Child Development Essay, Research Paper

Child Development

Babies grow and develop at a very rapid rate during the first year of life. They grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. In this paper I will discuss the physical growth and development patterns of an infant all the way through adulthood. Development is the baby’s increased skill in using various body parts. When dealing with a development of a child there are three basic development rules. First development rule: This rule says that babies develop in the head region first, then the trunk, and lastly in the legs and feet. For example, a baby can hold up their head before they can grasp an object with their hand. Also they can feed themselves before they can walk.

Second development rule: The second development rule explains that children develop from the mid line, or center of the body, outward toward the fingers and toes. Third development rule: Finally, this rule reveals that, as the brain develops, a child responds to more and more sights and sounds in their environment. Furthermore, they learn to respond to much finer details. A general rule is that a baby increases in height by 50% and triples its birth weight in the first year. Clearly, this is a very rapid growth rate; however, the rate of growth slows down after infancy.

At three months, a baby is alert and responding to the world.

When put on their tummy, they can hold their chest and head up for ten seconds. They try to swipe at toys hung over the crib. They turn their heads toward an interesting sound or listen to voices. Babies love to stare at people’s faces. They coo and gurgle.

At six months a baby is developing control over its body.

They can sit with support and may sit alone for short periods of time. They can roll over. They will hold out their arms to be lifted up or reach and grab an object. They can hold their own bottles and toys. They laugh out loud, babbles, “calls” for help and screams when annoyed.

At nine months babies are exploring their environment.

They can sit unassisted, crawl, pull to a stand and sidestep along furniture. They can use their fingers to point, poke, and grasp small objects. They feed themselves finger foods. Babies know their names and respond to simple commands. She babbles a pattern as if she were speaking a foreign language.

At twelve months a baby is striving for independence.

They stand and may walk by themselves. They climb up and down stairs and out of the crib or playpen. They prefer using one hand over the other and can drop and throw toys. They fear strange people and places. They remember events, expresses affection, shows emotion, uses trial and error to solve a problem.

Babies that aren’t so healthy do not develop as fast or as much as normal babies. For example, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a problem that is increasing all across America. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is the effect of pregnant women drinking alcohol. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is the leading cause of retardation. It affects more than 8,000 babies in the U.S.A. every year. FAS is 100% preventable; however, because of their mother’s decision to drink alcohol during pregnancy, none of the thousands of affected babies had the chance to be born normal. FAS birth effects include facial abnormalities, growth deficiency, or brain damage. FAS children need guidance because they are easily distracted and forgetful. FAS does not go away because brain damage and birth defects are permanent. Mental retardation’s permanent and irreversible, behavioral problems are permanent. All of these problems associated with FAS and drug abuse are permanent.

Moving on past the infant stage and into the adolescence and puberty stages, this is where children start becoming young adults and many new developments begin to occur. This is also a time when youth start wanting their independence and begin to challenge societal values in the form of rebellion, act, and dress radically and form groups. These actions against the structure of existing society promote the beginning of independence that reflect their own rules, structures, class, gender, and ethnic groups. So, the youth culture, in challenging society’s values, at the same time is reflecting them.

Expectations of the children change as they get older. They know what is expected of them and want to follow the rules; However, due to peer pressure and other issues, some children will often break the rules.

Many teenagers come from broken homes and poor communities with little respect for authority. They rebel against what they feel is an unjust society and look for a culture or group that they can identify with. Often society stereotypes these groups as dangerous, deviant, and delinquent. These groups, however, just show many of the valued structures of society, but in a more radical way. They have a standard code of dress, values, ethics, and rebel in order to force their ideas onto the public and to feel part of a recognizable group. Although they feel they are expressing individuality through these groups, they are actually fitting into different structures, values, and in fact, a totally different society group.

Over the centuries the importance of the extended family has decreased considerable. At one time the family included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and it was more important then the society in which it lived. The children were protected and controlled from outer forces by this large family with strong religious, cultural, and family ties. The longer the child is kept in a controlled state, the more of the general cultural attitude it will absorb, and the less of a disturbing element it will become.

In recent years, families have become limited to parents and their children. They have more material goods but lose out socially and emotionally. From a young child, nursery schools or kindergarten have taken over previous parental obligations. The schools do exercises, feeds them, takes them out for walks, gives them a nap, teaches them to keep things tidy, read, write, sing, and dance, etc ? It also teaches them to be kind, considerate, and honest. While the parents work, the state educational system becomes a parent to children in kindergarten through high school. The close relationship between child and parent no longer exist, however, the state sees the family as responsible for the child’s welfare and expectable behaviors. The broken family is seen as a factor in juvenile delinquency.

Another negative aspect of the decline in family life is the rising incidence of divorce. These all leave the child confused, feeling alone and angry at society. The child then looks for ways to express himself and usually finds it in a youth group with similar concerns. Youths coming from broken homes look for ways to show their discontent with authority.

Another form of confusion for youth is the lack of discussion in the home about sex. Many parents and teachers feel that talking about sex or contraceptives would likely encourage early sexual relations. Often this psychology backfires and many teenagers start having sex without their parents knowledge. Their inexperience often leads to pregnancies and abortions. This system leaves the young adult humiliated and angry at society.

Self esteem is important for a teenager, and many teenagers find themselves lacking in it. This can lead to cruelty and rejection from many of their peers. Self esteem can often be rebuilt through contact with youth groups having similar interests as the teenager. It is interesting that it seems most human beings not only need to be in a social group, but one that accepts him or her as they want to be. This seems to show that self esteem is a very important ingredient in an adolescence life. Without it people rebel; with it there is no need to rebel.

When a teenager reaches puberty, many changes take place. In the early 20th century, G. Stanley Hall, noted the American psychologist, first defined adolescence as a distanced stage in human development. Puberty is defined as the age or period at which a person is first capable of sexual reproduction, in other eras of history, a rite or celebration event was a part of the culture. This is true of tribal societies that exist today, but for most of us , puberty as a specific event is part of a much more complicated piece of our lives called adolescence.

Puberty rites signal acknowledgment of a young woman or young man has reached the age of responsibility, virility and community productivity, and these rites make an impression on the teenager or adolescent. Puberty rites are an attempt to mold and educate the teenagers and prepare them for their new role in life.

Today, in our western culture part of the world, we have no clearly defined rites; however our rites are randomly scattered throughout the mid-teen years. For teenagers, getting your driver’s license, entering college, turning legal age, traveling across America or to Europe are all social rites. To further complicate matters, the period of adolescence has probably doubled in length since Mr. Hall first identified it, our children mature younger and younger and take longer and longer to prepare for fully engaged membership into adulthood.

Through all of the readings on child and adolescent development, it is clear that children from birth through teen years all develop according to many factors; society, peers, education, family life, finances, fetal development, pre dispositions, and basically anything or anyone that the child may come in contact with.