Psychosocial Development in Early Childhood

Children's playings are not sports and should be deemed as their most serious actions.

—Michele de Montaigne, *Essays*, 1575

Focus *Buffy Sainte-Marie, Artist and Educator**

Buffy Sainte-Marie has made a major impact on Canadian culture and on the lives of countless Aboriginal children throughout North America. Born at the Piapot (Cree) reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan, and raised by adoptive parents (who were themselves part Mi'kmaq) in Maine and Massachusetts, she distinguished herself throughout her life, earning a Ph.D. in fine art, and degrees in oriental philosophy and education.

Buffy Sainte-Marie

As a student in the 1960s, she became a highly popular singer and songwriter of folk and protest songs, many of which reflected her experiences as an Aboriginal woman growing up in a mainstream culture that had very inaccurate and misguided understandings of Aboriginal culture, the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to North American society, and the dire need for support for Aboriginal children and youth.

Her hit songs, like "Until It's Time for You to Go," and "Universal Soldier," were focal songs of the 1960s, bringing her great fame and fortune, and were recorded by over 200 artists in 16 languages. In the 1960s, she sought to combine her very successful singing career with contact with Aboriginal communities, striving to find a way to bridge the gap between mainstream and Aboriginal cultures. Thanks to her concerts throughout the world, she had the opportunity to meet with indigenous people in many countries, recognizing many common difficulties that Aboriginal people everywhere face when marginalized by a majority culture. She used her wealth to make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal children in Canada and the United States. She established the Nihewan (a Cree word meaning "talk Cree," or "be your culture") Foundation in 1969, an educational organization dedicated to Aboriginal youth, to prepare children for success in school, and to promote a more accurate understanding of Aboriginal peoples internationally and in their own communities.

In 1976, with the birth of her son, she stopped recording, but later began appearing in television episodes of *Sesame Street*, in which she presented material on Aboriginal culture in North America, reaching young people in Canada, the United States, and around the world with the message that Aboriginal people are an important part of Canadian and American society.

The Nihewan Foundation has expanded to focus on Aboriginal curriculum for elementary school children, with the Cradleboard Teaching Project, which is dedicated to developing teaching materials on North American Aboriginal cultures. The purpose of the project is to encourage the development of a healthy sense of self-esteem, identity, and pride in Aboriginal children, and to improve relations between indigenous and colonial populations. The project combines traditional Aboriginal culture with high-tech innovations, connecting classrooms of children from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In 1993 she helped establish a

* Sources of biographical information on Buffy Sainte-Marie were Hunter (1999), King (2000), Saint-Marie (1996), and Wilson (1996).

Juno award category for Aboriginal Canadian music. In recognition of her impact on North American culture she has won many awards and distinctions, including the Order of Canada, and a Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Indian College Fund. She has continued with her love of teaching, teaching digital art as an adjunct professor of fine arts at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina, and at York University in Toronto, and combines her concert career with her work with the Cradleboard Teaching Project.

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Buffy Sainte-Marie's life as an Aboriginal Canadian growing up in mainstream American society made her recognize the innaccurate perceptions non-Aboriginal people had of the cultures and traditions of Aboriginal peoples throughout North America. She became determined to change those perceptions and is working to ensure that young children in Aboriginal communities have positive educational experiences at a critical point in their development.

The years from ages 3 to 6 are pivotal ones in children's psychosocial development. As children's self-concept grows stronger, they learn what sex they are and begin to act accordingly. Their behaviour also becomes more socially directed.

In this chapter we discuss preschool children's understanding of themselves and their feelings. We see how their identification of themselves as male or female arises and how it affects their behaviour. We describe the activity on which children typically spend most of their time: play. We consider the influence, for good or ill, of what parents do. Finally, we discuss relationships with siblings and other children.

After you have read and studied this chapter, you should be able to answer each of the Guidepost questions that appear at the top of the next page. Look for them again in the margins, where they point to important concepts throughout the chapter. To check your understanding of these Guideposts, review the end-of-chapter summary. Checkpoints throughout the chapter will help you verify your understanding of what you have read.

The Developing Self

"Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle," said Alice in Wonderland, after her size had abruptly changed—again. Solving Alice's "puzzle" is a lifelong process of getting to know one's self.

The Self-concept and Cognitive Development

The **self-concept** is our image of ourselves. It is what we believe about who we are—our total picture of our abilities and traits. It is "a *cognitive construction,* . . . a system of descriptive and evaluative representations about the self," which determines how we feel about ourselves and guides our actions (Harter, 1996, p. 207). The sense of self also has a social aspect: Like Buffy Sainte-Marie, who had to deal with the misperceptions about Aboriginal cultures throughout her life, children incorporate into their self-image their growing understanding of how others see them.

self-concept Sense of self; descriptive and evaluative mental picture of one's abilities and traits

The picture of the self comes into focus in toddlerhood, as children develop self-awareness (refer back to chapter 8). The self-concept becomes clearer and more compelling as a person gains in cognitive abilities and deals with the developmental tasks of childhood, of adolescence, and then of adulthood.

Early Self-concept Development: The Continuous Self

How does the self-concept change in early childhood? A shift in self-awareness may occur near the age of 4, as autobiographical memory and a more sophisticated theory of mind develop. When 3½- and 4-year-olds were shown a videotape or photograph, taken a few minutes earlier, of a researcher placing a large sticker on their heads—an act of which they had been unaware—the children instantly reached up to feel and remove the sticker. Two-year-olds and younger 3-year-olds did not do that. Yet when shown the same thing happening in a mirror, the younger children did seem aware that a sticker was on their heads.

Does this mean that these children recognized themselves in a mirror but not in a photograph or videotape? That does not seem likely. Nor does it seem likely that they did not remember participating in a photograph session a few minutes earlier. A likelier explanation is that because younger children's memories are generic rather than autobiographical, they may not have thought of the events in the videotape or photograph as having happened to *them* (Povinelli, Landau, & Perilloux, 1996).

Self-Definition: A Neo-Piagetian View

By age 4, Jason's attempts at **self-definition** are becoming more comprehensive as he begins to identify a cluster of characteristics to describe himself:

> My name is Jason and I live in a big house with my mother and father and sister, Lisa. I have a kitty that's orange and a television set in my own room. . . . I like pizza and I have a nice teacher. I can count up to 100, want to hear me? I love my dog, Skipper. I can climb to the top of the jungle gym, I'm not scared! Just happy. You can't be happy *and* scared, no way! I have brown hair, and I go to preschool. I'm really strong. I can lift this chair, watch me! (Harter, 1996, p. 208)

The way Jason describes himself is typical of children his age. He talks mostly about concrete, observable behaviours; external characteristics, such as physical features; preferences; possessions; and members of his household. He mentions particular skills (running and climbing) rather than general abilities (being athletic). His self-descriptions are unrealistically positive, and they frequently spill over into demonstrations; what he *thinks* about himself is almost inseparable from what he *does.* Not until middle childhood (around age 7) will he describe himself in terms of generalized traits, such as *popular, smart,* or *dumb;* recognize that he can have conflicting emotions; and be self-critical while holding a positive overall self-concept.

During the past 25 years, researchers have become interested in pinpointing the intermediate changes that make up this "age 5 to 7 shift." An analysis based on neo-Piagetian theory (Case, 1985, 1992; Fischer, 1980) describes the 5 to 7 shift as occurring in three steps, which actually form a continuous progression.[*] At 4, Jason is at the first step: His statements about himself are **single representations**—isolated, one-dimensional items. His thinking jumps from particular to particular, without logical connections. At this stage he cannot imagine having two emotions at once ("You can't be happy *and* scared"). He cannot decentre, in part because of his limited working memory capacity, and so he cannot consider different aspects of himself at the same time. His thinking is all-or-nothing. He cannot acknowledge that his **real self**, the person he actually is, is not the same as his **ideal self**, the person he would like to be. So he describes himself as a paragon of virtue and ability.

At about age 5 or 6, Jason moves up to the second step, as he begins to link one aspect of himself to another: "I can run fast, and I can climb high. I'm also strong. I can throw a ball real far, I'm going to be on a team some day!" (Harter, 1996, p. 215) However, these **representational mappings**—logical connections between parts of his image of himself—are still expressed in completely positive, all-or-nothing terms. Since good and bad are opposites, he cannot see how he might be good at some things and not at others.

The third step, *representational systems,* takes place in middle childhood (see chapter 14), when children begin to integrate specific features of the self into a general, multidimensional concept. As all-or-nothing thinking declines, Jason's self-descriptions will become more balanced ("I'm good at hockey but bad at arithmetic").

Understanding Emotions

"I hate you!" Maya, age 5, shouts to her mother. "You're a mean mommy!" Angry because her mother sent her to her room for pinching her baby brother, Maya cannot imagine ever loving her mother again. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for making the baby cry?" her father asks Maya a little later. Maya nods, but only because she knows what response he wants. In truth, she feels a jumble of emotions—not the least of which is feeling sorry for herself.

Understanding their own emotions helps children to guide their behaviour in social situations and to talk about feelings (Laible & Thompson, 1998). It enables them to control the way they show their feelings and to be sensitive to how others feel (Garner & Power, 1996). Much of this development occurs during the preschool years.

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[*] This discussion of children's developing understanding of themselves from age 4 on, including their understanding of their emotions, is indebted to Susan Harter (1990, 1993, 1996, 1998).

Because early emotional experience occurs within the context of the family, it should not be surprising that family relationships affect the development of emotional understanding. A study of 41 preschoolers found a relationship between security of attachment to the mother and a child's understanding of negative emotions observed in others, such as fear, anger, and sadness—both as observed among their peers, and as inferred from stories enacted by puppets. Securely attached children apparently feel more comfortable discussing sensitive issues involving these emotions with their mothers (Laible & Thompson, 1998).

Preschoolers can talk about their feelings and often can discern the feelings of others, and they understand that emotions are connected with experiences and desires (Saarni, Mumme, & Campos, 1998). However, they still lack a full understanding of such self-directed emotions as shame and pride, and they have trouble reconciling conflicting emotions, such as being happy about getting a new bicycle but disappointed because it's the wrong colour (Kestenbaum & Gelman, 1995).

Emotions Directed toward the Self

Emotions directed toward the self, such as shame and pride, develop during the third year, after children gain self-awareness. These emotions depend on internalization of parental standards of behaviour. But even children a few years older often lack the cognitive sophistication to recognize such emotions and what brings them on.

In one study (Harter, 1993), 4- to 8-year-olds were told two stories. In the first story, a child takes a few coins from a jar after being told not to do so; in the second story, a child performs a difficult gymnastic feat—a flip on the bars. Each story was presented in two versions: one in which a parent sees the child doing the act, and another in which no one sees the child. The children were asked how they and the parent would feel in each circumstance.

The answers revealed a gradual progression in understanding of feelings about the self (Harter, 1996). At ages 4 to 5, children did not say that either they or their parents would feel pride or shame. Instead they used such terms as "worried" or "scared" (for the money jar incident) and "excited" or "happy" (about the gymnastic accomplishment). At 5 to 6, children said their parents would be ashamed or proud of them but did not acknowledge feeling these emotions themselves. At 6 to 7, children said they would feel proud or ashamed, but only if they were observed. At 7 to 8, children acknowledged that even if no one saw them, they would feel ashamed or proud of themselves. By this age, the standards that produce pride and shame appear to be fully internalized. Until that happens, children need the prod of parental observation—a sort of emotional "scaffolding."

Simultaneous Emotions

Part of the confusion in young children's understanding of their feelings is inability to recognize that they can experience different emotional reactions at the same time. Children gradually acquire an understanding of simultaneous emotions between ages 4 and 12 (Harter, 1996):

- *Level 0:* At first children do not understand that *any* two feelings can coexist. A child at the stage of *single representations* may say, "You can't have two feelings at the same time because you only have one mind!" The child cannot even acknowledge feeling two *similar* emotions at once (such as happy and glad).
- *Level 1:* Children are developing separate categories for positive and negative emotions—and can differentiate between emotions within each category, such as "happy" and "glad," or "mad" and "sad." They can now be aware of two emotions at the same time, but only if both are either positive or negative and are directed toward the same target ("If my brother hit me, I would be mad and sad").
- *Level 2:* Children capable of *representational mappings* can recognize having two feelings of the same kind directed toward different targets ("I was excited about going to Mexico and glad to see my grandparents"). However, they cannot acknowledge holding contradictory feelings ("I couldn't feel happy and scared at the same time; I would have to be two people at once!").

- *Level 3:* Children who have developed *representational systems* can integrate their sets of positive and negative emotions. They can understand having contrary feelings at the same time, but only if they are directed toward different targets. Ashley can express a negative feeling toward her baby brother ("I was mad at Tony, so I pinched him") and a positive feeling toward her father ("I was happy my father didn't spank me"), but she cannot recognize that she has positive and negative feelings (anger and love) toward both.
- *Level 4:* Older children can describe conflicting feelings toward the same target ("I'm excited about going to my new school, but I'm a little scared too").

In this study, not until children were 10 or 11 did they seem to understand conflicting emotions (Level 4). In later research, kindergartners, especially girls, showed this understanding (J. R. Brown & Dunn, 1996). The different findings may reflect differences in methodology. In the earlier study, the children were asked to tell their own stories involving mixed feelings; thus, narrative skills as well as understanding of emotions were involved. In the later study, only 1 in 4 kindergartners was able to recount such a story from personal experience. However, when *told* a story about, for example, a child receiving a present but not being allowed to open it, or riding a two-wheeled bicycle for the first time, 1 in 3 could identify conflicting emotions, and most could explain the emotions when told what they were.

Individual differences in understanding conflicting emotions seem to go back at least to age 3. Three-year-olds who could identify whether a face looked happy or sad and could tell how a puppet felt when enacting a situation involving happiness, sadness, anger, or fear were better able at the end of kindergarten to explain a story character's conflicting emotions. These children tended to come from families that often discussed why people behave as they do (J. R. Brown & Dunn, 1996).

Guidepost 2

How do young children develop initiative and self-esteem?

initiative versus guilt Erikson's third crisis in psychosocial development, in which children balance the urge to pursue goals with moral reservations that may prevent carrying them out

Erikson: Initiative versus Guilt

The need to deal with conflicting feelings about the self is at the heart of the third crisis of personality development identified by Erik Erikson (1950): **initiative versus guilt.** The conflict arises from the growing sense of purpose, which lets a child plan and carry out activities, and the growing pangs of conscience the child may have about such plans.

Preschool children can do—and want to do—more and more. At the same time, they are learning that some of the things they want to do meet social approval, while others do not. How do they reconcile their desire to *do* with their desire for approval?

This conflict marks a split between two parts of the personality: the part that remains a child, full of exuberance and a desire to try new things and test new powers, and the part that is becoming an adult, constantly examining the propriety of motives and actions. Children who learn how to regulate these opposing drives develop the "virtue" of *purpose,* the courage to envision and pursue goals without being unduly inhibited by guilt or fear of punishment (Erikson, 1982).

If this crisis is not resolved adequately, said Erikson, a child may turn into an adult who is constantly striving for success or showing off, or who is inhibited and unspontaneous or self-righteous and intolerant, or who suffers from impotence or psychosomatic illness. With ample opportunities to do things on their own—but under guidance and consistent limits—children can attain a healthy balance between the tendency to overdo competition and achievement and the tendency to be repressed and guilt-ridden.

Self-esteem

self-esteem The judgment a person makes about his or her self-worth

Children cannot articulate a concept of self-worth until about age 8, but they show by their behaviour that they have one (Harter, 1990, 1993, 1996). Young children's **self-esteem**—the judgment they make about their worth—is not based on a realistic appraisal of abilities or personality traits. In fact, young children usually overrate their abilities. Although they can make judgments about their competence at various activities, they are not yet able to rank them in importance; and they tend to accept the judgments of adults, who often give positive, uncritical feedback (Harter, 1990, 1996, 1998).

Self-esteem in early childhood tends to be global—"I am good" or "I am bad" (Harter, 1996, 1998). Parents' supportive behaviours—listening to a child, reading stories, making snacks, kissing away tears—are major contributors to self-esteem (Haltiwanger & Harter, 1988). Not until middle childhood do personal evaluations of competence and adequacy (based on internalization of parental and societal standards) normally become critical in shaping and maintaining a sense of self-worth (Harter, 1990, 1996, 1998).

When self-esteem is high, a child is motivated to achieve. However, if self-esteem is *contingent* on success, children may view failure or criticism as an indictment of their worth and may feel helpless to do better. About one-third to one-half of preschoolers, kindergartners, and first-graders show elements of this "helpless" pattern: self-denigration or self-blame, negative emotion, lack of persistence, and lowered expectations for themselves (Burhans & Dweck, 1995; Ruble & Dweck, 1995). Instead of trying a different way to complete a puzzle, as a child with unconditional self-esteem might do, "helpless" children feel ashamed and give up, or go back to an easier puzzle they have already done. They do not expect to succeed, and so they do not try. Whereas older children who fail may conclude that they are dumb, preschoolers interpet poor performance as a sign of being "bad." Furthermore, they believe that "badness" is permanent. This sense of being a bad person may persist into adulthood. To avoid fostering the "helpless" pattern, parents and teachers can give children specific, focused feedback rather than criticizing the child as a person ("Look, the tag on your shirt is showing in front," not "Can't you see your shirt is on backwards? When are you going to learn to dress yourself?").

Gender

Gender identity, awareness of one's femaleness or maleness and all it implies in a particular society, is an important aspect of the developing self-concept. How different are young boys and girls? What causes those differences? How do children develop gender identity, and how does it affect their attitudes and behaviour?

Gender Differences

Gender differences are psychological or behavioural differences between the sexes. Here girls seem to have a biological advantage; they are less vulnerable than boys, develop faster, are less reactive to stress, and are more likely to survive infancy (Keenan & Shaw, 1997). One of the earliest *behavioural* differences, appearing as early as age 2, is in the choice of toys and play activities and of playmates of the same sex (Turner & Gervai, 1995).

Still, while some gender differences become more pronounced after age 3, boys and girls on average remain more alike than different. A landmark review of more than 2,000 studies found few significant gender differences (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). The clearest difference is that boys, from preschool age on, act more aggressively than girls, both physically and verbally (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Turner & Gervai, 1995). Most studies find that girls are more empathic and prosocial (Keenan & Shaw, 1997), and some find that girls are more compliant, and cooperative with parents and seek adult approval more than boys do (N. Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, & Miller, 1989; M. L. Hoffman, 1977; Maccoby, 1980; Turner & Gervai, 1995).

Overall, intelligence test scores show no gender differences (Keenan & Shaw, 1997). This is not surprising, since the most widely used tests are designed to eliminate gender bias (Neisser et al., 1996). Females tend to do better at verbal tasks (but not analogies), at mathematical computation, and at tasks requiring fine motor and perceptual skills, while males excel in most spatial abilities and in abstract mathematical and scientific reasoning (Halpern, 1997).

Some of these cognitive differences, which seem to exist across cultures, begin quite early in life. Girls' superiority in perceptual speed and verbal fluency appears during infancy and toddlerhood, and boys' greater ability to mentally manipulate figures and shapes and solve mazes becomes evident early in the preschool years. Other differences do not become apparent in children of average ability until pre-adolescence or beyond (Halpern, 1997; Levine, Huttenlocher, Taylor, & Langrock, 1999).

gender identity Awareness, developed in early childhood, that one is male or female

As toddlers, boys and girls are equally likely to hit, bite, and throw temper tantrums, and they are just as likely to show "difficult" temperament. Around age 4, however, problem behaviour diminishes in girls, whereas boys tend to get in trouble or "act up." This absence of problem behaviour among girls persists until adolescence, when they become more prone to anxiety and depression (Keenan & Shaw, 1997).

Possible reasons for this divergence may lie in the biological and cognitive differences reported above. Lower reactivity to stress may enable girls to deal with frustration or anger in a more controlled way, and girls' greater facility with language may enable them to communicate their feelings in healthier ways. Another reason may be a difference in the way boys and girls are socialized. Girls, more than boys, are taught to control themselves, to share toys, and to think about how their actions affect others; and their greater empathic ability may help them internalize social standards (Keenan & Shaw, 1997).

We need to remember, of course, that gender differences are valid for large groups of boys and girls but not necessarily for individuals. By knowing a child's sex, we cannot predict whether that *particular* boy or girl will be faster, stronger, smarter, more compliant, or more assertive than another child.

Perspectives on Gender Development: Nature and Nurture

What accounts for gender differences, and why do some of them emerge with age? The most influential explanations, until recently, centred on the differing experiences and social expectations that boys and girls meet almost from birth (Halpern, 1997; Neisser et al., 1996). These experiences and expectations concern three related aspects of gender identity: *gender roles, gender-typing,* and *gender stereotypes.*

Gender roles are the behaviours, interests, attitudes, skills, and personality traits that a culture considers appropriate for males or females. All societies have gender roles. Historically, in most cultures, women have been expected to devote most of their time to caring for the household and children, while men were providers and protectors. Women were expected to be compliant and nurturant; men, to be active, aggressive, and competitive. Today, gender roles in North American and European cultures have become more diverse and more flexible. **Gender-typing** (refer back to chapter 8), the acquisition of a gender role, takes place early in childhood; but children vary in the degree to which they take on gender roles.

Gender stereotypes are preconceived generalizations about male or female behaviour ("All females are passive and dependent; all males are aggressive and independent"). Gender stereotypes pervade many cultures. They are seen to some degree in children as young as 2½ or 3, increase during the preschool years, and reach a peak at age 5 (Haugh, Hoffman, & Cowan, 1980; Ruble & Martin, 1998; J. E. Williams & Best, 1982). As we might expect from our discussion of self-concept, younger preschoolers often attribute positive qualities to their own sex and negative qualities to the other sex. Still, at this early age *both* boys and girls call boys strong, fast, and cruel, and girls fearful and helpless (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

How do young children acquire gender roles, and why do they adopt gender stereotypes? Are these purely social constructs, or do they reflect underlying biological differences between males and females? Do social and cultural influences create gender differences, or merely accentuate them?

Today investigators are uncovering evidence of biological explanations for gender differences: genetic, hormonal, and neurological. These explanations are not either–or. Both nature and nurture probably play important parts in what it means to be male or female. Biological influences are not necessarily universal, inevitable, or unchangeable; nor are social and cultural influences easily overcome.

Let's look, then, at four perspectives on gender development (summarized in Table 11-1): *biological, psychoanalytic, cognitive,* and *socialization-based* approaches. Each of these perspectives can contribute to our understanding; none fully explains why boys and girls turn out differently in some respects and not in others.

Checkpoint ✔

Can you . . .

✔ Summarize the main behavioural and cognitive differences between boys and girls?

gender roles Behaviours, interests, attitudes, skills, and traits that a culture considers appropriate for males or for females

gender-typing Socialization process by which children learn appropriate gender roles

gender stereotypes Preconceived generalizations about male or female role behaviour

Table 11-1	Four Perspectives on Gender Development		
Theories	**Major Theorists**	**Key Processes**	**Basic Beliefs**
Biological Approach		Genetic, neurological, and hormonal activity	Many or most behavioural differences between the sexes can be traced to biological differences.
Psychoanalytic Approach			
Psychosexual theory	Sigmund Freud	Resolution of unconscious emotional conflict	Gender identity occurs when child identifies with same-sex parent.
Cognitive Approach			
Cognitive-developmental theory	Lawrence Kohlberg	Self-categorization	Once a child learns she is a girl or he is a boy, child sorts information about behaviour by gender and acts accordingly.
Gender-schema theory	Sandra Bern, Carol Lynn Martin, & Charles F. Halverson	Self-categorization based on processing of cultural information	Child organizes information about what is considered appropriate for a boy or a girl on the basis of what a particular culture dictates, and behaves accordingly. Child sorts by gender because the culture dictates that gender is an important schema.
Socialization Approach			
Social cognitive theory	Albert Bandura	Modelling, reinforcement, and teaching	Gender-typing is a result of interpretation, evaluation, and internalization of socially transmitted standards.

Biological Approach

The existence of similar gender roles in many cultures suggests that some gender differences, at least, may be biologically based. Indeed, there is some evidence of biological differences that may affect behaviour.

By age 5, when the brain reaches approximate adult size, boys' brains are about 10 per cent larger than girls' brains, mostly because boys have more grey matter in the cerebral cortex, whereas girls have greater neuronal density. What these findings may tell us about brain organization and functioning is unknown (Reiss, Abrams, Singer, Ross, & Denckla, 1996).

We do have evidence that size differences in the *corpus callosum*, the band of tissue joining the right and left hemispheres, are correlated with verbal fluency (Hines, Chiu, McAdams, Bentler, & Lipcamon, 1992). Since girls have a larger corpus callosum, better coordination between the two hemispheres may help explain girls' superior verbal abilities (Halpern, 1997).

Hormones in the bloodstream before or about the time of birth may affect the developing brain and influence gender differences. The male hormone testosterone, along with low levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin, seems related to aggressiveness, competitiveness, and dominance, perhaps through action on certain brain structures, such as the hypothalamus and amygdala (Bernhardt, 1997). Attempts also have been made to link prenatal hormonal activity with other aspects of brain functioning, such as those involved in spatial and verbal skills (Neisser et al., 1996), but this research is controversial (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

Other research focuses on children with unusual hormonal histories. Girls with a disorder called *congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH)* have high prenatal levels of *androgens* (male sex hormones). Although raised as girls, they tend to develop into "tomboys," showing preferences for "boys' toys," rough play, and male playmates, as well as strong spatial skills (Berenbaum & Snyder, 1995). *Estrogens* (female sex hormones),

identification In Freudian theory, the process by which a young child adopts characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours of the parent of the same sex

gender constancy Awareness that one will always be male or female; also called *sex-category constancy*

on the other hand, seem to have less influence on boys' gender-typed behaviour. Since these studies are natural experiments, they cannot establish cause and effect; other factors besides hormonal differences, such as early interactions with parents, may play a role. Also, hormonal differences may themselves be affected by environmental or other factors. In any case, such atypical patterns of behaviour have not been found in children with normal hormonal variations (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

All in all, the lack of strong evidence of biological bases of behaviour—together with the fact that psychological and behavioural differences among individuals of the same sex are much larger than the differences between the sexes—suggests that the role of biology in gender differences is limited.

Psychoanalytic Approach

"Dad, where will you live when I grow up and marry Mommy?" asks Timmy, age 4. From the psychoanalytic perspective, Timmy's question is part of his acquisition of gender identity. That process, according to Freud, is one of **identification,** the adoption of characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours of the parent of the same sex. Freud and other classical psychoanalytic theorists considered identification an important personality development of early childhood; some social learning theorists also have used the term.

According to Freud, identification will occur for Timmy when he represses or gives up the wish to possess the parent of the other sex (his mother) and identifies with the parent of the same sex (his father). Although this explanation for gender development has been influential, it has been difficult to test. Despite some evidence that preschoolers tend to act more affectionately toward the opposite-sex parent and more aggressively toward the same-sex parent (Westen, 1998), the theory has little research support (Maccoby, 1992). Most developmental psychologists today favour other explanations.

Cognitive Approach

Sarah figures out she is a girl because people call her a girl. She discovers that she will always be a girl. She comes to understand gender the same way she comes to understand everything else: by actively thinking about and constructing her own gender-typing. This is the heart of Lawrence Kohlberg's (1966) cognitive-developmental theory.

According to Kohlberg, children classify themselves as male or female and then organize their behaviour around that classification. They do this by adopting behaviours they perceive as consistent with their gender. Thus, Sarah prefers dolls to trucks because she views playing with dolls as consistent with her idea of herself as a girl. According to Kohlberg, **gender constancy,** more recently called *sex-category constancy*—a child's realization that his or her sex will always be the same—leads to the acquisition of gender roles. Once children realize they are permanently male or female, they adopt what they see as gender-appropriate behaviours.

When does gender constancy emerge? Answers vary from ages 3 to 7. This wide range in findings may be due to the kinds of questions asked, to differing criteria, to differences in children's reasoning at different ages, or to methodological differences (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Szkrybalo & Ruble, 1999).

Gender constancy does not appear all at once. Instead, it seems to occur in three stages (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Szkrybalo & Ruble, 1999). First, between 2 and 3, children become aware of their own gender and that of others. Next, a girl realizes that she will grow up to be a woman, and a boy that he will grow up to be a man—in other words, that gender remains the same across time. Children at this stage may base judgments about gender on superficial external appearances and stereotyped behaviours. Finally comes the realization that a girl remains a girl even if she has a short haircut and wears pants, and a boy remains a boy even if he has long hair and earrings.

There is little evidence for Kohlberg's view that gender constancy is the key to gender-typing. Long before children attain the final stage of gender constancy, they show gender-typed preferences (Bussey & Bandura, 1992; Ruble & Martin, 1998). They categorize activities and objects by gender, know a lot about what males and females do, and often acquire gender-appropriate behaviours (G. D. Levy & Carter, 1989; Luecke-Aleksa,

Anderson, Collins, & Schmitt, 1995). Even at 2½, girls show more interest in dolls and boys in cars, and both begin to prefer being with children of their own sex (Ruble & Martin, 1998).

It is possible that gender constancy, once achieved, may further sensitize children to gender-related information (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Five-year-old boys who have reached or are on the brink of gender constancy pay more attention to male characters on television and watch more sports and action programs than other boys their age (Luecke-Aleksa et al., 1995). Later, children develop more complex beliefs about gender and become more flexible in their views about gender roles (Ruble & Martin, 1998; M. G. Taylor, 1996).

A second cognitive approach, which combines elements of cognitive-developmental and social learning theory, is **gender-schema theory.** Among its leading proponents is Sandra Bem (1983, 1985, 1993); others are Carol Lynn Martin and Charles F. Halverson (1981).

A *schema* is a mentally organized network of information that influences a particular category of behaviour. According to gender-schema theory, children begin (very likely in infancy) to categorize events and people, organizing their observations around the schema, or category, of gender. They organize information on this basis because they see that their society classifies people that way: Males and females wear different clothes, play with different toys, and use separate bathrooms. Once children know what sex they are, they take on gender roles by developing a concept of what it means to be male or female in their culture. Children then match their own behaviour to their culture's gender schema—what boys and girls are "supposed" to be and do.

According to this theory, gender schemas promote gender stereotypes by influencing judgments about behaviour. When a new boy his age moves in next door, 4-year-old Brandon knocks on his door, carrying a toy truck. He assumes that the new boy will like the same toys he likes: "boys' toys." Children are quick to accept gender labels; when told that an unfamiliar toy is for the other sex, they will drop it like a hot potato, and they expect others to do the same (C. L. Martin, Eisenbud, & Rose, 1995; Ruble & Martin, 1998). However, it is not clear that gender schemas are at the root of this behaviour. Nor does gender-schema theory explain why some children show less stereotyped behaviour than others (Bussey & Bandura, 1992, 1999; Ruble & Martin, 1998).

Another problem with both gender-schema theory and Kohlberg's theory is that gender-typing does not necessarily become stronger with increased gender knowledge; in fact, the opposite is often true (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). One explanation, which has some research support, is that while children are constructing and then consolidating their gender schemas (around ages 4 to 6), they notice and remember only information consistent with them. Later, around age 8, schemas become more complex as children begin to take in and integrate contradictory information, such as the fact that many girls wear pants (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Welch-Ross & Schmidt, 1996).

Cognitive approaches to gender development have made an important contribution by exploring how children think about gender and what they know about it at various ages. However, these approaches do not fully explain the link between knowledge and conduct. What prompts children to act out gender roles, and why do some children become more strongly gender-typed than others? Some investigators point to socialization (Bussey & Bandura, 1992).

Socialization-Based Approach

Anna, at age 5, insisted on dressing in a new way. She wanted to wear leggings with a skirt over them, and boots—indoors and out. When her mother asked her why, Anna replied, "Because Katie dresses like this—and Katie's the king of the girls!"

According to Albert Bandura's (1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999) **social cognitive theory,** an expanded version of social learning theory, children learn gender roles through socialization. Bandura sees gender identity as the outcome of a complex array of interacting influences, personal and social. The way a child interprets experiences with parents, teachers, peers, and cultural institutions plays a central part.

As in traditional social learning theory, children initially acquire gender roles by observing models. Children generally pick models they see as powerful or nurturing. Typically, one model is a parent, often of the same sex, but children also pattern their behaviour after other adults or (as Anna did) after peers. Behavioural feedback, together with direct teaching

Anna's enjoyment of her truck shows that she is not restricted in her play by gender stereotypes. According to Bem's gender-schema theory, parents can help their children avoid such sterotypes by encouraging them to pursue their own interests, even when these interests are unconventional for their sex.

gender-schema theory Theory, proposed by Bem, that children socialize themselves in their gender roles by developing a mentally organized network of information about what it means to be male or female in a particular culture

social cognitive theory Albert Bandura's expansion of social learning theory; holds that children learn gender roles through socialization

by parents and other adults, reinforces gender-typing. A boy who models his behaviour after his father or male peers is commended for acting "like a boy." A girl receives compliments on a pretty dress or hairstyle.

Socialization begins in infancy, long before a conscious understanding of gender begins to form. Gradually, as children begin to regulate their own activities, standards of gender-related behaviour become internalized. A child no longer needs praise, rebukes, or a model's presence to act in socially appropriate ways. Children feel good about themselves when they live up to their internal standards and feel bad if they don't. A substantial part of this shift from socially guided control to self-regulation of gender preferences may take place between ages 3 and 4 (Bussey & Bandura, 1992).

Early childhood, then, is a prime period for socialization. Let's look more closely at how parents, peers, and the media influence gender development.

Parental Influences It is not clear how much effect parental influences actually have (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Some studies have found that parental treatment affects children's gender *knowledge* more than their *behaviour* (Fagot & Leinbach, 1995; Turner & Gervai, 1995). A girl may know that baseball bats are "supposed" to be for boys but may want to use one anyway.

One reason for discrepancies in findings may be that researchers study different kinds of gender-related behaviour and use different measuring instruments (Turner & Gervai, 1995). Gender-typing has many facets, and the particular combination of "masculine" and "feminine" traits and behaviours that a child acquires is an individual matter. Also, today many parents' own gender roles are less stereotyped than they once were.

In general, boys are more strongly gender-socialized in play preferences than girls. Parents, especially fathers, tend to show more discomfort if a boy plays with a doll than if a girl plays with a truck (Lytton & Romney, 1991). Girls have more freedom than boys in their clothes, games, and choice of playmates (Miedzian, 1991).

In egalitarian households, the father's role in gender socialization seems especially important (Fagot & Leinbach, 1995). In an observational study of 4-year-olds in Cambridge, England, and Budapest, Hungary, boys and girls whose fathers did more housework and child care were less aware of gender stereotypes and engaged in less gender-typed play (Turner & Gervai, 1995). Gender-role socialization also tends to be untraditional in single-parent families headed by mothers or fathers who must play both the customary masculine and feminine roles (Leve & Fagot, 1997).

Peer Influences Even in early childhood, the peer group is a major influence on gender-typing (Turner & Gervai, 1995). Peers begin to reinforce gender-typed behaviour by age 3, and their influence increases with age. Children show more disapproval of boys who act "like girls" than of girls who are tomboys (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Although both 3- and 4-year-olds know what behaviours peers consider gender-appropriate, 4-year-olds more consistently apply these judgments to themselves (Bussey & Bandura, 1992). In a Toronto study of stated preferences for descriptions of fictitious boys and girls, children as young as 5 years preferred fictitious boys or girls whose behaviour was more in keeping with the stereotyped behaviour of the children's own sex. Boys preferred masculine boys and girls, while girls preferred feminine boys and girls (Zucker, Wilson-Smith, Kurita, & Stern, 1995).

In the study of British and Hungarian 4-year-olds' play preferences (Turner & Gervai, 1995), these preferences seemed less affected by the parents' gender-typing than were other aspects of their behaviour; at this age, such choices may be more strongly influenced by peers and the media than by the models children see at home. Generally, however, peer and parental attitudes reinforce each other. Social cognitive theory sees peers, not as an independent influence for socialization but as part of a complex cultural system that encompasses parents and other socializing agents as well (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Cultural Influences The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky analyzed how cultural practices affect development. When, for example, a Hindu girl in a village in Nepal touched the plow that her brother was using, she was severely rebuked. In this way she learned that as a female she was restricted from acts her brother was expected to perform (Skinner, 1989).

A major channel for the transmission of cultural attitudes toward gender is television. Although women in television programs and commercials are now more likely to be working outside the home and men are sometimes shown caring for children or doing the marketing, for the most part life as portrayed on television continues to be more stereotyped than life in the real world (Coltrane & Adams, 1997; Ruble & Martin, 1998).

Social cognitive theory predicts that children who watch a lot of television will become more gender-typed by imitating the models they see on the screen. Dramatic supporting evidence emerged from a natural experiment in several western Canadian towns, one of which, dubbed "Notel" to protect the anonymity of the participants, obtained access to television transmission for the first time in 1973. Children who had had relatively unstereotyped attitudes in Notel showed marked increases in traditional views 2 years later (Kimball, 1986). In another study, children who watched a series of non-traditional episodes, such as a father and son cooking together, had less stereotyped views than children who had not seen the series (J. Johnston & Ettema, 1982).

Children's books have long been a source of gender stereotypes. Today, friendship between boys and girls is portrayed more often, and girls are braver and more resourceful. Still, male characters predominate, females are more likely to need help, and males are more likely to give it (Beal, 1994; Evans, 1998). So pervasive is the influence of these stereotypes that when children are exposed to an alternative, non-sexist version of a fairy tale, they expect it to follow the usual stereotyped patterns and may even be indignant when it does not (Evans, 1998).

Major strengths of the socialization approach include the breadth and multiplicity of processes it examines and the scope for individual differences it reveals. But this very complexity makes it difficult to establish clear causal connections between the way children are raised and the way they think and act. Just what aspects of the home environment and the peer culture promote gender-typing? Underlying this question is a chicken-and-egg problem: Do parents and peers treat boys and girls differently because they *are* different, or because the culture says they *should be* different? Does differential treatment *produce* or *reflect* gender differences? Perhaps, as social cognitive theory suggests, there is a bi-directional relationship. Further research may help to show how socializing agents mesh with children's own tendencies in gender-related attitudes and behaviour.

Play: The Business of Early Childhood

Carmen, age 3, pretends that the pieces of cereal floating in her bowl are "fishies" swimming in the milk, and she "fishes," spoonful by spoonful. After breakfast, she puts on her mother's hat, picks up a briefcase, and is a "mommy" going to work. She rides her tricycle through the puddles, comes in for an imaginary telephone conversation, turns a wooden block into a truck and says, "Vroom, vroom!" Carmen's day is one round of play after another.

It would be a mistake to dismiss Carmen's activities as no more than "having fun." Play is the work of the young, and it contributes to all domains of development. Through play, children stimulate the senses, learn how to use their muscles, coordinate sight with movement, gain mastery over their bodies, and acquire new skills. Through pretending, they try out roles, cope with uncomfortable emotions, gain understanding of other people's viewpoints, and construct an image of the social world. They develop problem-solving skills, experience the joy of creativity, and become more proficient with language (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; J. I. F. Davidson, 1998; Furth & Kane, 1992; J. E. Johnson, 1998; Nourot, 1998; Singer & Singer, 1990). By making "tickets" for an imaginary train trip or "reading" eye charts in a "doctor's office," they build emergent literacy (Christie, 1991, 1998). As they sort blocks of different shapes, count how many they can pile on each other, or announce that "my tower is bigger than yours," they lay the foundation for mathematical concepts (Jarrell, 1998). As they play with computers, they learn new ways of thinking (Silvern, 1998).

Preschoolers engage in different types of play at different ages. Particular children have different styles of play, and they play at different things. Researchers categorize children's play by its *content* (what children do when they play) and its *social dimension* (whether they play alone or with others). What can we learn about children by seeing how they play?

Types of Play

Carol, at 3, "talked for" a doll, using a deeper voice than her own. Michael, at 4, wore a kitchen towel as a cape and "flew" around as Batman. These children were engaged in pretend play involving make-believe people or situations.

Pretend play is one of four categories of play identified by Piaget and others as showing increasing levels of cognitive complexity (Piaget, 1951; Smilansky, 1968). The simplest form, which begins during infancy, is active **functional play** involving repetitive muscular movements (such as rolling or bouncing a ball). As gross motor skills improve, preschoolers run, jump, skip, hop, throw, and aim.

The second level of cognitive complexity is seen in toddlers' and preschoolers' **constructive play** (using objects or materials to make something, such as a house of blocks or a crayon drawing). Four-year-olds in preschools or daycare centres may spend more than half their time in this kind of play, which becomes more elaborate by ages 5 and 6 (J. E. Johnson, 1998).

The third level, **pretend play,** also called *fantasy play, dramatic play,* or *imaginative play,* rests on the symbolic function, which emerges near the end of the sensorimotor stage (Piaget, 1962). Pretend play typically begins during the last part of the second year, increases during the preschool years, and then declines as school-age children become more involved in the fourth cognitive level of play, *formal games with rules,* such as hopscotch and marbles.

An estimated 10 to 17 per cent of preschoolers' play and 33 per cent of kindergartners' is pretend play, often using dolls and real or imaginary props (Bretherton, 1984; Garner, 1998; J. E. Johnson, 1998; K. H. Rubin, Fein, & Vandenberg, 1983). Children who often play imaginatively tend to cooperate more with other children and to be more popular and more joyful than those who don't (Singer & Singer, 1990). Children who watch a great deal of television tend to play less imaginatively, perhaps because they are accustomed to passively absorbing images rather than generating their own (Howes & Matheson, 1992). Television also seems to have influenced the kinds of roles preschoolers choose to play. Instead of modelling their dramatic play after real people, they more often pretend to be television adventure heroes (French & Pena, 1991).

Toward the end of this period and into middle childhood, *rough-and-tumble play* involving wrestling, kicking, and sometimes chasing, becomes more common (Pellegrini, 1998).

The Social Dimension of Play

In the 1920s, Mildred B. Parten (1932) identified six types of early play, ranging from the least to the most social (see Table 11-2). She found that as children get older, their play tends to become more interactive and more cooperative. At first they play alone, then alongside other children, and finally, together.

Is solitary play less mature than social play? Parten thought so. She and some other observers suggest that young children who play alone may be at risk of developing social, psychological, and educational problems. However, most researchers now view Parten's characterization of children's play development as too simplistic. Non-social play does not necessarily diminish through the years, to be replaced by social play; instead, children of all ages engage in all of Parten's categories of play. Although solitary active play becomes less common between ages 3 and 6, solitary constructive play does not. Furthermore, playing near other children and watching what they do is often a prelude to joining in their play (K. H. Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998).

Much non-social play consists of activities that foster cognitive, physical, and social development. In one study of 4-year-olds, some kinds of non-social play, such as *parallel constructive play* (for example, working on puzzles near another child) were most common among children who were good problem solvers, were popular with other children, and were seen by teachers as socially skilled (K. Rubin, 1982). Such play may reflect independence and maturity, not poor social adjustment. Children need some time alone to concentrate on tasks and problems, and some simply enjoy individual activities more than group activities. We need to look, then, at what children *do* when they play, not just at whether they play

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functional play In Piaget's and Smilansky's terminology, the lowest cognitive level of play, involving repetitive muscular movements

constructive play In Piaget's and Smilansky's terminology, the second cognitive level of play, involving use of objects or materials to make something

pretend play In Piaget's and Smilansky's terminology, the third cognitive level of play, involving imaginary people or situations; also called *fantasy play, dramatic play,* or *imaginative play*

What's your view ?

- How do you think use of computers might affect preschool children's cognitive and social development?

Table 11-2	Parten's Categories of Social and Non-social Play
Category	**Description**
Unoccupied behaviour	The child does not seem to be playing, but watches anything of momentary interest.
Onlooker behaviour	The child spends most of the time watching other children play. She talks to them, asking questions or making suggestions, but does not enter into the play. She is definitely observing particular groups of children rather than anything that happens to be exciting.
Solitary independent play	The child plays alone with toys that are different from those used by nearby children and makes no effort to get close to them.
Parallel play	The child plays independently, but among the other children, playing with toys like those used by the other children, but not necessarily playing with them in the same way. Playing *beside* rather than *with* the others, the parallel player does not try to influence the other children's play.
Associative play	The child plays with other children. They talk about their play, borrow and lend toys, follow one another, and try to control who may play in the group. All the children play similarly if not identically; there is no division of labour and no organization around any goal. Each child acts as she or he wishes and is interested more in being with the other children than in the activity itself.
Cooperative or organized supplementary play	The child plays in a group organized for some goal—to make something, play a formal game, or dramatize a situation. One or two children control who belongs to the group and direct activities. By a division of labour, children take on different roles and supplement each other's efforts.

Source: Adapted from Parten, 1932, pp. 249–251.

alone or with someone else (K. H. Rubin et al., 1998). Some investigators have modified Parten's system to more realistically gauge developmental and individual differences in play by assessing both its cognitive and social dimensions (Cheah, Nelson, & Rubin, 2001; Coplan & Rubin, 1998).

One kind of play that does become more social during the preschool years is imaginative play, which shifts from solitary pretending to dramatic play involving other children (K. H. Rubin et al., 1998; Singer & Singer, 1990). Young children follow unspoken rules in organizing dramatic play, staking out territory ("I'm the daddy; you're the mommy"), negotiating ("Okay, I'll be the daddy tomorrow"), or setting the scene ("Watch out—there's a train coming!"). As imaginative play becomes increasingly collaborative, storylines become more complex and more innovative. Dramatic play offers rich opportunities to practise interpersonal and language skills and to explore social roles and conventions (Bodrova & Leong, 1998; Christie, 1991; J. E. Johnson, 1998; Nourot, 1998).

How Gender Influences Play

A tendency toward sex segregation in play seems to be universal. It is common among preschoolers as young as 3 and becomes even more common in middle childhood (Maccoby, 1988, 1990, 1994; Ramsey & Lasquade, 1996; Snyder, West, Stockemer, Gibbons, & Almquist-Parks, 1996).

Boys and girls play differently (Serbin, Moller, Gulko, Powlishta, & Colburne, 1994). Most boys like rough-and-tumble play in fairly large groups; girls are inclined to quieter play with one playmate (Benenson, 1993). The difference is not just based on liking different kinds of activities. Even when boys and girls play with the same toys, they play more socially with others of the same sex (Neppl & Murray, 1997). Boys play more boisterously; girls play more cooperatively, taking turns to avoid clashes (Maccoby, 1980).

Children's developing gender concepts seem to influence dramatic play. Whereas boys' stories often involve danger and discord (such as mock battles), girls' plots generally

Checkpoint ✔

Can you . . .

✔ Describe four cognitive levels of play, according to Piaget and others, and six categories of social and non-social play, according to Parten?

✔ Explain the connection between the cognitive and social dimensions of play?

focus on maintaining or restoring orderly social relationships (playing house) (Fagot & Leve, 1998; Nourot, 1998).

From an evolutionary viewpoint, gender differences in children's play provide practice for adult behaviours important for reproduction and survival. Boys' rough-and-tumble play mirrors adult males' competition for dominance and status, and for fertile mates. Girls' play parenting prepares them to care for the young (Geary, 1999).

How Culture Influences Play

The amount of time spent in play varies around the world. In non-literate societies, children spend less time playing, and girls spend more time on household chores (Larson & Verma, 1999). The frequency of specific forms of play differs across cultures and is influenced by the play environments adults set up for children, which in turn reflect cultural values (Bodrova & Leong, 1998).

One observational study compared 48 middle-class Korean-American and 48 middle-class Anglo-American children in separate preschools (Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995). The Anglo-American preschools, in keeping with typical American values, encouraged independent thinking, problem solving, and active involvement in learning by letting children select from a wide range of activities. The Korean-American preschool, in keeping with traditional Korean values, emphasized developing academic skills and completing tasks. The Anglo-American preschools encouraged social interchange among children and collaborative activities with teachers. In the Korean-American preschool, children were allowed to talk and play only during outdoor recess.

Not surprisingly, the Anglo-American children engaged in more social play, whereas the Korean-Americans engaged in more unoccupied or parallel play. Korean-American children played more cooperatively, often offering toys to other children—very likely a reflection of their culture's emphasis on group harmony. Anglo-American children were more aggressive and often responded negatively to other children's suggestions, reflecting the competitiveness of American culture.

An ethnographic study compared pretend play among 2½- to 4-year-olds in five Irish-American families in the United States and nine Chinese families in Taiwan. Play was primarily social in both cultures, but Irish-American children were more likely to pretend with other children and Chinese children with caregivers, who often used the play as a vehicle to teach proper conduct. Children in both cultures used objects (such as toy soldiers) in play, though this was more typical of Irish-American children, whose play tended to centre on fantasy or movie themes (Haight, Wang, Fung, Williams, & Mintz, 1999).

Parenting

As children gradually become their own persons, their upbringing can be a complex challenge. Parents must deal with small people who have minds and wills of their own, but who still have a lot to learn about what kinds of behaviour work well in a civilized society. How do parents discipline children and teach them self-discipline? Are some ways of parenting more effective than others?

Forms of Discipline

Discipline refers to methods of teaching children character, self-control, and acceptable behaviour. It can be a powerful tool for socialization. What forms of discipline work best? Researchers have looked at a wide range of techniques. Although discipline involves imparting knowledge and skill, it is often confused with punishment and control (Psychosocial Paediatrics Committee, Canadian Paediatric Society [CPS], 1997). There are other ways of disciplining children that are more effective than using punishment.

Reinforcement and Punishment

"What are we going to do with that child?" Noel's mother says. "The more we punish him, the more he misbehaves!"

Parents sometimes punish children to stop undesirable behaviour, but children usually learn more from being reinforced for good behaviour. *External* reinforcements may be tan-

Guidepost 5

How do parenting practices influence development?

discipline Methods of moulding children's character and of teaching them self-control and acceptable behaviour

gible (candy, money, toys, or gold stars) or intangible (a smile, a word of praise, a hug, extra attention, or a special privilege). Whatever the reinforcement, the child must see it as rewarding and must receive it fairly consistently after showing the desired behaviour. Eventually, the behaviour should provide its own *internal* reward: a sense of pleasure or accomplishment. In Noel's case, his parents often ignore him when he behaves well but scold or spank him when he acts up. In other words, they unwittingly reinforce his *mis*behaviour by giving him attention when he does what they do *not* want him to do.

Still, at times punishment is commonly used. Children may have to be prevented from running out into traffic or hitting another child. Sometimes a child is wilfully defiant. In such situations, punishment, if consistent, immediate, and clearly tied to the offence, may be effective. It should be administered calmly, in private, and aimed at eliciting compliance, not guilt. It is most effective when accompanied by a short, simple explanation (Baumrind, 1996a, 1996b; CPS, 1997). However, the Canadian Paediatric Society recommends against corporal punishment, like disciplinary spanking, and recommends alternatives like time-out and away-from-the-moment reasoning (CPS, 1997).

Imprudent punishment can be counterproductive. Children who are punished harshly and frequently may have trouble interpreting other people's actions and words; they may attribute hostile intentions where none exist (B. Weiss, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1992). Young children who have been punished harshly may later act aggressively, even though the punishment is intended to stop what a parent sees as purposely aggressive behaviour (Nix et al., 1999). Or such children may become passive because they feel helpless. Children may become frightened if parents lose control and may eventually try to avoid a punitive parent, undermining the parent's ability to influence behaviour (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

Corporal punishment has been defined as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, to correct or control the child's behaviour" (Straus, 1994a, p. 4). It can include spanking, hitting, slapping, pinching, shaking (which can be fatal to infants), and other physical acts. Its use is extremely common in Canada and the United States—so much so that it is as a pervasive part of the socialization of many children. Corporal punishment is popularly believed to be more effective than other remedies and to be harmless if done in moderation by loving parents. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that these beliefs are untrue, that corporal punishment can have serious negative consequences, and that it should not be used (MacMillan et al., 1999; Straus, 1999; Straus & Stewart, 1999; see Box 11-1). Outside of the family and despite Section 43 of the Canadian Criminal Code, provincial laws like Ontario's Day Nurseries Act prohibit the use of corporal punishment, harsh or degrading measures, or the deprivation of basic needs in disciplining children by daycare workers (Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990).

corporal punishment Use of physical force with the intention of causing pain, but not injury, to correct or control behaviour

Power Assertion, Induction, and Withdrawal of Love

Reinforcement and punishment are not the only ways to influence behaviour. Contemporary research has focused on three broader categories of discipline: *power assertion, induction,* and *temporary withdrawal of love.*

Power assertion is intended to stop or discourage undesirable behaviour through physical or verbal enforcement of parental control; it includes demands, threats, withdrawal of privileges, and spanking. **Inductive techniques** are designed to induce desirable behaviour (or discourage undesirable behaviour) by reasoning with a child; they include setting limits, demonstrating logical consequences of an action, explaining, discussing, and getting ideas from the child about what is fair. **Withdrawal of love** may take the form of ignoring, isolating, or showing dislike for a child. The choice and effectiveness of a disciplinary strategy may depend on the personality of the parent, the personality and age of the child, and the quality of their relationship, as well as on culturally based customs and expectations (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

Most parents call upon more than one strategy, depending on the situation. Parents tend to use reasoning to get a child to show concern for others. They use power assertion to stop play that becomes too rough, and they use both power assertion and reasoning to deal with lying and stealing (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

power assertion Disciplinary strategy to discourage undesirable behaviour through physical or verbal enforcement of parental control

inductive techniques Disciplinary techniques to induce desirable behaviour by appealing to a child's sense of reason and fairness

withdrawal of love Disciplinary strategy that may involve ignoring, isolating, or showing dislike for a child

Recent court challenges of Section 43 of the Canadian Criminal Code, which was ultimately upheld, have made corporal punishment a live issue today. While some professionals view corporal punishment as verging on child abuse (Straus, 1994b), others defend it as necessary or desirable in moderation, when prudently administered by loving parents (Baumrind, 1996a, 1996b).

Corporal punishment has diminished in many European countries since the passage of laws against it in Sweden in 1979, followed by Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Croatia, and Latvia; and a number of other countries are considering such laws. Yet in Canada, considered to be a society that is tolerant of physical punishment (Durrant, 1995), an estimated 70 to 90 per cent of parents spank their children, and one-third of those report doing so at least once a week (Durrant, Broberg, & Rose-Krasnor, 1999). Canadian mothers are more likely than Swedish mothers to spank their children, and the likelihood of spanking is higher if mothers have a positive attitude towards spanking and believe that their children's behaviours are changeable (Durrant et al., 1999). In fact, 80 per cent of respondents in a retrospective study of non-abused adults in Ontario reported having experienced some form of corporal punishment as children (MacMillan et al., 1999).

Some form of corporal, or bodily, punishment is widely used on infants, and it is virtually universal among parents of toddlers. In interviews with a nationally representative sample of 991 parents in 1995, 35 per cent reported using corporal punishment—usually hand slapping—on infants during the previous year, and fully 94 per cent on 3- and 4-year-olds. About half of the parents were still hitting children by age 12, one-third at age 14, and 13 per cent at age 17 (Straus & Stewart, 1999).*

Opponents of corporal punishment are not against disciplining children, but they maintain there are more effective, less risky or harmful ways to do it. A large body of research has consistently found negative outcomes from its use. Apart from the risk of injury to the child, these outcomes include increased physical aggression in childhood and anxiety disorders, depression, alcohol problems, antisocial behaviour, or partner abuse later in life (MacMillan et al., 1999; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994).

Most of this research was cross-sectional or retrospective, and the few longitudinal studies did not consider that the spanked children may have been aggressive in the first place, and that their aggressive behaviour might have led their parents to spank them. Since 1997 several large, American, nationally representative landmark studies (Brezina, 1999; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Simons, Lin, & Gordon, 1998; Straus, Sugarman, & Giles-Sims, 1997; and Straus & Paschall, 1999) have overcome this defect by taking account of the child's own behaviour at the time of first measurement.

These studies, which included youngsters ranging from age 3 through adolescence, found that corporal punishment is counterproductive: the more a child receives, the more aggressive or antisocial the child's behaviour becomes, and the more likely that child is to show antisocial or other maladaptive behaviour as a child and as an adult (Straus & Stewart, 1999).

Why is this so? One answer is that physical punishment stimulates aggressive behaviour by leading children to imitate the punisher and to consider infliction of pain an acceptable response to problems. Furthermore, as with any punishment, the effectiveness of spanking diminishes with repeated use; children may feel free to misbehave if they are willing to take the consequences. Reliance on physical punishment may weaken parents' authority when children become teenagers and most parents recognize that spanking becomes inappropriate—if not impractical (AAP Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 1998; McCord, 1996; Psychosocial Paediatrics Committee of the Canadian Paediatric Society, 1997).

Spanking may even inhibit cognitive development, according to data on 2- to 4-year-olds and 5- to 9-year-olds from the U.S. National Longitudinal Study of Youth. Children whose mothers used little or no corporal punishment (such as spanking or hand-slapping) during a 2-week period showed greater cognitive gains than children who received corporal punishment (Straus & Paschall, 1999).

The CPS Psychosocial Paediatrics Committee urges parents to avoid spanking. Instead, the committee suggests such inductive methods as helping children learn to use words to express feelings, giving children choices and helping them evaluate the consequences, and modelling orderly behaviour and collaborative conflict resolution. The committee recommends positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviours, and verbal reprimands, "time-outs," or removal of privileges to discourage undesired behaviours—all within a positive, supportive, loving parent–child relationship.

What's your view?

Did your parents ever spank you? If so, how often and in what kinds of situations? Would you spank, or have you ever spanked, your own child? Why or why not?

Check it out!

For more information and relevant links on this topic, go to the Online Learning Centre: **www.mcgrawhill.ca/college/papalia.**

*Unless otherwise referenced, the material and viewpoint in this box are based on Straus (1999) and Straus & Stewart (1999).

The strategy parents choose may depend not only on their belief in its effectiveness but on their confidence that they can carry it out. In one observational study of parental handling of sibling conflicts, mothers were more likely to use inductive techniques, while fathers were more likely to use power-assertive strategies. Still, what both mothers and fathers did most often was not to intervene at all (Perozynski & Kramer, 1999).

An important goal of socialization is to help a child internalize parental teachings in the form of self-discipline. Induction is usually the most effective method, and power assertion the least effective, of getting children to accept parental standards (M. L. Hoffman, 1970a,

1970b). Kindergartners whose mothers reported using reasoning were more likely to see the moral wrongness of behaviour that hurts other people (as opposed to merely breaking rules) than children whose mothers took away privileges (Jagers, Bingham, & Hans, 1996). This may be because removal of privileges encourages children to focus on themselves and their own feelings rather than on the way their behaviour affects others (McCord, 1996).

The effectiveness of parental discipline may hinge on how well the child understands and accepts the parent's message, both cognitively and emotionally (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). For the child to accept the message, the child has to recognize it as appropriate; so parents need to be fair and accurate, and clear and consistent about their expectations. They need to fit their actions to the misdeed and to the child's temperament and cognitive and emotional level. A child may be more motivated to accept the message if the parents are normally warm and responsive, if they arouse the child's empathy for someone harmed by the misdeed, and if they make the child feel less secure in their affections as a result of the misbehaviour (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

One point on which experts agree is that a child interprets and responds to discipline in the context of an ongoing relationship with a parent. Some researchers therefore have looked beyond specific parental practices to overall styles, or patterns, of parenting.

Parenting Styles

Why does Stacy hit and bite the nearest person when she cannot finish a jigsaw puzzle? What makes David sit and sulk when he cannot finish the puzzle, even though his teacher offers to help him? Why does François work on the puzzle for 20 minutes and then shrug and try another? Why are children so different in their responses to the same situation? Temperament is a major factor, of course; but some research suggests that styles of parenting may affect children's competence in dealing with their world.

Baumrind's Model

In her pioneering research, Diana Baumrind (1971, 1996b; Baumrind & Black, 1967) studied 103 preschool children from 95 families. Through interviews, testing, and home studies, she measured how children were functioning, identified three parenting styles, and described typical behaviour patterns of children raised according to each.

Authoritarian parents, according to Baumrind, value control and unquestioning obedience. They try to make children conform to a set standard of conduct and punish them arbitrarily and forcefully for violating it. They are more detached and less warm than other parents. Their children tend to be more discontented, withdrawn, and distrustful.

Permissive parents value self-expression and self-regulation. They make few demands and allow children to monitor their own activities as much as possible. When they do have to make rules, they explain the reasons for them. They consult with children about policy decisions and rarely punish. They are warm, non-controlling, and undemanding. Their preschool children tend to be immature—the least self-controlled and the least exploratory.

Authoritative parents value a child's individuality but also stress social constraints. They have confidence in their ability to guide children, but they also respect children's independent decisions, interests, opinions, and personalities. They are loving and accepting, but also demand good behaviour, are firm in maintaining standards, and are willing to impose limited, judicious punishment when necessary, within the context of a warm, supportive relationship. They explain the reasoning behind their stands and encourage verbal give-and-take. Their children apparently feel secure in knowing both that they are loved and what is expected of them. These preschoolers tend to be the most self-reliant, self-controlled, self-assertive, exploratory, and content.

Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin (1983) added a fourth parenting style—**neglectful, or uninvolved**—to describe parents who, sometimes because of stress or depression, focus on their own needs rather than on those of the child. Neglectful parenting, discussed in chapter 9, has been linked with a variety of behavioural disorders in childhood and adolescence (Baumrind, 1991; Parke & Buriel, 1998; R. A. Thompson, 1998).

Why does authoritative parenting seem to enhance children's competence? It may be because authoritative parents set sensible expectations and realistic standards. By making clear, consistent rules, they let children know what is expected of them. In authoritarian

authoritarian Baumrind's term for parenting style emphasizing control and obedience

permissive Baumrind's term for parenting style emphasizing self-expression and self-regulation

authoritative Baumrind's term for parenting style blending respect for a child's individuality with an effort to instill social values

neglectful/uninvolved Maccoby and Martin's term for parents who focus on their own needs rather than on those of the child

homes, children are so strictly controlled that often they cannot make independent choices about their own behaviour. In permissive homes, children receive so little guidance that they may become uncertain and anxious about whether they are doing the right thing. In authoritative homes, children know when they are meeting expectations and can decide whether it is worth risking parental displeasure to pursue a goal. These children are expected to perform well, fulfill commitments, and participate actively in family duties as well as family fun. They know the satisfaction of meeting responsibilities and achieving success. Parents who make reasonable demands show that they believe their children can meet them—and that the parents care enough to insist that they do.

The question of how much freedom children should be allowed is a major source of conflict between parents and children in mainstream Canadian culture. Most Canadian parents believe that even preschoolers are entitled to their own opinions and should have control over some aspects of their lives so as to promote competence and self-esteem. However, the precise boundaries where a child's area of autonomy ends and the area of parental control begins are matters of negotiation and may vary among ethnic and socio-economic groups (Nucci & Smetana, 1996). When conflict arises, an authoritative parent can teach the child positive ways to communicate his or her own point of view and negotiate acceptable alternatives. ("If you don't want to throw away those smelly clam shells you found, where do you think we should keep them?") Internalization of this broader set of skills, not just of specific behavioural demands, may well be a key to the success of authoritative parenting (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

Support and Criticisms of Baumrind's Model

Baumrind's work has inspired much research, and the superiority of authoritative parenting (or similar conceptions of parenting style) has repeatedly been supported (Baumrind, 1989; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). For example, a longitudinal study of 585 ethnically and socio-economically diverse families in Tennessee and Indiana from pre-kindergarten through Grade 6 found that four aspects of early supportive parenting—warmth, use of inductive discipline, interest and involvement in children's contacts with peers, and proactive teaching of social skills—predicted children's later behavioural, social, and academic outcomes (Pettit, Bates, & Dodge, 1997).

Similar principles apply to teachers and other caregivers. In a low-income daycare centre for 3- to 6-year-olds at risk for developing disruptive behaviour, teachers' laxity (similar to permissive parenting) tended to elicit misbehaviour; and children's misbehaviour, in turn, elicited either laxity or overreactivity (similar in some ways to authoritarian parenting) from the teachers. The results suggest that teachers, like parents, need to learn how to set and enforce firm, consistent, and appropriate rules (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998).

Still, because Baumrind's model seems to suggest that there is one "right" way to raise children well, it has provoked some controversy. Since Baumrind's findings were correlational, they merely establish associations between each parenting style and a particular set of child behaviours. They do not show that different styles of child rearing *cause* children to be more or less competent. Sandra Scarr (1992, 1993), for example, argues that heredity normally exerts a much greater influence than parenting practices.

It is also impossible to know whether the children Baumrind studied were, in fact, raised in a particular style. It may be that some of the better-adjusted children were raised inconsistently, but by the time of the study their parents had adopted the authoritative pattern. Furthermore, parents often behave differently in different situations (Holden & Miller, 1999).

In addition, Baumrind did not consider innate factors, such as temperament, that might have affected children's competence and exerted an influence on the parents. Parents of "easy" children may be more likely to respond to the child in a permissive or authoritative manner, while parents of "difficult" children may become more authoritarian.

Cultural Differences in Parenting Styles

Baumrind's categories reflect the dominant North American view of child development and may be misleading when applied to some cultures or socio-economic groups. Among Chinese parents, for example, obedience and strictness—rather than being associated with harshness and domination—have more to do with caring, concern, and involvement and

with maintaining family harmony. Traditional Chinese culture, with its emphasis on respect for elders, stresses adults' responsibility to maintain the social order by teaching children socially proper behaviour. This obligation is carried out through firm and just control and governance of the child. Although Asian parenting is frequently described as authoritarian, the warmth and supportiveness that characterize Chinese family relationships more closely resemble Baumrind's authoritative parenting. Authoritarian parenting in China is associated with aggression and low acceptance by peers, whereas authoritative parenting in China is associated with high levels of social and academic adjustment (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997).

In general, Canadian parents adopt a positive parenting style, characterized by offering support and encouragement to children (Landy & Tam, 1996). Positive parenting approaches are associated with good developmental outcomes in social development and helping behaviour. However, children are particularly vulnerable to poor developmental outcomes if their family situations contain more than several risk factors including family dysfunction, low social support, being in a single-parent family, having a teenage parent, and living in poverty. The impact of these factors on child development is typically diminished by positive parenting practices (Landy & Tam, 1996).

The traditional Aboriginal parenting style in Canada is much like Baumrind's permissive style. However, as is the case with the preferred parenting style in families of Asian background, there is no detrimental influence on Aboriginal children's development (Johnson & Cremo, 1995). Among Canadian immigrant groups, there are differences in parenting style, which may reflect differences in social values in the countries of origin. Egyptian Canadians, for example, were found to score higher on measures of authoritarianism and collectivism than were Anglo-Canadians (Rudy & Grusec, 2001). The best predictor of authoritarian parenting style in Egyptian Canadian parents was high levels of collectivism, in comparison to individualism, whereas in Anglo-Canadians the best predictor of authoritarian parenting was a combination of collectivism and lack of warmth (Rudy et al., 2001). It may be misleading, then, to consider parenting styles without looking at the goals parents are trying to achieve and the constraints their life circumstances present.

Promoting Altruism and Dealing with Aggression and Fearfulness

Three specific issues of especial concern to parents, caregivers, and teachers of preschool children are how to promote altruism, curb aggression, and deal with fears that often arise at this age.

Pro-social Behaviour

Alex, at 3½, responded to two fellow preschoolers' complaints that they did not have enough modelling clay, his favourite plaything, by giving them half of his. Alex was showing **altruism**—acting out of concern for another person with no expectation of reward. Altruistic acts like Alex's often entail cost, self-sacrifice, or risk. Altruism is the heart of **pro-social behaviour,** voluntary activity intended to benefit another.

Even before the second birthday, children often help others, share belongings and food, and offer comfort. Such behaviours may reflect a growing ability to imagine how another person might feel (Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992). An analysis of 179 studies found increasing evidence of concern for others from infancy throughout childhood and adolescence (Fabes & Eisenberg, 1996). Although girls tend to be more pro-social than boys, the differences are small (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

In a study of pro-social behaviour in children, a team of researchers in Nova Scotia gave children opportunities to share stickers with others, either at no cost to themselves (choosing stickers for themselves and for another person), or at a cost (choosing between taking two stickers or taking one for themselves and giving one to another person). In both cases, 3- and 4-year old children shared, but much more sharing took place in the no-cost condition. When given the choice between immediately receiving a sticker, or waiting awhile to be given a sticker for themselves as well as for another person, older children tended to delay their gratification in order to share, while 3-year-olds tended to choose being given a sticker immediately (Moore, Barresi, & Thompson, 1998).

Guidepost 6

Why do young children help or hurt others, and why do they develop fears?

altruism Behaviour intended to help others out of inner concern and without expectation of external reward

pro-social behaviour Any voluntary behaviour intended to help others

The family is important as a model and as a source of explicit standards of behaviour (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Parents of pro-social children are typically pro-social themselves. They point out models of pro-social behaviour and steer children toward stories, films, and television programs that depict cooperation, sharing, and empathy and encourage sympathy, generosity, and helpfulness (Singer & Singer, 1998). Relationships with siblings (discussed later in this chapter) provide an important "laboratory" for trying out caring behaviour and learning to see another person's point of view. Peers and teachers also can model and reinforce pro-social behaviour (Eisenberg, 1992; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Parents encourage pro-social behaviour when they use inductive disciplinary methods instead of power-assertive techniques (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). When Sara took candy from a store, her father did not lecture her on honesty, spank her, or tell her what a bad girl she had been. Instead, he explained how the owner of the store would be harmed by her failure to pay for the candy, and he took her back to the store to return it. When such incidents occur, Sara's parents ask, "How do you think Mr. Jones feels?" or, "How would you feel if you were Mr. Jones?"

Motives for pro-social behaviour may change as children grow older and develop more mature moral reasoning (see chapters 13 and 16). Preschoolers tend to show egocentric motives; they want to earn praise and avoid disapproval. They weigh costs and benefits and consider how they would like others to act toward them. As children grow older, their motives become less self-centred. They adopt societal standards of "being good," which eventually become internalized as principles and values (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Cultures vary in the degree to which they foster pro-social behaviour. Traditional cultures in which people live in extended family groups and share work seem to foster pro-social values more than cultures that stress individual achievement (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998).

Aggression

When Peter roughly snatches a ball away from Tommy, he is interested only in getting the ball, not in hurting or dominating Tommy. This is **instrumental aggression,** or aggression used as an instrument to reach a goal—the most common type of aggression in early childhood. Between ages 2½ and 5, children commonly struggle over toys and control of space. Aggression surfaces mostly during social play; children who fight the most also tend to be the most sociable and competent. In fact, the ability to show some instrumental aggression may be a necessary step in social development.

Between ages 2 and 4, as children develop more self-control and become better able to express themselves verbally and to wait for what they want, they typically shift from showing aggression with blows to doing it with words (Coie & Dodge, 1998). However, individual differences remain; children who more frequently hit or grab toys from other children at age 2 are likely to be more physically aggressive at age 5 (Cummings, Iannotti, & Zahn-Waxler, 1989). After age 6 or 7, most children become less aggressive as they become more cooperative, less egocentric, more empathic, and better able to communicate. They can now put themselves in someone else's place, can understand why the other person may be acting in a certain way, and can develop more positive ways of dealing with that person.

As aggression declines overall, **hostile aggression**—action intended to hurt another person—proportionately increases (see chapter 14). Some children do not learn to control aggression; they continue to be destructive and anti-social throughout life (Coie & Dodge, 1998).

Are boys more aggressive than girls? Many studies say yes. Indeed, it has been suggested that the male hormone testosterone may underlie aggressive behaviour. From infancy, boys are more likely to grab things from others. As children learn to talk, girls are more likely to rely on words to protest and to work out conflicts (Coie & Dodge, 1998).

However, girls may be more aggressive than they seem; they just show aggressiveness differently (McNeilly-Choque, Hart, Robinson, Nelson, & Olsen, 1996). Boys engage in more **overt aggression,** either instrumental or hostile. Overt aggression, either physical or verbal, is openly directed against its target. Girls tend to practise **relational aggression** (also called *covert, indirect,* or *psychological aggression*). This more subtle kind of aggression consists of damaging or interfering with relationships, reputation, or psychological well-being. It may involve spreading rumours, name-calling, withholding friend-

instrumental aggression Aggressive behaviour used as a means of achieving a goal

hostile aggression Aggressive behaviour intended to hurt another person

overt aggression Aggression openly directed at its target

relational aggression Aggression aimed at damaging or interfering with another person's relationships, reputation, or psychological well-being; also called *covert, indirect,* or *psychological aggression*

ship, or excluding someone from a group. NLSCY data indicate that aggressive girls in Canada experience more difficulty than non-agressive girls in their family and peer relations, and come from homes with higher levels of ineffective parenting, family violence, and difficulties in relations with parents and with siblings. The types of problems they experience, including emotional, self-concept, and behavioural difficulties, are similar to those of aggressive boys (Pepler & Sedighdeilami, 1998).

Sources and Triggers of Aggression What sets off aggression? Why are some children more aggressive than others?

Biology may play a part. So may temperament: Children who are intensely emotional and low in self-control tend to express anger aggressively (Eisenberg, Fabes, Nyman, Bernzweig, & Pinuelas, 1994). Family relations are also important, particularly for children from lower socio-economic levels: Children from the same family show more similarity in aggression levels than do children from different families (Tremblay et al., 1996).

A negative early relationship with the mother is an important factor, which may interact with other risk factors, such as low socio-economic status and single parenthood. In longitudinal studies, insecure attachment and lack of maternal warmth and affection in infancy have predicted aggressiveness in early childhood (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Furthermore, negative parent–child relationships may set the stage for prolonged, destructive sibling conflicts, in which children imitate their parents' hostile behaviour. These coercive family processes (Patterson, 1984) may foster aggressive tendencies. Among 180 low-income 5-year-olds with close-in-age siblings, a combination of rejecting parents (by age 2) and high levels of destructive sibling conflict predicted aggressive or anti-social conduct at home and at school at age 6 (Garcia, Shaw, Winslow, & Yaggi, 2000).

Parents of children who become anti-social often fail to reinforce good behaviour and are harsh or inconsistent, or both, in stopping or punishing misbehaviour (Coie & Dodge, 1998). Parents who back down when confronted with a preschooler's coercive demands (such as whining or shouting when scolded for not going to bed) may reinforce repetition of the undesirable behaviour (G. R. Patterson, 1995). On the other hand, harsh punishment, especially spanking, can backfire; children who are spanked not only suffer frustration, pain, and humiliation (which can be spurs to aggression) but also see aggressive behaviour in an adult model.

Exposure to real or televised violence can trigger aggression (see chapter 14). In a classic social learning experiment (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961), 3- to 6-year-olds individually watched adult models play with toys. Children in one experimental group saw the adult play quietly. The model for a second experimental group began to assemble Tinkertoys, but then spent the rest of the 10-minute session punching, throwing, and kicking a life-size inflated doll. A control group did not see any model. After the sessions, the children, who were mildly frustrated by seeing toys they were not allowed to play with, went into another playroom. The children who had seen the aggressive model acted much more aggressively than those in the other groups, imitating many of the same things they had seen the model say and do. The children who had been with the quiet model were less aggressive than the control group. This finding suggests that parents may be able to moderate the effects of frustration by showing non-aggressive behaviour to their children.

Influence of Culture How much influence does culture have on aggressive behaviour? One research team asked closely matched samples of 30 Japanese and 30 U.S. middle- to upper-middle-class preschoolers to choose pictured solutions to hypothetical conflicts or stressful situations (such as having one's block tower knocked down, having to stop playing and go to bed, being hit, hearing parents argue, or fighting on a jungle gym). The children also were asked to act out and complete such situations using dolls and props. The U.S. children showed more anger, more aggressive behaviour and language, and less control of emotions than the Japanese children (Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta, & Hiruma, 1996).

These results are consistent with child-rearing values in the two cultures. In Japan, anger and aggression are seen as clashing with the emphasis on harmonious relationships. Japanese mothers are more likely than U.S. mothers to use reasoning and induce guilt,

pointing out how aggressive behaviour hurts others. Japanese mothers also show strong disappointment when children fail to meet their behavioural standards. However, the cross-cultural difference in children's anger and aggressiveness was significant even apart from mothers' behaviour, suggesting that temperamental differences also may be at work (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1996).

On the other hand, a correlational study of 207 Russian 3- to 6-year-olds, based on parental questionnaires and nursery-school teachers' ratings of children's behaviour, identified much the same family influences on aggression as have studies in North American and European cultures: parental coercion and lack of responsiveness. Coercive (power-assertive) discipline by either parent was linked with overt aggression in both boys and girls (C. H. Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998).

Fearfulness

Passing fears are common in early childhood. Many 2- to 4-year-olds are afraid of animals, especially dogs. By 6 years, children are more likely to be afraid of the dark. Other common fears are of thunderstorms, doctors, and imaginary creatures (DuPont, 1983; Stevenson-Hinde & Shouldice, 1996). Most of these disappear as children grow older and lose their sense of powerlessness.

Young children's fears stem largely from their intense fantasy life and their tendency to confuse appearance with reality. Sometimes their imaginations become carried away, making them worry about being attacked by a lion or being abandoned. Young children are more likely to be frightened by something that looks scary, such as a cartoon monster, than by something capable of doing great harm, such as a nuclear explosion (Cantor, 1994). For the most part, older children's fears are more realistic and self-evaluative (for example, fear of failing a test), since they know they are being evaluated by others (Stevenson-Hinde & Shouldice, 1996; see Table 11-3).

Fears may come from personal experience or from hearing about other people's experiences (Muris, Merckelbach, & Collaris, 1997). A preschooler whose mother is sick in bed may become upset by a story about a mother's death, even if it is an animal mother. Often fears come from appraisals of danger, such as the likelihood of being bitten by a dog, or are triggered by events, as when a child who was hit by a car becomes afraid to cross the street. Children who have lived through an earthquake, a kidnapping, or some other frightening event may fear that it will happen again (Kolbert, 1994).

Parents can help prevent children's fears by instilling a sense of trust and normal caution without being too protective, and also by overcoming their own unrealistic fears. They can help a fearful child by reassurance and by encouraging open expression of feelings. Ridicule ("Don't be such a baby!"), coercion ("Pat the nice doggie—it won't hurt you"), and logical persuasion ("The closest bear is 20 miles away, locked in a zoo!") are not helpful. Not until elementary school can children tell themselves that what they fear is not real (Cantor, 1994).

Children can also be helped to overcome fears by *systematic desensitization,* a therapeutic technique involving gradual exposure to a feared object or situation. This technique has been used successfully to help children overcome fears ranging from those of snakes to elevators (Murphy & Bootzin, 1973; Sturges & Sturges, 1998).

Relationships with Other Children

Although the most important people in young children's world are the adults who take care of them, relationships with siblings and playmates become more important in early childhood. Virtually every characteristic activity and personality issue of this age, from gender development to pro-social or aggressive behaviour, involves other children. Sibling and peer relationships provide a measuring stick for **self-efficacy,** children's growing sense of capability to master challenges and achieve their goals. By competing with and comparing themselves with other children, they can gauge their physical, social, cognitive, and linguistic competencies and gain a more realistic sense of self (Bandura, 1994).

self-efficacy Sense of capability to master challenges and achieve goals

Table 11-3	Childhood Fears
Age	**Fears**
0–6 months	Loss of support, loud noises
7–12 months	Strangers; heights; sudden, unexpected, and looming objects
1 year	Separation from parent, toilet, injury, strangers
2 years	Many stimuli, including loud noises (vacuum cleaners, sirens and alarms, trucks, and thunder), animals, dark rooms, separation from parent, large objects or machines, changes in personal environment, unfamiliar peers
3 years	Masks, dark, animals, separation from parent
4 years	Separation from parent, animals, dark, noises (including noises at night)
5 years	Animals, "bad" people, dark, separation from parent, bodily harm
6 years	Supernatural beings (e.g., ghost, witches), bodily injury, thunder and lightning, dark, sleeping or staying alone, separation from parent
7–8 years	Supernatural beings, dark, media events (e.g., news reports on the threat of nuclear war or child kidnapping), staying alone, bodily injury
9–12 years	Tests and examinations in school, school performances, bodily injury, physical appearance, thunder and lightning, death, dark

Source: Adapted from Morris & Kratochwill, 1983; Stevenson-Hinde & Shouldice, 1996.

Siblings—or Their Absence

Ties between brothers and sisters often set the stage for later relationships. Let's look at sibling relationships, and then at children who grow up with no siblings.

Brothers and Sisters

"It's mine!"

"No, it's mine!"

"Well, I was playing with it first!"

The earliest, most frequent, and most intense disputes among siblings are over property rights—who owns a toy or who is entitled to play with it. Although exasperated adults may not always see it that way, sibling disputes and their settlement can be viewed as socialization opportunities, in which children learn to stand up for moral principles. Studies of sibling interactions in Canada have shown that conflict and aggression is common, with conflict around property and possession of objects being the most typical (Perlman & Ross, 1997).

Among 40 pairs of 2- and 4-year-old siblings, property disputes arose, on average, about every 15 minutes during a 9-hour observation period. Even children as young as 2½ argued on the basis of clear principles: the owner's right to a toy should take precedence over who was currently using it, but when the toy belonged to both children (as was true in about half the disputes), the current user should have exclusive rights. Parents did not clearly favour claims based on either ownership or possession but were more inclined to stress sharing and avoiding damage, or to suggest alternate playthings (Ross, 1996).

Should parents step into sibling disputes? A home observation of 88 three- to five-year-olds and their older siblings suggests that younger children are more likely to benefit from parental intervention than older ones. When parents stayed out of sibling conflicts, both older and younger pairs, but especially younger ones, tended to behave more antagonistically in later conflicts. However, older pairs developed less positive, close sibling relationships if their mothers intervened (Kramer, Perozynski, & Chung, 1999).

Despite the frequency of conflict, sibling rivalry is *not* the main pattern between brothers and sisters early in life. While some rivalry exists, so do affection, interest, companionship, and influence. Observations spanning 3½ years, which began when younger siblings were about 1½ years old and the older ones ranged from 3 to 4½, found pro-social and play-oriented behaviours to be more common than rivalry, hostility, and competition (Abramovitch, Corter, & Lando, 1979; Abramovitch, Corter, Pepler, & Stanhope, 1986; Abramovitch, Pepler, & Corter, 1982). Older siblings initiated more behaviour, both friendly and unfriendly; younger siblings tended to imitate the older ones. Siblings got

In 1979, to control an exploding population, the People's Republic of China established an official policy of limiting families to one child each. In addition to propaganda campaigns and incentives (housing, money, child care, health care, and preference in school placement) to induce voluntary compliance, millions of involuntary abortions and sterilizations have taken place. People who have had children without first getting a permit faced fines and loss of jobs. By 1985, at least 8 out of 10 young urban couples and half of those in rural areas had only one child (Yang, Ollendick, Dong, Xia, & Lin, 1995), and by 1997, the country's estimated population growth was holding steady at a little more than 1 per cent.

Today the one-child policy is unevenly enforced. Economic growth is exerting a natural check on family size and also making it easier for families who want a second child to pay the fine (Faison, 1997). The State Family Planning Commission has now prohibited forced sterilizations and abortions and has begun to switch to a system stressing education, contraceptive choice, and heavy taxation for families with more than one child. In a small but growing number of counties, fixed quotas and permit requirements have been eliminated (Rosenthal, 1998).

Still, in many Chinese cities, kindergartens and primary classrooms are almost completely filled with children who have no brothers or sisters. This situation marks a great change in Chinese society, in which newlyweds were traditionally congratulated with the wish, "May you have a hundred sons and a thousand grandsons."

Since 1979 the People's Republic of China has officially limited families to one child each. The implications of this policy for children growing up without siblings, cousins, or aunts and uncles are hotly debated by educators, researchers, and politicians.

What kind of future population are the Chinese raising? Among 4,000 third- and sixth-graders, personality differences between only children and those with siblings—as rated by parents, teachers, peers, and the children themselves—were few. In academic achievement and physical growth, only children did about the same as, or better than, those with siblings (Falbo & Poston, 1993). A review of the literature found no significant differences in behaviour problems; the small number of severe problems that did appear in only children were attributed to parental overindulgence and overprotection (Tao, 1998).

Indeed, only children seem to be at a distinct psychological advantage in China. When questionnaires were administered to 731 urban children and adolescents, children with siblings reported higher levels of fear, anxiety, and depression than only children, regardless of sex or age. Apparently children with siblings are less well adjusted in a society that favours and rewards the only child (Yang et al., 1995).

Only children seem to do better cognitively, too. A randomized study in Beijing schools (Jiao, Ji, & Jing, 1996) found that only children outperformed Grade 1 classmates with siblings in memory, language, and mathematics skills. This finding may reflect the greater attention, stimulation, hopes, and expectations that parents shower on a baby they know will be their first and last. Grade 5 only children, who were born before the one-child policy was strongly enforced—and whose parents may have originally planned for a larger family—did not show a pronounced cognitive edge.

Both of these studies used urban samples. Further research may reveal whether the findings hold up in rural areas and small towns, where children with siblings are more numerous, and whether only children maintain their cognitive superiority as they move through school.

China's population policy has wider implications. If it succeeds, most Chinese will eventually lack aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, and cousins, as well as siblings. How this will affect individuals, families, and the social fabric is incalculable.

A more sinister question is this: What happened to the girls? A 1990 census suggests that 5 per cent of all infant girls born in China (some half a million infants born alive each year) are unaccounted for. Suspicions are that many parents, being permitted only one child, had their baby girls killed or let them die of neglect to allow the parents the chance to bear and raise more highly valued sons. A more benign explanation is that these girls were hidden and raised secretly to evade the one-child policy (Kristof, 1991, 1993). In either case, China's one-child policy appears to be having ramifications its developers may not have considered, and concern about these unforeseen effects may be one factor in the current relaxation of enforcement.

What's your view?

Governmental control of reproduction may seem like the ultimate in totalitarianism, but what course of action would you propose for a country that cannot support an exploding population?

Check it out!

For more information on this topic, go to **www.mcgrawhill.ca/college/papalia,** where you will be directed to the website from the Public Broadcasting Corporation about China and reproductive issues.

along better when their mother was not with them. (Squabbling can be a bid for parental attention.) As the younger children reached their fifth birthday, the siblings became less physical and more verbal, both in showing aggression (through commands, insults, threats, tattling, put-downs, bribes, and teasing) and in showing care and affection (by compliments and comforting rather than hugs and kisses).

At least one finding of this research has been replicated in many studies: same-sex siblings, particularly girls, are closer and play together more peaceably than boy-girl pairs (Kier & Lewis, 1998). The quality of relationships with brothers and sisters often carries over to relationships with other children; a child who is aggressive with siblings is likely to be aggressive with friends as well. However, a child who is dominated by an older sibling may be able to take a dominant role with a playmate (Abramovitch et al., 1986).

The Only Child

People often think of only children as spoiled, selfish, lonely, or maladjusted, but research does not bear out this stereotype. According to an analysis of 115 studies, "onlies" do comparatively well (Falbo & Polit, 1986; Polit & Falbo, 1987). In occupational and educational achievement and intelligence, they surpass children with siblings. Only children also tend to be more mature and motivated to achieve and to have higher self-esteem. They do not differ, however, in overall adjustment or sociability. Perhaps these children do better because their parents spend more time with them and focus more attention on them, talk to them more, do more with them, and expect more of them.

Research in China, which mandates one-child families, has produced encouraging findings about only children (see Box 11-2).

Playmates and Friends

Friendships develop as people develop. Toddlers play alongside or near each other, but not until about age 3 do children begin to have friends. Through friendships and interactions with casual playmates, young children learn how to get along with others. They learn that being a friend is the way to have a friend. They learn how to solve problems in relationships, they learn how to put themselves in another person's place, and they see models of various kinds of behaviour. They learn moral values and gender-role norms, and they practise adult roles.

Choosing Playmates and Friends

Preschoolers usually like to play with children of their own age and sex. In preschool, they tend to spend most of their time with a few other children with whom they have had positive experiences and whose behaviour is like their own. Children who have frequent positive experiences with each other are most likely to become friends (Rubin et al., 1998; Snyder et al., 1996). About 3 out of 4 preschoolers have such mutual friendships (Hartup & Stevens, 1999).

The traits that young children look for in a playmate are similar to the traits they look for in a friend (C. H. Hart, DeWolf, Wozniak, & Burts, 1992). In one study, 4- to 7-year-olds rated the most important features of friendships as doing things together, liking and caring for each other, sharing and helping one another, and to a lesser degree, living nearby or going to the same school. Younger children rated physical traits, such as appearance and size, higher than did older ones and rated affection and support lower (Furman & Bierman, 1983). Preschool children prefer pro-social playmates (C. H. Hart et al., 1992). They reject disruptive, demanding, intrusive, or aggressive children and ignore those who are shy, withdrawn, or tentative (Ramsey & Lasquade, 1996; Roopnarine & Honig, 1985).

Well-liked preschoolers and kindergartners, and those who are rated by parents and teachers as socially competent, generally cope well with anger. They respond directly, in ways that minimize further conflict and keep relationships going. They avoid insults and threats. Unpopular children tend to hit back or tattle (Fabes & Eisenberg, 1992).

Not all children without playmates have poor social adjustment, however. Among 567 kindergartners, almost 2 out of 3 socially withdrawn children were rated (through direct observation, teacher questionnaires, and interviews with classmates) as socially and cognitively competent; they simply preferred to play alone (Harrist, Zain, Bates, Dodge, & Pettit, 1997).

Checkpoint ✔

Can you . . .

✔ Explain how the resolution of sibling disputes contributes to socialization?

✔ Tell how birth order and gender affect typical patterns of sibling interaction?

Checkpoint ✔

Can you . . .

✔ Compare development of only children with that of children with siblings?

Guidepost 8

How do young children choose playmates and friends, and why are some children more popular than others?

Characteristics and Effects of Friendships

Preschoolers act differently with their friends and with other children. They have more positive, pro-social interactions, but also more quarrels and fights (Rubin et al., 1998). Children may become just as angry with a friend as with someone they dislike, but they are more likely to control their anger and express it constructively (Fabes, Eisenberg, Smith, & Murphy, 1996).

Friendships are more satisfying—and more likely to last—when children see them as relatively harmonious and as validating their self-worth. Being able to confide in friends and get help from them is less important at this age than when children are older (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996).

Children with friends enjoy school more (Ladd & Hart, 1992). Among 125 kindergartners, those who had friends in their class when they entered in August liked school better 2 months later, and those who kept up these friendships continued to like school better the following May. Children whose friendships are a source of help and self-validation are happier, have more positive attitudes toward school, and feel they can look to classmates for support (Ladd et al., 1996).

Parenting and Popularity

Parenting styles and practices can influence peer relationships. Popular children generally have warm, positive relationships with both mother and father. The parents are likely to be authoritative, and the children to be both assertive and cooperative (Isley, O'Neil, & Parke, 1996; Kochanska, 1992; Roopnarine & Honig, 1985). Children who are insecurely attached or whose parents are harsh, neglectful, or depressed or have troubled marriages are at risk of developing unattractive social and emotional patterns and of being rejected by peers (Rubin et al., 1998).

Children whose parents rely on power-assertive discipline tend to use coercive tactics in peer relations; children whose parents engage in give-and-take reasoning are more likely to resolve conflicts with peers that way (Crockenberg & Lourie, 1996). Children whose parents clearly communicate disapproval rather than anger, as well as strong positive feelings, are more pro-social, less aggressive, and better liked (Boyum & Parke, 1995). Children whose physical play with their fathers is characterized—on both sides—by pouting, whining, anger, teasing, mocking, or boredom tend to share less than other children, to be more verbally and physically aggressive, and to avoid social contact (Carson & Parke, 1996).

Helping Children with Peer Relations

Adults can help young children's relationships with peers by getting them together with other children, monitoring their play, and suggesting strategies to use in approaching other children.

Children whose parents arrange play dates for them have more playmates, see them more often, and initiate more get-togethers themselves (Ladd & Colter, 1988; Ladd & Hart, 1992). They also tend to be more outgoing and cooperative in kindergarten. In arranging and supervising play dates, parents promote pro-social behaviour as well as sociability by prompting children to think about the needs and wishes of their guests. Since children who behave pro-socially tend to be more popular, such guidance can have long-lasting consequences (Ladd & Hart, 1992).

Other helpful strategies include making a special effort to find a play group for young children who do not often have the opportunity to be with other youngsters; encouraging "loners" to play with another lone child or a small group of two or three children, or just to play side by side with other children at first; praising signs of empathy and responsiveness; and teaching friendship skills indirectly through puppetry, role-playing, and books about animals and children who learn to make friends (Ramsey & Lasquade, 1996; Roopnarine & Honig, 1985).

Peer relationships become even more important during middle childhood, which we examine in chapters 12, 13, and 14.

Checkpoint ✔

Can you . . .

✔ Explain how preschoolers choose playmates and friends, how they behave with friends, and how they benefit from friendships?

✔ Discuss how relationships at home can influence relationships with peers?

Summary and Key Terms

The Developing Self

Guidepost 1 How does the self-concept develop during early childhood, and how do children advance in understanding their emotions?

- The self-concept undergoes major change in early childhood. According to neo-Piagetians, self-definition shifts from single representations to representational mappings. Young children do not see the difference between the real self and the ideal self.

- Understanding of emotions directed toward the self and of simultaneous emotions develops gradually.

  self-concept (267)   self-definition (268)
  single representations (268)   real self (268)
  ideal self (268)   representational mappings (268)

Guidepost 2 How do young children develop initiative and self-esteem?

- According to Erikson, the chief developmental crisis of early childhood is initiative versus guilt. Successful resolution of this conflict results in the "virtue" of *purpose.*

- Self-esteem in early childhood tends to be global and unrealistic, reflecting adult approval. If self-esteem is contingent on success, children may develop a "helpless" pattern of thought and behaviour.

  initiative versus guilt (270)   self-esteem (270)

Gender

Guidepost 3 How do boys and girls become aware of the meaning of gender, and what explains differences in behaviour between the sexes?

- Gender identity is an important aspect of the developing self-concept.

- The main gender difference in early childhood is boys' greater aggressiveness. Girls tend to be more empathic and pro-social and less prone to problem behaviour. Some cognitive differences appear early, others not until pre-adolescence or later.

- Children learn gender roles at an early age through gender-typing. Gender stereotypes peak during the preschool years.

- Four major perspectives on gender development are the biological, psychoanalytic, cognitive, and socialization-based approaches.

- Evidence of differences in brain size and prenatal hormonal activity suggests that some gender differences may be biologically based.

- In Freudian theory, a child identifies with the same-sex parent after giving up the wish to possess the other parent.

- Cognitive-developmental theory maintains that gender identity develops from thinking about one's gender. According to Kohlberg, gender constancy leads to acquisition of gender roles. Gender-schema theory holds that children categorize gender-related information by observing what males and females do in their culture.

- According to social cognitive theory, children learn gender roles through socialization: observation of models, reinforcement of gender-appropriate behaviour, and internalization of standards. Parents, peers, and the media influence gender-typing.

  gender identity (271)   gender roles (272)   gender-typing (272)
  gender stereotypes (272)   identification (274)
  gender constancy (274)   gender-schema theory (275)
  social cognitive theory (275)

Play

Guidepost 4 How do preschoolers play, and how does play contribute to and reflect development?

- Play has physical, cognitive, and psychosocial benefits. Changes in the types of play children engage in reflect cognitive and social development.

- According to Piaget and Smilansky, children progress cognitively from functional play to constructive play, pretend play, and then formal games with rules. Pretend play becomes increasingly common during early childhood and helps children develop social and cognitive skills. Rough-and-tumble play also begins during early childhood.

- According to Parten, play becomes more social during early childhood. However, later research has found that non-social play is not necessarily immature, depending on what children do when they play.

- Children prefer to play with (and play more socially with) others of their sex.

- Both the cognitive and social aspects of play are influenced by the culturally approved environments adults create for children.

  functional play (278)   constructive play (278)
  pretend play (278)

Parenting

Guidepost 5 How do parenting practices influence development?

- Discipline can be a powerful tool for socialization.

- Both positive reinforcement and prudently administered punishment can be appropriate tools of discipline within the context of a positive parent–child relationship.

- Power assertion, inductive techniques, and withdrawal of love can each be effective in certain situations. Reasoning is generally the most effective and power assertion the least effective in promoting internalization of parental standards. Spanking and other forms of corporal punishment can have negative consequences.

- Baumrind identified three child-rearing styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. A fourth style, neglectful or

uninvolved, was identified later. According to much research, authoritative parents tend to raise more competent children. However, Baumrind's findings may be misleading when applied to some cultures or socio-economic groups.

- Family conflict can help children learn standards of behaviour and negotiating skills.

  discipline (280)   corporal punishment (281)
  power assertion (281)   inductive techniques (281)
  withdrawal of love (281)   authoritarian (283)
  permissive (283)   authoritative (283)
  neglectful/uninvolved (283)

Guidepost 6   Why do young children help or hurt others, and why do they develop fears?

- The roots of altruism and pro-social behaviour appear early. This may be an inborn disposition, which can be cultivated by parental modelling and encouragement.

- Instrumental aggression—first physical, then verbal—is most common in early childhood.

- Most children become less aggressive after age 6 or 7, but the proportion of hostile aggression increases. Boys tend to practise overt aggression, whereas girls engage in relational aggression. Aggression may be influenced by the home and culture.

- Preschool children show temporary fears of real and imaginary objects and events; older children's fears tend to be more realistic. Some fears can be overcome by systematic desensitization.

  altruism (285)   pro-social behaviour (285)
  instrumental aggression (286)   hostile aggression (286)
  overt aggression (286)   relational aggression   (286)

Relationships with Other Children

Guidepost 7   How do young children get along with (or without) siblings?

- Sibling and peer relationships contribute to self-efficacy.

- Most sibling interactions are positive. Older siblings tend to initiate activities, and younger ones to imitate. Same-sex siblings, especially girls, get along best.

- Siblings tend to resolve disputes on the basis of moral principles. Parental intervention in sibling conflict, especially among younger siblings, may prevent worse conflict later.

- The kind of relationship children have with siblings often carries over into other peer relationships.

- Only children seem to develop at least as well as children with siblings.

  self-efficacy (288)

Guidepost 8   How do young children choose playmates and friends, and why are some children more popular than others?

- Preschoolers choose playmates and friends who are like them. Aggressive children are less popular than pro-social children.

- Friends have more positive and negative interactions than other playmates.

- Parenting can affect children's social competence with peers.

OLC Preview

As well as offering additional information on such topics as corporal punishment and discipline, the official website for *A Child's World,* First Canadian Edition, provides a direct link to a website about China and its stance on reproductive issues. Check out **www.mcgrawhill.ca/college/papalia**.