

Erikson's Theory of Personality Development

One of the best-known theories of personality development is that of psychologist Erik Erikson. He saw life as a series of eight stages from birth to death. Each of these stages has a particular challenge or turning point, called a crisis.

According to Erikson, how people meet each crisis affects how their personalities develop. Those who meet the challenge well move to the next stage ready to face the crisis there. People who are unsuccessful in facing each crisis may find themselves stuck in a stage. This setback can affect their development throughout life.

- **Stage 1: Trust versus Mistrust** (Birth to age one) During the first year of life, children feel secure if they receive love and affection in a stable, predictable environment. This security allows them to trust others. Babies who are mistreated, abused, or neglected see the world as a frightening place and learn to mistrust others.
- **Stage 2: Autonomy and Doubt** (Ages one to three). Autonomy means free will. In Stage 2, children learn to see themselves as separate individuals. They seek to control themselves and their environment. Children who are allowed freedom to explore within limits learn self-confidence. Those who are not given this freedom become discouraged and begin to feel worthless.
- **Stage 3: Initiative and Guilt** (Ages three to five) In this stage, children are bundles of energy, full of imagination and initiative. They begin to master peer relationships and language. Children who are not encouraged to participate may feel guilty about the extent of their own ambitions or cling to adults and fail to develop the skills to play and work with others.
- **Stage 4: Industry and Inferiority** (Ages six to eleven) Industry means working hard and

having a sense of accomplishment from work. During this stage, children learn that work is worthwhile. They develop self-discipline and talents. Learning to work with others is an important part of industry. Children who do not have the chance to work on projects and activities, or who are not successful in them, may feel a sense of failure, leading to a feeling of inferiority.

- **Stage 5: Identity and Identity Confusion** (Ages 12 to 18). The challenge of the teen years is to build a sense of identity, or “self.” Teens explore the world and the people in it, seeking to discover who they are, what they want to do, and what they believe in. Those who are not able to build a sense of themselves suffer identity confusion. They drift through life not understanding themselves or where they are going.
- **Stage 6: Intimacy and Isolation** (Ages 19 to 35). In this stage, people turn toward others, working to build intimacy based on mutual caring. For most, this stage involves marriage and parenthood. However, people also meet the challenge of intimacy through other relationships. Those who do not build intimate relationships feel isolated and lonely.
- **Stage 7: Generativity and Stagnation** (Ages 35 to 50). Generativity involves taking care of others and contributing something lasting to the world. This is the challenge of the middle years of life. Raising children, creative activities, and community service are ways people give to others in this stage. Being unable to contribute in these ways can bring about boredom, restlessness, stagnation, and a feeling that life is meaningless.

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- **Stage 8: Integrity and Despair** (Age 50 and up)
Being able to look back on life with contentment and few regrets is the main task of Stage 8. Integrity involves having a good perspective on life in one's final years. People who struggled through life without feeling a part of it may end up facing death in despair.

No one moves through the eight stages of life with only successes. At each stage, people experience the positive and negative. The challenge is to have the successes outnumber the failures.

Taking Action

Write specific recommendations for positive personality development directed at parents of children in Stages 1 through 5. Identify a type of conflict or problem children may face in each stage. Then suggest a way to guide the children's behavior and an approach to avoid. For example, you might address a child's unwillingness to share toys in Stage 3 or fear of trying a new activity in Stage 4.

Stage 1 Problem: _____

Do: _____

Don't: _____

Stage 2 Problem: _____

Do: _____

Don't: _____

Stage 3 Problem: _____

Do: _____

Don't: _____

Stage 4 Problem: _____

Do: _____

Don't: _____

Stage 5 Problem: _____

Do: _____

Don't: _____

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The Art of Infant Massage

There are many reasons parents are being encouraged to incorporate massage techniques into their daily routine of baby care. The benefits are both physical and psychological. For example, massage can often relieve a baby's discomfort. It can also strengthen parent-child bonding. Other benefits can include:

- Physically, infant massage increases oxygen and nutrient flow to the cells, improves circulation, and stimulates sensory awareness.
- Some studies have shown increased weight gain and immune function in babies who were given massages.
- Infant massage can also assist in relieving discomfort from teething, congestion, and colic.
- Parents who massage their baby every day are more likely to notice if their baby develops a physical problem. For example, they may feel a strange lump that they might not have noticed if they were not massaging the baby.
- Some infants sleep longer after being massaged, and they may have longer periods of deep sleep. Massage can help babies learn to cope with stress. It can be a great way for both parents to bond with their baby.

Tips for a Successful Massage

- Start by gently massaging a few areas. Gradually work up to a full massage.
- Use gentle strokes when massaging a baby.
- Keep your fingernails short.
- Before massaging, wash your hands. Then rub them together until they are warm.
- Choose a warm room.

- Talk or sing to the infant while massaging, using a soothing voice.
- If using oil, such as a baby oil, warm it in your hands first so cold oil does not bother the baby. Do not use oil on the baby's face.
- Watch for cues from the baby. Relaxation should occur. If the massage seems to cause pain, displeasure, or increased tension, stop and try another time.
- Finish each massage with a period of holding and cuddling the baby.

Infant Massage Techniques

Check books and other resources for more on infant massage. Most techniques are quite simple.

- **Face and head.** Using gentle pressure, stroke across the forehead and down the nose to the mouth. Stroke from the center of the chin to the jawbone, and continue along the outline of the ears.
- **Chest and stomach.** Using the open palms of both hands, gently stroke the chest from the middle to the sides. Then alternately massage from each shoulder down to the stomach. Massage the stomach area in widening circles starting at the navel. (Avoid the navel area in newborns.) These movements are especially calming to babies who have colic.
- **Legs and feet.** Use long strokes on the top of the legs from top to bottom. Gently massage the calves. Use the thumb to massage the soles of the feet, extending the stroke up to the ends of the toes.

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- **Arms and hands.** Use the same motions for the arms and hands as for the legs and feet. Use the thumb when massaging the palm of the hand and the fingers for the back of each hand.
- **The complete front.** Use long, light strokes to fully massage the baby’s front from neck and arms to toes. Use one hand for each side of the body.
- **The back.** Place the baby facedown on your lap. First, use your open hand to stroke the full width of the back from neck to buttocks. Next, use the fingertips to massage the muscles on either side of the spine in small circular motions.
- **Buttocks and legs.** Use a light, circular motion to massage the buttocks. Then use long strokes for the back of the legs, from the thighs to the toes.

Taking Action

Create a pamphlet that explains to parents why baby massage is helpful and where they can learn more about it.

Understanding Social Development of Infants

Section 8–2

Reading to Infants

It is never too early to start reading to a child. Many people believe that children do not begin to learn to read and write until they enter school. However, research shows that children get ready to read and write by learning to enjoy books. Their first experiences with books can start even when they are young infants.

What Reading Teaches Babies

Reading to a baby stimulates the baby's brain in a variety of ways. These include:

- **Book handling.** Even before babies can turn pages, they enjoy handling books. Because babies usually try to put books in their mouths, plastic cloth, or heavy cardboard “board” books, are good choices for infants who are first exploring books. Between the ages of 12 and 18 months, they learn to turn books right side up and begin to turn the pages of board books themselves.
- **Picture recognition.** Pointing to pictures and naming objects in the pictures help babies learn to identify things. As babies get older, finding objects in pictures can become a game.
- **Sound recognition.** Babies soon begin to imitate the sounds they hear the reader make. This speeds their language development and prepares the way for them to understand that letters on the page represent sounds.
- **Books are fun!** Perhaps the most important thing that reading teaches infants is that books are interesting and enjoyable.

Choosing Appropriate Books

While it is beneficial to read to a baby, exactly what is read is not that important. Simply hearing the rise and fall of language, and being held, are what is important.

As babies grow and become more aware of what is being read, content counts more. Most infants are not able to sit and listen to a long story, so short books with lots of pictures are good choices. Sometimes you can talk about the pictures instead of actually reading the text.

Here are some other points to keep in mind when choosing books for babies:

- Look for books with simple texts that are predictable and include familiar things. They also like pictures of faces.
- Make homemade books that have pictures of the child and other family members.
- Books about food, animals, or other children are interesting to most young children.
- Books with rhymes help children learn to distinguish sounds.
- Books with textures that the baby can feel or with flaps to manipulate help stimulate the baby's senses.

Reading to infants helps develop a love of books and an enjoyment of reading. Research shows that children who have had books read to them are better prepared to learn to read and are more eager to want to learn to read.

Taking Action

Visit a library or bookstore and choose two books that you think would be appropriate for a one-year-old child. List the authors and titles of the two books and explain why you think they are good choices.