendships in middle childhood tend to fall along same-sex groupings. Boys tend to have a large group of friends characterized by competition, where the members challenge one another. Girls tend to have smaller groups of friends that all share the same popularity status. Girls' interactions are less confrontational, and they view the group more collectively.

Status and popularity begin to weigh more in importance in middle childhood when making friends and peer groups. Status is the evaluation of a person by other members of a group. Children measure status through likeability among peers, how many friendships they have, and their social competence level. Low status children tend to have lower numbers of friends and a lower social competence. To improve social competence, teachers and caregivers can encourage social interaction, teach conversation and listening skills, teach about nonverbal communication, and work on conflict resolution situations.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power. It can be physical, verbal, and emotional (through intimidation, threatening gestures, and social exclusion). Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, anxious, lonely, and have lower self-esteem. Schools can implement strategies to prevent and address bullying.

# **Challenging Conditions**

Children with special needs may need assistance with social interaction, and teachers can promote positive social interaction by providing opportunities for children with challenging conditions and their typically developing peers to work together on projects and classroom activities.

Some children have emotional disturbances, in which the characteristics are persistent, and to a degree that adversely affects the child's educational performance. Characteristics of an emotional disturbance include an inability to learn (that can not be explained by other factors). The inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers and inappropriate types of behaviors (under normal circumstances) are also common. A general mood of unhappiness and the following tendency of developing physical symptoms or fears associated with their problems is also a sign of an emotional disturbance. Some characteristics of more serious emotional disturbances include hyperactivity (short attention span), impulsiveness, aggressive behavior, social withdrawal, and learning disabilities.

# Review

- During middle childhood, a child's self-concept, self-esteem, and moral self-worth are at an importance stage of development.
- As children mature and gain independence, new relationships form with their families as co-regulation occurs.
- The basis of friendships matures and become based on trust and emotional support.
- Children with challenging physical and emotional conditions can be integrated with typically developing peers with the support of teachers and caregivers.
- Children during middle childhood will develop best with a supportive environment in which they have opportunities to succeed within their individual potential.

# Interactive Elements

## Questions For Discussion

1. Children grow physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively during middle childhood. Suggest some ways to cope with the changes that occur socially and emotionally during this stage of development?

*Students should touch upon the following ideas: Talking to caregivers and teachers to learn that all changes are natural and normal. Teachers can foster self-esteem by providing opportunities that will make the student successful. Caregivers can provide support for all of their children.*

2. How do peer, family, and school environmental factors help shape the development and expression of emotions in middle childhood?

*Students may talk about the emotional effects on children of divorce and what caregivers can do to ease the process for the child. Students may also talk about the teacher's role in helping students gain high self-esteem through structuring activities that promote success, recognize students' talents and achievements, and give students meaningful, age-appropriate responsibilities.*

3. How do peer relationships and the forming of friendships affect children's social and emotional development?

*Students can touch upon the types of friendships proposed by Damon and addressing the maturity level of each (behavioral, trusting, psychological closeness). Students can talk about the affects that status groups have on children and describe how it affects the cycle of behavior.*

4. How do experiences within the family help or hurt emotional and social growth of a child during middle childhood?

*Students may have a discussion about siblings and their affects on children. Students may talk about sibling rivalry and their own experiences in middle childhood with it. Students should touch upon how sibling rivalry does not always lend itself to a negative outcome. Children can develop strategies to get along with siblings and work out problems that can help them socially with those outside of their family.*

5. How has bullying changed throughout the years? What has stayed the same? Are there differences between male and female bullying?

*Students can touch upon the emergence of bullying online through emails, texts, instant messages, and material posted on websites. Students can also talk about the types of friendships that fall along same-sex lines, and how male and female groups differ.*

## **Suggested Activities**

1. Tell students to create a social map of their grammar school, middle school, or junior high school. Have them draw out the playground or the cafeteria and ask them to place all the students in the area they could normally be found in. Students will normally place the children along group associations (i.e. “jocks” or “geeks”). Have students analyze why this occurred, touching upon the levels of friendships made during middle childhood. Students will analyze the reasons why students form groups, emphasizing that there has been a shift to belonging based on internal qualities, rather than the physical accomplishments of early childhood.
2. Have students access the following websites and have groups create an anti-bullying campaign for a school. Students will gain knowledge about the prevalence of bullying in today’s schools. Students can get ideas for their campaigns at the websites as well.

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/faq/bullying.asp>

[http://endthehate.org/?page\\_id=11](http://endthehate.org/?page_id=11)

# **Research Project**

Research the stages of development proposed by Erik Erikson. Identify the “struggles” through each stage and how a human can move beyond that struggle. Can humans surpass all the struggles to complete their development?

# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Fill-In-The-Blank**

Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the bank at the bottom of the page.

\_\_\_\_\_ may cause psychological maladjustment from six months to two years after.  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, sleep disturbances, and \_\_\_\_\_ are some examples.  
Developmental psychologist William \_\_\_\_\_ proposed that children's friendships go through three stages; friendships based on other's \_\_\_\_\_, friendships based on \_\_\_\_\_, and friendships based on psychological \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is one's definition or description of attributes, while \_\_\_\_\_ is an evaluation of attributes. \_\_\_\_\_ is aggressive behavior that is \_\_\_\_\_, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power. It can be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ such as intimidation, threatening gestures, and social exclusion. Erik \_\_\_\_\_ argued that children during this stage are struggling with \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_ in an effort to gain competence.

### **Word Bank:**

self-concept	Erikson	bullying	emotional	verbal	industry
self-esteem	divorce	inferiority	physical	closeness	Damon
anxiety	trust	intentional	behavior	phobias	depression

# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Fill-In-The-Blank Answer Key**

Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the bank at the bottom of the page.

**Divorce** may cause psychological maladjustment from six months to two years after. **phobias**, **depression**, sleep disturbances, and **anxiety** are some examples. Developmental psychologist William **Damon** proposed that children's friendships go through three stages; friendships based on other's **behavior**, friendships based on **trust**, and friendships based on psychological **closeness**. **Self-concept** is one's definition or description of attributes, while **self-esteem** is an evaluation of attributes. **Bullying** is aggressive behavior that is **intentional**, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power. It can be **physical**, **verbal**, or **emotional** such as intimidation, threatening gestures, and social exclusion. Erik **Erikson** argued that children during this stage are struggling with **industry** vs. **inferiority** in an effort to gain competence.

### **Word Bank:**

self-concept	Erikson	bullying	emotional	verbal	industry
self-esteem	divorce	inferiority	physical	closeness	Damon
anxiety	trust	intentional	behavior	phobias	depression

# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Multiple Choice Worksheet**

Circle the best available answer for each of the following:

- 1) All are examples of bullying EXCEPT:
  - a) calling names
  - b) pushing in the hallways
  - c) starting vicious rumors
  - d) rough and tumble play
  
- 2) The percentage of U.S. children in blended families:
  - a) 50%
  - b) 17%
  - c) 39%
  - d) 26%
  
- 3) According to Damon, friendships are based on these characteristics EXCEPT:
  - a) trust
  - b) behavior
  - c) personal appearance
  - d) psychological closeness
  
- 4) An example of a severe emotional disturbance would be:
  - a) crying
  - b) not speaking
  - c) social withdrawal
  - d) talking back
  
- 5) An individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of their self worth is:
  - a) self-concept
  - b) self-esteem
  - c) global self-esteem
  - d) moral self-worth
  
- 6) The period of time when parents set broad standards and guidelines while children make choices about their behavior is called:
  - a) co-habitation
  - b) co-regulation
  - c) co-operation
  - d) co-working
  
- 7) Divorce may cause psychological maladjustment from six months to this long after the divorce:
  - a) 1 year
  - b) 9 months
  - c) 18 months
  - d) 2 years
  
- 8) The evaluation of a person by the other members of a group:
  - a) social competence
  - b) hierarchy
  - c) status
  - d) popularity
  
- 9) As children mature they gain a conscience and loosen their rigid view on:
  - a) fairness and consequence
  - b) life and death
  - c) pretty and ugly
  - d) cause and effect
  
- 10) Girls tend to have smaller groups of friends with interactions that are:
  - a) based only on looks
  - b) confrontational
  - c) sarcastic
  - d) non-confrontational

# Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development

## Multiple Choice Worksheet Answer Key

Circle the best available answer for each of the following:

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# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Matching Quiz**

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

_____	The struggle middle childhood children experience as they attain competence	1) Attention deficit
_____	Children who let themselves into their homes after school	2) William Damon
_____	Example of a serious emotional condition/disturbance	3) Physical self-concept
_____	People learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling	4) Internal qualities
_____	This developmental psychologist proposed that middle childhood children form friendships in three ways	5) Industry vs. Inferiority
_____	In middle childhood, children move beyond physical achievements and begin to note these	6) Moral self-worth
_____	The physical characteristics (weight, height, or complexion) or the physical abilities that a child identifies with	7) Social learning theory
_____	The perception about one's virtue as defined by society	8) Self-care

# **Middle Childhood: Social & Emotional Development**

## **Matching Quiz Answer Key**

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>5) Industry vs. Inferiority</b> | The struggle middle childhood children experience as they attain competence   |
| <b>8) Self-care</b>                | Children who let themselves into their homes after school   |
| <b>1) Attention deficit</b>        | Example of a serious emotional condition/disturbance  |
| <b>7) Social learning theory</b>   | People learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modeling  |
| <b>2) William Damon</b>            | This developmental psychologist proposed that middle childhood children form friendships in three ways              |
| <b>4) Internal qualities</b>       | In middle childhood, children move beyond physical achievements and begin to note these                             |
| <b>3) Physical self-concept</b>    | The physical characteristics (weight, height, or complexion) or the physical abilities that a child identifies with |
| <b>6) Moral self-worth</b>         | The perception about one's virtue as defined by society   |

# **Glossary**

## **Blended Family**

A remarried couple that has at least one stepchild living with them

## **Bullying**

Aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength

## **Co-Regulation**

A period in which caregivers and children jointly control children's behavior

## **Emotional Disturbance**

A condition exhibiting one or more characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affect a child's educational performance

## **Global Self-Esteem**

An individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of their self worth

## **Industry vs. Inferiority**

Efforts to attain competence in meeting the challenges presented by parents, peers, school and the complexity of the world in which they live

## **Moral Self Worth**

The perception about one's virtue as defined by society

## **Self-Care Children**

Children who let themselves into their homes after school and wait until their caregivers return from work

## **Self Concept**

One's definition or description of attributes

## **Self-Esteem**

An evaluation of attributes

## **Social Competence**

The collection of skills that allow individuals to perform successfully in social situations

## **Social Learning Theory**

Theory that suggests that we learn from one another through observations, imitation, and modeling

## **Status**

The evaluation of a person by the other members of a group

## **Teacher Expectancy Effect**

The cycle of behavior in which a teacher transmits an expectation about a child, and thereby brings about the expected behavior

## **For More Information...**

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