**[90-day assignment] – FLE 714 - 3 5-7 Page Paper on Application of a**

**Developmental Theory**

**Write a paper using one of the developmental theories: Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, or**

**Fowler (choose only one). Describe how you as a parent would assist a child at a**

**specific age (e.g., toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, or**

**young adulthood) in his or her cognitive, moral, emotional, or spiritual development,**

**according to the theory you chose. Include specific parenting action points or**

**emphases for each stage. The essay should be 5-7 pages in length, double-spaced,**

**and should express your understanding of the essential elements of the topic.**

**Introduction**

Parents have the largest set of roles and responsibilities in the world. It is important for a parent to understand developmental theories for children. It gives the child an opportunity to become a better human being. When a child is born they begin to learn who they are and form their own personality, even from within the womb as well. Imagine living in a world where a parent is knowledgeable about what is best for the child. The theory that is going to be focused on to help make that previous sentence seem possible is Erik Erikson’s 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development which deals with the early stages of a child till death.This theory is there for parents to learn how to prevent problems from occurring. Erik Erikson was a developmental psychologist who specialized in child psychoanalysis. According to Erikson, a person passes through these eight stages of development which then builds on each other.

When one has been faced with each stage’s crisis the individual develops psychological strengths or character traits that helps one become confident and healthy people. This theory gives us a way to view the development of a person through an entire lifespan. (Lewis, R., 2020). In the first stage of Erikson’s theory is the trust vs. mistrust which begins at birth to 18 months. This stage the parents learn that the child is extremely dependent on them and if they are refused attention in a major way they then can develop fear, anxiety and mistrust.

Stage two is called autonomy vs. shame and doubt, in this stage they gain their independence and this aids in building the child’s self esteem. If children lack the chance to assert themselves, they will battle with feelings of inadequacy and self doubt. This stage is from 18 months to 3 years old. From the age 3 to 5 years old, they reach the stage of initiative vs. guilt. As your child socializes and plays with others, they learn that they can take initiatives, control what happens and create a positive self-image. But if the parent does not allow their children to make decisions, they may not be equipped to take initiatives, they begin to lack ambition, and could be filled with guilt. (Lewis, R., 2020).

Stage 4: industry vs. inferiority which begins at 5 to 12 years old. This is the stage they begin to learn new skills, the following stage is in the adolescence category and focuses on identity vs. confusion. This is the one being focused on within the paper. At this stage the child faces the challenge of developing a sense of self by examining their beliefs, goals, and values. They are to ask themselves, “Who am I?”, “What do I want to become?”, “How do I fit into society?” (Lewis, R., 2020).

There are times society pressures children to feel as though it needs to be all figured out but it is crucial for the parent to know that the encouragement and reinforcement you give your child/ children are vital to shaping their personal identity. If the child does not search for their identity, they may not develop a strong sense of self. It is stated that as a parent, you should not pressure them to conform to your own values and beliefs. (Lewis, R., 2020). The rest of the stages start with intimacy vs. isolation at age 18 - 40, followed by generativity vs. stagnation which begins from 40 to 65 years old and lastly integrity vs. despair over 65 years old.

**Cognitive Development**

Early childhood age group according to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion is usually defined as birth to 8 years old and goes through a tremendous physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development. (2020). According to Erikson’s developmental theory early childhood begins around age 3 - 8 years old. Focusing on the life span of early childhood, according to Encyclopedia of Children’s Health, cognitive development refers to how a person perceives, thinks, and gains understanding of his or her world through the interaction of genetics and learned factors. (2021). The first stage of Erik Erikson’s theory describes how you can develop a level of trust or lack security. Imagine living in a world where people do not learn this critical stage in life but when you think about it, technically the world is becoming filled with unhealthy practices of parenting. This problem then affects the children born within the home, parents that are not ready to deal with all these responsibilities can possibly put their children's life in jeopardy.

In the United States of America, records show that 15,310 mothers are leading the household and 3,720 fathers in the year 2020. (Statista, 2021). This is one too many times a household should lack the opportunity to grow up in a properly structured home. As a single parent it would obviously be more challenging raising a child in a society where the parent has to wake up early to beat traffic for work, drop the children to school, work for an organization that might not compensate the worker as they should, leave work to pick the children up from school head back home in more traffic, reach back home to cook food for tonight and lunch for you and the children. The point is that the system is not set up for allowing you to live a proper, well balanced life and doing it without help makes it more difficult. It is crucial for a parent to recognize what is more important when it comes to developing children into becoming outstanding citizens. As a parent, learning if you lack consistency and reliability can in the future make the child develop negative stressors such as anxiety. This can be avoided, according to Erikson, when crises arise there is a strong possibility that other people will be there as a source of support.

The cognitive aspect from birth to 18 months shows that they seek interests in objects and human faces and may get bored with repeated activities, then respond to signs of love and affection, pass things from one hand to the other and probably learnt how to use some basic things like spoons. At the age of 6 - 8 years old, they can count backwards, they know left from right and can tell time. (Legg, T., 2020). Children’s brains develop in spurts called critical periods. At the start of these periods, the number of connections (synapses) between brain cells (neurons) doubles and these connections between brain cells are where learning occurs, twice as many synapses enable the brain to learn faster than at any other time of life. (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-ages-2-7-matter-so-much-brain-development>).

A child’s cognitive development during early childhood, which includes building skills such as pre-reading, language, vocabulary, and numeracy, begins from the moment a child is born.(<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/sect2.html>). In some cases it is believed that from within the womb learning begins to take place. Developmental scientists have found that the brain acquires a tremendous amount of information about language in the first year of life even before infants can speak. (<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/sect2.html>).

Children who never constructively pass through this phase limit themselves by limiting their abilities and never set their own goals to become the best version of themselves as adults. Knowledge needs to be enforced while an individual is developing. Statistics show that the best period in life to gain knowledge is when a person is young. This first critical period of brain development begins around age 2 and concludes around age 7. It provides a prime opportunity to lay the foundation for a holistic education for children. (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/why-ages-2-7-matter-so-much-brain-development>).

**Moral Development**

“Moral development is the process through which children develop proper attitudes and behaviours toward other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules, and laws. (Encyclopedia of Children’s Health, 2021). At the age of 3 to 5 years old the stage of initiative and guilt is focused and it speaks on the development of self-confidence; the ability to take initiative and make decisions. According to Legg, in this stage they learn how to show empathy for hurt or crying children, offer affection, understand mine and yours, can get upset if routines are changed, know how to take turns, talk about their likes and dislikes, and can tell the difference between made up and real. (Legg, T., 2020).

It is important to encourage your child to plan, achieve goals, and take responsibility by making sure they have plenty of opportunities to interact with others. If this stage is not faced properly the child sees himself as a nuisance and is sometimes embarrassed which then causes them to not take initiatives. Too much guilt can hinder a child's ability for creativity. According to Legg, if there is success in this stage it can lead to the virtue of purpose. (Legg, T., 2020). The ability to have a sense of purpose can be linked with how you build your morals or what is right and wrong to you as a child.

**Emotional Development**

According to the “Be You'' website, emotional development involves learning what feelings and emotions are, understanding how and why they occur, recognizing your own feelings and those of others, and developing effective ways for managing those feelings. (2021). The emotional aspect can be linked with the second stage where they either develop autonomy and develop a sense of personal control and a sense of independence or on the flip side; if they develop shame and doubt, they can feel inadequate in their ability to survive and can become overly dependent and/ or lacking esteem.

It is important as parents that in assisting your child you must be able to allow the child to be free in making decisions and you as the parent supporting that decision. Being overly controlling as a parent could only do more harm. This may cause lifelong psychological damage. In some ways the child can become an indecisive adult. “Psychological control stifles children’s expressions of autonomy and independent initiations; behavioural control concerns the presence of rules and regulations.” (Groinick, W., 2002). The studies showed that the children who were able to form secure emotional bonds with parents are most likely to have secure, happy relationships later in life. (Cooper, C., 2015).

**Spiritual Development**

Spiritual development’s meaning can vary depending on the secular and pluralistic environment. It can be defined based on the Seattle Christian Counselling site that states, it is the belief in something beyond the material universe and to develop an awareness of realities beyond the confines of time and space. (Matthew, N., 2017). This is likely to develop within the second stage as well, however from birth there can be a foundation laid for them to develop the parent’s beliefs and values. Allowing them a strong foundation so that at the age where they begin to make their own decisions they are most likely focused on what is right and wrong which is what the moral development is linked with.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is best to develop a delicate balance from the parent. It is critical for a parent to understand developmental theories for children. It gives the child an opportunity to become a better human being. The theory developed by Erik Erikson called the 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development deals with the early stages of a child till death and views the development of a person through an entire lifespan. As a parent this model can assist a child through his or her cognitive, moral, emotional, or spiritual development.

**References**

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