

# Middle Childhood: Social and Emotional Development

## Overview

Middle childhood is the time when children move into a world peopled by peers and teachers. As children interact with this larger world, their self-esteem undergoes some adjustment. A more realistic sense of self emerges.

As children develop cognitively and build mastery in language, math and science they also grow in social cognition. They are learning about their society and the people who live in it.

The peer group supports the movement of growing independence from the family. Children learn those behaviors which the peer group deems acceptable.

The parents remain an important element in the lives of middle years children. The success or failure in the society of children depends greatly on the relationship with parents and the experiences within the family. During middle childhood, some children are faced with many stresses and difficulties. These may include changes in family structure, abuse, poverty, and violence. These experiences can lead to depression or phobias.

Despite these difficulties, many children cope quite well, often because of the modifying influences of teachers. Teachers who respect each child's ability and background and who welcome parents into the school, help children succeed in school and in society.

## Questions To Consider

1. What are the influences on the self-esteem of middle years children?
2. What is the importance of the peer group?
3. Why are children cruel to the outsider?
4. How do middle years children feel about their parents?
5. What happens to children who live in poverty?
6. How do schools and teachers influence children's self-esteem?

## Vocabulary

Read these terms with their definitions before viewing the program.

**Independence** Freedom from parental control or influence

**Phobia** A persistent, morbid, extreme fear

**Peers** Age mates or equals

**Pro-social behavior** Doing something helpful for someone else

**Resilient children** Children with adaptive, positive personalities who raise above negative experiences

**Self-concept** An individual's sense of him or herself as a separate person with particular characteristics.

**Self-esteem** A person's evaluation of his/her own qualities that become global judgment of self worth

**Sibling** brother and/or sister

**Social cognition** The awareness of one's society and of the people who live in it

## Instructional Objectives

When you have successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

1. Describe the development of the sense of self in middle childhood.
2. Define what is meant by social cognition.
3. Describe the formation of the peer group in middle childhood.
4. Describe the changing relationship with the parents.
5. Recognize the social and emotional strengths and problems of school-age children.
6. Describe the role of the school in the social/emotional development of middle childhood.

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## Self-Test

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

Match the item in column I with its description in column II.

I	II
___ a. Self-concept	1. A person's evaluation of his or her own abilities.
___ b. Self-esteem	2. The ability to make accurate guesses about the thoughts and feelings of another
___ c. Social cognition	3. A person's sense of him or herself as a person.
___ d. Social interface	4. the awareness of one's society and of the people in it.

2. The child's self-esteem is influenced by
  - a. the way she is socialized by her parents
  - b. the manner in which she is valued by teachers and peers
  - c. achieving competencies in literacy or sports
  - d. all the above
3. Self-esteem of boys is usually higher than that of girls because
  - a. males have more dominant roles in society
  - b. females are depicted in dependent roles in society
  - c. teachers praise boys more often than girls
  - d. all the above
4. As children grow in social cognition they
  - a. see things from a narrower perspective
  - b. become more sensitive to the feelings of others
  - c. develop less respect for others
  - d. all the above
5. School-age children most likely become friends with children who are
  - a. from diverse ethnic backgrounds
  - b. from any economic status
  - c. of the same age and sex
  - d. all of the above
6. In school-age peer groups
  - a. girls are more empathetic and affectionate
  - b. behavior of group members is non-conforming
  - c. leaders tend to be antisocial
  - d. all of the above
7. List three functions of the peer group of middle childhood
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Describe the relationship of school-age children to their parents.

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9. Describe at least two social or emotional problems experienced by school-age children.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Describe what is meant by *resilient* child.

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11. State five ways schools and teachers help children feel valued.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_