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From birth to age five over half of the stages of social development have been completed. It is the time when preschoolers are forming their views of self and others and laying the foundation upon which all else will be built. Research has been proving for well over twenty years how important the first five years of life are to a child's future. We must stop placing the importance on school age children while neglecting our youngest and most impressionable. If you plan to place your child in the care of other people or facilities while you work make certain that you check child staff ratios, staff qualifications, and observe the facility several times at different times a day. The first five years of your child have a huge impact upon his or her future.

For Additional Information

Our school library has many books written by experts in the field of child development. They are available for you to check out at any time.

Social & Emotional Development,
by Dave Riley, Robert R. San Juan, Joan
Klinkner, Ann Ramminger



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Social Development Stages

PARENT EDUCATION SERIES

The Six Stages of Social Development

Stage 1 *Attachment*

Attachment begins at birth and goes to the age of eighteen months. The child's developmental task is to bond with his or her parents. This is an extremely important stage. If this need is not met your child will feel unlovable or flawed.

Stage 2 *Exploration*

This stage of development occurs from eighteen months to the age of three. The main passage of this stage is to be able to explore one's environment while feeling safe in the security of parents or caregivers presence. It is during this stage that one moves from attachment figures to investigate new experiences and relationships. Failure to do this will cause your child to grow suspicious and fearful.

Stage 3 *Identity*

Identity occurs between the ages of three and four. This is the critical stage of personal development; in it your child will begin to formulate his or her concept of self and know who he or she is apart from their caretakers. In order to successfully complete this stage, he or she will need to develop a stable, consistent internal image of self and caregivers. It is during this stage your child will mimic other personalities and caregivers help him or her develop a clear and distinct identity. Failure to develop individualization creates insecurities and low self-esteem.

Stage 4 *Competence*

This stage occurs from four to seven years of age. The purpose of this stage is for your child to experiment by testing his or her skills and challenging his or her abilities while seeking praise from parents or caregivers. Failure to complete this stage creates a sense of incompetence.

Stage 5 *Social Concern*

The fifth stage of social development occurs from ages seven to twelve. This is the stage where teasing is predominant, and anyone who is different is ostracized. It is the beginning of crushes on the opposite sex and puppy love. It is the fertile ground for learning to resolve issues and learning to heal from wounding.

Stage 6 *Intimacy*

This is the last stage of social development, which begins at age thirteen and goes to age nineteen. It is the passage from adolescence into young adulthood. The purpose of this stage is to develop skills in intimacy. It is where ideas of love and romance are formed. It is the stage where your child is hindered by heartbreak or learns to love in healthy ways.

