

Psychology

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The psychosocial developmental theory, presented by the American-German psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, focuses on the social development of human beings throughout life. Erikson divided a human's life into eight stages of psychosocial growth, covering key developmental stages from infancy to old age. Each stage is composed of psychosocial challenges which impart particular characteristics to the individual, and depending upon how the challenges are handled; those particular characteristics generally become an individual's personality flaws or virtues (Gross, 2020). For example, one of Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development is initiative versus guilt. This stage is based on the stage of autonomy vs. shame and begins between the age groups of 3 to 5 years, which Erickson refers to as the "play ages." During this stage, young kids spend a lot of time playing with other kids and developing their social skills. Hence, the initiative versus guilt stage is an evaluative phase among play-age children in which they learn to play and initiate activities independently while also experimenting with their leadership skills to develop relations with others.

When children aged 3-5 years start playing, they start taking initiative and even try to figure out leadership actions and behaviors, which is identified as the start of the initial stage. Play age is such an age in an individual's life where they get the opportunity for the first time to take the initiative via playing. Kids in this period discover how and when to exert power and control by taking the initiative in gaming activities, decision-making, and supervising other kids. Play-age children are instinctively attracted to experiences that enable them to make choices and lead other individuals (Orenstein & Lewis, 2020). Therefore, they may like to engage in such games in which they could choose their characters and even the characters and roles of other players. However, children might also encounter various obstacles in this life stage. Thus, the

children's parents, families, or caregivers must support them in exploring the world around them and assist them in making effective decisions at this stage. If the children's parents or caregivers fail to support or encourage them, they may develop feelings of inadequacy and ultimately become completely reliant upon other individuals.

Additionally, at this stage of psychosocial development, the children also start to develop communication and interpersonal skills while playing and interacting with other children. Children's imaginations and their involvement in games play significant roles in the effective development of their interpersonal abilities. Children usually choose to create their games and like to lead others during the game. In this way, along with practicing initiative, children also get an opportunity to develop good leadership abilities as well. However, while the children start taking initiative and discovering their options for developing interpersonal skills, the parents or caregivers might become frustrated as they usually start to control things that influence their lives. Still, the parents must support the children by helping them make appropriate choices and improving their interpersonal abilities so that they could develop a sense of direction and ambition in their lives.

The guilt stage comes into play in an individual's life when kids make errors while practicing their leadership skills. Children aged 3-5 years i.e., in the third stage of Erikson's theory are commonly aggressive and are new to the world of cooperating and interacting with other children without being dictatorial. Children in this stage are immature and are not sensible enough to select the best roles and games for themselves and others. Hence, the children make mistakes while making decisions and socially interacting with others, resulting in the development of guilt among the children (Maree, 2021). However, through trial and error, children learn to practice appropriate leadership skills and social behavior without being bossy

around others. Hence, guilt can result in positive outcomes in children, for example, developing a sense of care among the children for others while playing games.

Maintaining a balance between the child's initiative and guilt is necessary as practicing initiative without guilt can be hurtful to other children while practicing guilt without initiative can result in the child's withdrawal from other individuals. Hence, parents and caregivers must assist children in maintaining an appropriate balance between the two traits. Parents must be conscious and mindful enough to prevent negative consequences related to initiative and guilt while also providing the children with the necessary space. This would allow the children to take the initiative and make decisions while also being considerate about the feelings and wishes of others. Moreover, it is sometimes appropriate for the children to learn from their faults. In such situations, the parents must simply highlight the mistake and propose a solution for the next time. In this way, children can learn to manage their social skills without carrying guilt for long. Thus, maintaining a balance between initiative and guilt is essential as it helps children learn the art of collaborating without being bossy or aggressive.

Conclusively, Erikson's stage of initiative versus guilt is an evaluative phase among children aged 3-5 years. They learn to play and initiate activities independently while also testing their interpersonal abilities to develop healthy relations with other children. Thus, succeeding in Erikson's stage of initiative versus guilt creates a strong sense of ambition and purpose among the children which helps them in achieving their life aims later in their lives.

References

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