
Preschoolers: Social and Emotional Development

Overview

The preschool child moves into the new stage of initiative. Newfound activities are attacked with energy and eagerness. The child is curious and inquisitive trying to find what she can accomplish.

At the same time that the child is experiencing his new powers, he is also subject to strong emotions and fears. Especially troubling may be the issue of separating from the parent.

Friends become important during this stage of development. In order to be a friend, the child must learn to share, to cooperate and to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.

Parents and teachers help the child develop these social skills by providing an environment in which children have the freedom to explore. They help the child develop self control by imposing reasonable limits and being available to help when needed.

Questions To Consider

1. What behaviors are characteristic of initiative?
2. How do adults support the development of initiative in preschool children?
3. What do children learn from friends?
4. How do children learn from friends?
5. What are effective techniques adults use to guide children's behavior?

Vocabulary

Read these terms with their definitions

before viewing the program.

Consequences The outcomes which arise naturally or logically from a particular circumstance.

External rewards The means used by adults to influence children's behavior. May be tangible – money, privileges or intangible – a smile or praise.

Guilt The feeling of being bad or troublesome.

Initiative The capability of actively carrying out ideas or reaching out into the world with confidence and assertiveness.

Internal rewards The positive feelings which result when accomplishing some task or completing an action.

Punishment The infliction of pain either physical or psychological used to control behavior.

Socialization Learning skills that enable the child to fit into society.

Instructional Objectives

1. Describe initiative during preschool years.
2. Describe the environment that fosters initiative.
3. Recognize that children experience strong emotions during the preschool years.
4. Identify the social skills which emerge during the preschool years.
5. Discuss the adult roles which facilitate the child's growing social skills.
6. Recognize effective ways of teaching children expected behavior.

Self-Test

After studying the objectives and watching the video, take the self-test to check your progress.

1. List three behaviors which are seen during the stage of initiative:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. The environment which fosters the development of initiative is one in which adults
 - a. give children total freedom.
 - b. provide reasonable limits
 - c. offer limited choices
 - d. remove themselves from the situation.

3. Children in the stage of initiative are
 - a. fearless.
 - b. unable to overcome fears.
 - c. subject to strong emotions.
 - d. always on an even keel.

4. List four social skills children learn during the preschool years:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

5. Discuss the ways in which adults help children learn social skills.

6. In the following list, check those statements which illustrate the most effective way adults teach children expected behavior:
 - a. The teacher applauds the child's successful efforts.
 - b. The teacher ignores the child as the child learns new skills.
 - c. The inattentive child is removed from the group and reprimanded for his inattention.
 - d. The inattentive child is removed from the group quietly and helped to find another activity.
 - e. The adult pays attention but does not interfere as the child successfully completes a task.
 - f. Children are expected to know the rules
 - g. Children are given explanations and are helped to learn the rules.
 - h. Parents and teachers provide gentle guidance.