Social Development in Middle Childhood

Week 12

Overview of Chapter 13
- Moral Development
- Peer Relationships
- The Influence of Parents
- A New Sense of Self

Overview of This Week
- Games with Rules
  - video: Baseball
- Reasoning about Right & Wrong
  - heteronomous morality
  - autonomous morality
- Relations with Peers & Parents
  - video: Los Abandonados

How do we get our understanding of right and wrong?
Peer Interactions are Increasingly Important

- Between ages 6 and 12, children in USA typically spend more than 40% of their waking hours in the company of peers.
  - Twice what was spent with peers during preschool years.
  - Because of less adult supervision, the content of peer interactions and forms of social control are different.
  - **Content:** Games and “doing nothing.”
  - **Social control:** conflict, negotiation, compromise, discussion.

Games with Rules

Games in Middle Childhood

- Like 4- and 5-year-olds, older children still engage in fantasy role play.

A reminder: Fantasy Play

- Games based on roles.
- Social rules are only implicit.
- The rules are used to negotiate roles & maintain the game.
- E.g. “Only girls are allowed to be Superwoman.”
- The rules are often made during the game.
- The goal is to keep the game going.
- Only 2-3 kids, for 10 minutes or so.
Games with Explicit Rules

- But in middle childhood children begin to engage in a new form of play – games based on explicit rules
  - Agreed upon ahead of time and consistently followed – anyone who changes rules without common consent is “cheating”
  - Goal: Win through competition based on rules
  - Configuration: Often for hours in groups of up to 20

Cognitive demands of games:

- Must keep multiple perspectives in mind
  - Follow rules while trying to win
  - Understand the relation between the thoughts of other players and their own actions
    - “If I move my checker to this square, she’ll double-jump me”
- This shows concrete operations in the social sphere (e.g., decreasing egocentrism)

Games are Models of Society

Piaget studied children playing marbles:

1. Games are social institutions that remain basically the same as they are transmitted from one generation to the next
2. Rule-based games can only exist if children agree to participate
   - require respect and mutual consent
   - children must put group interests above their own desires
   - Consequently, peer groups can be self-governing, and their members become capable of autonomous moral thinking

From Heteronomous Morality to Autonomous Morality
Piaget’s account of how children play marbles

- **Early childhood**: Little regard for rules, no competition
- **Middle childhood**: Try to win according to preexisting rules
  - At first, believe that rules of the game have been handed down by authority figures and that they cannot be changed (heteronomous moral thinking)
  - Between ages of 9 and 11, realize that game rules are social conventions resulting from mutual consent and one can change the rules if others agree (autonomous moral thinking)

Heteronomous:

Autonomous:

video: two games of baseball

- in middle childhood, children are able to organize their social life without adult assistance
- playing, for example, games with rules such as baseball
- but that doesn’t mean that adults leave them alone!
• What values are being learned in each of these games of baseball?

Kohlberg's Moral Stages

• Piaget described two stages:
  - Heteronomous morality
  - Autonomous morality

• Lawrence Kohlberg extended Piaget's work
  - He focused on moral reasoning about harm and justice

• Total of 6 stages, grouped in 3 levels
  - Preconventional
  - Conventional
  - Postconventional or Principled

• The first 3 stages correspond to middle childhood:

Kohlberg's First 3 Stages:

- Level I: Preconventional:
  - Stage 1: Heteronomous morality (5 or 6)
    - seeks praise, avoids punishment
  - Stage 2: Instrumental morality (7 or 8)
    - aware that others have different perspectives
    - uses others for own interests

- Level II: Conventional:
  - Stage 3: Good-child morality (10 or 11)
    - reaches agreements with others
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Stage</th>
<th>What Is Right</th>
<th>Why Do Right</th>
<th>Social Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hetero-egocentric morality (begins at ages 5 or 6)</td>
<td>Adherence to rules backed by punishment</td>
<td>Avoidance of punishment</td>
<td>Egocentric point of view</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Obedience to authority</td>
<td>Superior power of authorities</td>
<td>Actions are considered in physical rather than psychological terms</td>
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<td>Instrumental morality (begins at ages 7 or 8)</td>
<td>Following rules when it is in one's immediate interest</td>
<td>To serve one's own needs or interests in a world where other people have their own interests</td>
<td>Aware that all have their own interests and that these may conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good-child morality (begins at ages 10 or 11)</td>
<td>Living up to what others close to you expect of you</td>
<td>Need to be a good person in your own and others' eyes</td>
<td>Perspective of an individual in a relationship with others (i.e., shared feelings, expectations, agreements)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**But:**
- There is a difference between moral judgment and moral action
- There is a difference between a hypothetical dilemma and a real situation

**Moral Judgment and Moral Action**
- **Findings**
  - Higher levels of reasoning are positively related to higher levels of prosocial behavior
  - In half of cases, children’s behavior matched their reasoning; in 10%, behavior was higher; remainder, behavior was lower
- **Conclusions**
  - Moral judgment is important to moral action
  - But it is not the only factor
  - When conditions require one to resist temptation, some element of social control and threat of punishment appear to be necessary for younger children

**Percentage of children who observed the moral rule in the “honesty” situation under different circumstances**

- [Chart showing percentage of children age 3 to 6 who observed the rule in a “honesty” situation under different circumstances]
  - Verbal behavior
  - Real behavior before witnessing model's deviant behavior
  - Real behavior after witnessing model's deviant behavior
Moral understanding in a real situation

Vygotsky:

“People with great passions, people who accomplish great deeds, people who possess strong feelings, even people with great minds and a strong personality, rarely come out of good little boys and girls”

The importance of rebellion:

- Vygotsky:
  - “People with great passions, people who accomplish great deeds, people who possess strong feelings, even people with great minds and a strong personality, rarely come out of good little boys and girls”

Relations with Peers

Social Status
Friendship
Cross-Gender Relations

- Middle childhood: Sexually segregated groups
- Boys and girls show preferences for different kinds of activities and styles of interaction
  - For example, on playgrounds girls ordinarily congregate to talk or play in groups of 2 or 3, while boys tend to play or run around in "swarms"

Peer Relations & Social Status

Four basic social types

1. Popular children: Receive highest peer ratings; often skilled at compromising and negotiating
2. Rejected children: Actively disliked by peers; often aggressive and in conflict with peers, although some are shy

Peer Relations & Social Status

Four basic social types

1. Neglected children: Ignored by peers; less sociable but not especially aggressive or shy; status often improves over the year; often better liked by teachers and have higher achievement
2. Controversial children: Both + and – nominations; even more aggressive than those rejected, but compensate by joking
Friendship: A Special Relationship

- Friendships determined by proximity and similarities
  - Focus in early childhood: Pretend play together
  - Focus in middle childhood: Belonging, social acceptance
  - Focus in adolescence: Exchange of intimate personal knowledge; also more generous, cooperative, and helpful with each other

Stages of understanding in friendship (Selman)

0. Momentary playmates: a friend lives close by.
1. One-way assistance: A friend does what one wants; shares likes & dislikes.
3. Intimate & mutually shared relationships: Friends provide mutual support & intimacy. Friendships survive arguments, but are ended by jealousy.
4. Autonomous, interdependent friendships: Friends provide each other with a sense of identity, and accept the need for other relationships

Relationship with Parents

- Parents no longer act as if their children are adorable
  - They expect them to behave themselves and perform appropriately
  - They are more critical of the mistakes they make
- Children are less likely to whine, yell, and hit
  - Now they argue with their parents and point out their parents' inconsistencies
  - They don't want parents to show them affection in public (don't want to be "treated like a baby")

Parental Influences on Peer Relations

- Patterns of parent-child interaction provide working models of how people should interact with each other
Could children get along without their parents in middle childhood?

video: los abandonados
- it’s too simplistic to say that children without supportive parents lack morality or social competence
- children in the stage of middle childhood are able to survive without adult assistance
- sometimes that ability is called upon even in the heart of a city
- this is Guatemala City, the capital of the Central American country Guatemala

How do these children show the characteristics of middle childhood?
A New Sense of Self

Self-Concept
Self-Esteem

Development of Self-Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Typical Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categorical identification</td>
<td>&quot;I'm 6 years old.&quot; &quot;I have blue eyes.&quot; &quot;I can kick a ball far.&quot; &quot;I know my ABC's.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4-7 years)</td>
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<td>Comparative assessments</td>
<td>&quot;My picture is the best one.&quot; &quot;What problem are you on?&quot; &quot;I am a good athlete.&quot; &quot;I'm smart.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8-11 years)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal implications</td>
<td>&quot;I'm blonde, which is good because boys like blondes.&quot; &quot;I am an honest person, so people trust me.&quot;</td>
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<td>(12-15 years)</td>
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Development of Self-Esteem

- **Erikson**: Middle childhood – issue of **industry vs. inferiority**
  - To maintain positive self-esteem (i.e., self-evaluation of worth)
  - Self-esteem is an important index of mental health
  - Low self-esteem is linked to depression, anxiety, and academic and social maladjustment

Scales of Self-Esteem

Children indicate the picture or statement which most closely applies to them
Main Points: Middle Childhood

Middle Childhood
Bio-Social-Behavioral Shift

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<th>Biological Domain</th>
<th>Social Domain</th>
<th>Behavioral Domain</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of baby teeth and gain of permanent teeth</td>
<td>Peer-group participation and deliberate instruction</td>
<td>Increased memory capacity; strategic remembering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth spurt in frontal lobes and overall brain size</td>
<td>Rule-based games without direct adult supervision</td>
<td>Concrete operations and logical classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp increase in EEG coherence</td>
<td>Instrumental exchange morality and social comparison</td>
<td>Decreased egocentrism; improved perspective taking</td>
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