

**PSYC2500, Developmental Psychology**  
**Friday, November 22/13**

**Children's Self-Esteem, Continued**

- **the most often used scale for children's self-esteem is the Harter scale**
- 5 levels: an overall score, and then 5 domains
- Harter devised a scale and what dimensions we should measure
- sometimes children's self esteem goes down scholastically in school when they compare themselves to others. To those who do not do well in school, some children's main source of self-esteem comes from physical appearance or athletic competence.
- children have 2 choices—have to decide which is more like them (“I can sometimes figure out answers in school” vs “I can almost always figure out answers in school”)
- if some kids have trouble figuring out things in school, that's when you are at the lower end of the scholastic competence scale
- there are multiple items to measure the breadth of self-esteem
  
- in elementary school, self-esteem starts to get nuanced; also in elementary school, where it starts to drop. Some evidence that academically, children will get more of their self-esteem.
- during adolescence, this is a period in one's life where they start figuring out their own values and how they want to fare in terms of those values
- in terms of developmental changes, **it seems to go from excellent self-esteem during pre-school, and then more nuanced where it seems more vulnerable**
- gender differences between boys and girls, especially in math abilities
- boys have a better self-esteem in math, but there is no actual difference in mathematical abilities.
- Compared to others, girls perceive themselves as lower in math than boys do.**
- boys outperform girls in math overall in elementary school. However, girls start taking less math classes in the stream than boys.

**What makes girls perceive themselves as having less skills mathematically than boys?**

- stereotype threats; they think that boys are supposed to be better in it than they are

**Chapter 12: Moral Development**

- 6 stages to moral development (Lawrence Kohlberg) \*\* see the textbook\*\*

**Level 1: pre-conventional/moral**

- stage 1: obedience and punishment orientation
- stage 2: naively egoistic orientation

**Level 2. Conventional/role conformity**

- stage 3: good boy/ good girl orientation
- stage 4: authority and social-order-maintaining orientation

**Level 3. Post-conventional/self-accepted moral principles**

- stage 5: contractual/legalistic orientation
- stage 6: individual principles of conscience

- Kohlberg has been criticized for many reasons (his stages come from a male perspective, it's not necessarily linear, etc.)

**Moral understanding and behaviour:**

**Self-Control**

- in the first year of life, babies start understanding that they can actually obtain things depending on their behaviour and start learning about how to soothe themselves
- at age 2, start internalizing self control
- age 3: some kids but not all are capable of auto-regulation. Some children have more difficulty than others auto-regulating.

### **Study done in Stanford—marshmallow study done in the 70s**

- explored self-regulation
- presented w/a marshmallow, told they could eat it or wait to get 2 of them
- only 1/3 of the children were able to delay gratification (children 4-6 yrs)
- sat for 15 minutes in order to get 2 marshmallows
- those who resisted the marshmallows tended to move away, look away
- younger and older kids use different strategies
- the initial study done in the 60s was done in a daycare
- kids who resisted were from the same SES level
- those who could resist did better in school academically (did better on their SATs)
- **seems to be a link between the ability to delay gratification and the ability to pursue academic work**
- later on, when in their 40s, their brains were examined via brain imaging
- **the area of the brain that lit up the most was the area of the brain that deals w/emotions**
- **self-control seems to be implicated in terms of learning how to conduct oneself in a social environment**

### **Influences of self-control:**

- how parents interact w/children seems to influence the children's ability to self-regulate
- in Japan, children act out much less frequently than in North America due to cultural differences
- **role-modelling:** if the parents and other siblings are modelling behaviours, child seems to self-regulate more quickly

Back to the marshmallow experiment – whether or not you eat the marshmallow might depend on the trustworthiness of your source

- study done in Rochester done to explore this
- found that children who were in the unreliable group were quick to eat their marshmallows, whereas those who were in the reliable group waited 4x longer
  - **rational process wherein children are assessing choices about their environment and making decisions about long term gain vs short term gain – makes sense that they would behave impulsively if they are only going to be benefiting in the short term**
- **the reliability of the source seems to influence the willingness that you're going to wait**

**Parents who are very inconsistent and unreliable:** children will have more difficulty w/self-control

**Kohlberg** came after Piaget, his whole career was based on moral reasoning. He developed different types of stages. They don't overlap with **Piaget's**, but they are similar in that you have concrete rules and you go back in terms of reasoning for yourself – **are there rules that should not be in place, and when should we disobey those rules?**

- some studies have shown that if you have discussions, if your professor has a higher level of moral reasoning (more relative perspective), then the moral reasoning of the children does become more nuanced

- **criticism of Kohlberg: the biggest opponent of his theory was Carol Gillian, who argued that women develop differently than men do in their morals**

- Gillian developed her own research – **care as the core value and whether caring influences the way we act**

- there is much more variability in stages than the stage theorists would have us believe

- stage theorists aren't valued as much these days; more nuanced and non-linear

### **Helping Others:**

Paul Bloom from Yale University – does research with babies

- thinks that altruism and helping others is imbedded into human beings

- in chimps and apes, there is evidence of altruism

- animals who live in social contexts might have evidence of altruism

- Bloom argues that it is a characteristic of being a human being

- babies who hear others cry will cry too; also, when confronted with a hurt human being, will become distressed

- if they see someone out in pain, will try to soothe them

- children know how to help each other if one is crying

### **Bloom's study with a puppet show and babies ~4 months of age**

- observe children, make the children choose – will the child choose the puppet who acts in a cooperative way or an uncooperative way?

- no villain or emotional reaction, just puppets who need help; another trial shows another character bumping another down the hill

- infants see this between 6-14 times

- when bored, infant (8 months) asked to choose between 2 characters

- findings: upwards of 80% of babies choose helpful character over the unhelpful one

### **Pen study – stolen pen, woman does not get up to get her pen, but tries to reach for it and makes a groaning sound while reaching**

- toddler is at the other end of the room playing w/toy

- toddler does get up to fetch pen to give to woman

- experiment done in more complicated manner – series of obstacles that are toy-like between the baby and the experimenter

- the majority of the toddlers go to help; see the social cues

### **Violent Acts:**

- what is the period in development where developing bodies will show the most aggression?

- age 1-2

- video showing aggressive children – scientists looking for earliest signs of violent behaviour; studied first signs of anger in newborns

- Dr Michael Lewis: devised the study of development of angry emotions

- 9 or 10 months: babies begin to crawl; this is the start of exploratory aggression

### **As soon as the hands are liberated, we see overt signs of aggression**

- when walking, their wants become more important; more overt acts of aggression

- **at 2 is the peak period, and then it starts declining**

- physical aggression: decreases, but there are other levels of aggression that come to appear

- w/little girls, verbal forms of aggression = much more frequent in little girls than boys

- **if you have a poor predisposition, unstable support from parents, or from a single parent family**

- **these are called cumulative risks \*\*\*\*\***

- **more likely to maintain higher levels of aggression, potentially conduct disorder**
- this trajectory = predictive of very poor outcomes for individuals
- the level of involvement ON ALL THESE FACTORS has a significant impact on the individual is massive, but it is VERY difficult to intervene

- if you are securely attached during the preschool years, you will be less dependent on your parents, have better relations w/your peers
- over 60 % of kids are securely attached
- if insecurely attached, then during that preschool period, children tend to have more difficulty w/their peers
- **attachment occurs between 8 and 18 months of age** but parenting opportunities always emerge
- during adolescence, **level of attachment you might have had in the past actually changes**
- there is enough evidence of women who experience depression after the birth of the baby; compared to mothers of the same socioeconomic level – middle-class mothers who don't have support – more likely the infant will be insecurely attached (of the disorganized type, the babies look confused both when mom leaves and when she comes back in the Strange Situation Task)
- if depressed, typically lack emotional expression; if anything, sadness as an expression

**Self-esteem always varies; doesn't have to be all on the mom, just more likely during pre-school years**