Psychosocial

- Signs of maturation
- Industry and inferiority
- The self
- Peers
The Nature of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8.1 AT ABOUT THIS TIME: Signs of Psychosocial Maturation Between Ages 6 and 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are more likely to have specific chores to perform at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are more likely to have a weekly allowance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are expected to tell time, and they have set times for various activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children have more homework assignments, some over several days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are less often punished physically, more often with disapproval or withdrawal of privileges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children try to conform to peer standards in such matters as clothing and language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children influence decisions about their after-school care, lessons, and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children use media (TV, computers, video games) without adult supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are given new responsibility for younger children, pets, or, in some cultures, employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children strive for more independence from parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Industry and Inferiority

- Industrious children at this age actively master culturally valued skills and abilities (e.g. reading, math, collecting, categorizing, counting)

- Children work on regulating their temper
  - **Effortful control**: The ability to regulate one’s emotions and actions through effort, not simply through natural inclination.
Erikson on the School-Age Child

• **Industry versus inferiority**
  
  – The fourth of Erikson’s eight psychosocial crises
  
  – Children attempt to master many skills, developing a sense of themselves as either industrious or inferior, competent or incompetent.
Freud on Latency

• Latency:
  – Emotional drives are quiet and unconscious sexual conflicts are submerged.
  – Children acquire cognitive skills and assimilate cultural values by expanding their world to include teachers, neighbors, peers, club leaders, and coaches.
  – Sexual energy is channeled into social concerns.
Self-Concept

- **Social comparison**: Tendency to assess one’s abilities, achievements, social status, and other attributes by measuring them against those of other people, especially one’s peers.
  - Helps children value the abilities they have and abandon the imaginary, rosy self-evaluation of preschoolers.
  - Confidence plummets and inhibition rises from about 18 months of age to 9 years
  - Materialism rises
FIGURE 8.1 More Hesitant, Less Outgoing Although some continuity over time was apparent for each child, the overall trend was for children to become less sure of themselves and more shy with others. This particular study is part of an intensive longitudinal project in Norway, but the trends seem universal.

Parents’ Ratings of Their Children’s Levels of Confidence and Inhibition

Source: Janson & Mathiesen, 2008.
Resilience and Stress

• **Resilience:** The capacity to adapt well despite significant adversity and to overcome serious stress.

Important:

1. Resilience is *dynamic* - a person may be resilient at some periods but not at others.
2. Resilience is a *positive adaptation* to stress - if rejection by a parent leads a child to establish a closer relationship with another adult, that child is resilient.
3. Adversity must be *significant* - Resilient children overcome conditions that overwhelm many of their peers.
Cumulative Stress

Source: Survey data gathered by Howard J. Osofsky et al., of Louisiana State University; reported in Viadero, 2007, p.7.
Gathering Strengths

- Child’s working model
- Developing friends, activities, and skills
- School success and after-school activities
- Community, church, and government programs
- Education
- Easygoing temperament and high IQ
Social Support and Religious Faith

• A network of supportive relatives is a better buffer than having only one close parent.
• Grandparents, teachers, unrelated adults, peers, and pets can lower stress.
• Community institutions (e.g. churches, libraries) can also be crucial sources of social support.
“How Would the Person in This Story Feel After He or She Prayed?”

Families and Children

Shared and Nonshared Environments:

• Genes affect half or more of the variance for almost every trait

• Environment:
  – Influence of shared environment (e.g., children raised by the same parents in the same home) shrinks with age
  – Effect of nonshared environment (e.g., friends or schools) increases
Families and Children

Important:

• Children raised in the same households by the same parents do not necessarily share the same home environment.

• Changes in the family affect every family member differently (e.g. depending on age and/or gender).

• Most parents respond to each of their children differently.
Family Function

• **Family function:** The way a family works to meet the needs of its members. Children need families to:

1. provide basic material necessities
2. encourage learning
3. help them develop self-respect
4. nurture friendships
5. foster harmony and stability
Family Structure

- **Family structure**: The legal and genetic relationships among relatives living in the same home; includes nuclear family, extended family, stepfamily, and so on.
TABLE 8.3 Common Family Structures (with percentages of U.S. children aged 6–11 in each family type)

Two-Parent Families (67%)
Most human families have two parents. These families are of several kinds.
1. **Nuclear family** (56%) Named after the nucleus (the tightly connected core particles of an atom), the nuclear family consists of a husband and wife and their biological offspring. About half of all families with children are nuclear.
2. **Stepparent family** (9%) Divorced fathers (Stewart et al., 2003) are particularly likely to remarry. Usually his children from a previous marriage do not live with him, but if they do, they are in a stepparent family. Divorced mothers are less likely to remarry, but when they do, the children often live with her and their stepfather. Many children spend some time in a stepparent family, but relatively few spend their entire childhood in such families.

Blended family A stepparent family that includes children born to several families, such as the biological children from the spouses’ previous marriages and the biological children of the new couple. This type of family is a particularly difficult structure for school-age children.
3. **Adoptive family** (2%) Although as many as one-third of infertile married couples adopt children, fewer adoptable children are available than in earlier decades, which means that most adoptive families have only one or two children. A single parent is sometimes an adoptive parent, but this is unusual.
4. **Polygamous family** (0%). In some nations, it is common for one man to have several wives, each bearing his children.

One-Parent Families (28%)
One-parent families are increasingly common, but they tend to have fewer children than two-parent families.
1. **Single mother, never married** (10%) Many babies (about one-third of all U.S. newborns) are born to unmarried mothers, but most of these mothers intend to marry someday (K. Musick, 2002). Many of them do get married, either to their baby’s father or to someone else. By school age, their children are often in two-parent families.
2. **Single mother—divorced, separated, or widowed** (13%) Although many marriages end in divorce (almost half in the United States, less in other nations), many divorcing couples have no children and many others remarry. Thus, only 13 percent of school-age children live with single, formerly married mothers.
3. **Single father, divorced or never married** (5%) About one in five divorced or unmarried fathers has physical custody of the children. This structure is the most rapidly increasing one in the United States, especially among divorced fathers who were actively involved in child rearing when they were married.

Other Family Types (5%)
Some children live in special versions of one- or two-parent families.
1. **Extended family** Many children live with a grandparent or other relatives as well as with one or both of their parents.
2. **Grandparents alone** For some school-age children, their one or two “parents” are their grandparents, because the biological parents are dead or otherwise unable to live with them. This family type is increasing, especially in Africa, where an epidemic of AIDS is killing many parents.
3. **Homosexual family** Some school-age children live in a homosexual family, usually when a custodial parent has a homosexual partner. Less often, a homosexual couple adopts children or a lesbian has a child. Varying laws and norms determine whether these are one- or two-parent families.
4. **Foster family** This family type is usually considered temporary, and the children are categorized by their original family structure. Otherwise, they are in one- or two-parent families depending on the structure of their foster family.

Source: Percentages are estimated from data in U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007.
Households

- **Household**: Composed of people who live together in the same home
  - Two or more people who are related to one another (most common)
  - One person living alone (26%)
  - Nonrelatives living together (6%)

- **Family household**: Includes at least one parent and at least one child under age 18
  - Accounts for about two-thirds of the households in the United States
FIGURE 8.4 Family and Nonfamily Households Of the 68 percent of U.S. households that consist of families, a large proportion include one or more school-age children.

U.S. Households by Presence of School-Age Child

- Nonfamily households (32%)
- Family households, no school-age child (38%)
- Households with at least one school-age child (30%)

Two-Parent Families

- **Nuclear family**: A family that consists of a father, a mother, and their biological children under age 18.
  - Tend to be wealthier, better educated, healthier, more flexible, and less hostile
  - Biological parents tend to be very dedicated to their offspring
  - Similar advantages occur for children who are adopted
Families Headed by Gay Men or Lesbian Women

- Make up less than 1% of all U.S. households
- Many have children (from previous marriage, assisted reproduction or adoption)
- Strengths and weaknesses are similar to those of the heterosexual family
- Children of homosexual parents have the same romantic impulses, school achievements, and psychosocial difficulties as children of heterosexual couples
- The quality of children’s relationships with their parents is more important than the parents’ sexual interactions, the family structure, or the household status
Stepfamilies

- Stepparent must find a role that is not as intimate as that of the biological parents but that allows some involvement with the children.
  - Easier if the children are young (under age 3)
  - Difficult if the children are teenagers
- **Blended family:** A stepparent family that includes children born to several families, such as the biological children from the spouses’ previous marriages and the biological children of the new couple.
Single-Parent Families

• **Single-parent family:** A family that consists of only one parent and his or her children under age 18.
  – Children in single-mother families fare worse in school and in adult life than most other children.
  – Single-mother households are often low-income and unstable, move more often and add new adults more often.
  – Single-fathers have a slightly higher income and tend to be slightly older than single mothers.
Many Relatives at Home

- **Extended family**: A family consisting of parents, their children, and other relatives living in one household.

- **Polygamous family**: A family consisting of one man, several wives, and the biological children of the man and his wives.
Cultural Differences in Family Structure

U.S. Family Structures by Ethnicity of Parents with Children Under 18, 2006

Family Trouble

• **Dysfunctional family:** A family that does not support all its members

• Three factors increase the likelihood of dysfunction:
  1. Low Income
  2. Instability
  3. Low Harmony
Low Income

- **Family stress model**: the crucial question to ask about any risk factor (e.g. poverty, divorce, job loss, eviction) is whether or not it increases the stress on a family
  - The family-stress model contends that the adults’ stressful *reaction* to poverty is crucial in determining the effect on the children.
Instability

- Children in middle childhood prefer continuity
  - Upsetting changes include moving to a new home, being sent to a new school, and changes in the family structure
  - Adults might not realize that these transitions affect schoolchildren
Harmony

• Children feel a need for harmony
  – Parents who habitually fight are more likely to divorce, move, and otherwise disrupt the child’s life.
  – Remarriage of divorced parents is often difficult for children due to jealousy, stress, and conflict.
  – Children frequently suffer if parents physically or verbally abuse each other.
The Peer Group

- **Culture of children:** The particular habits, styles, and values that reflect the set of rules and rituals that characterize children as distinct from adult society.
  - Fashion
  - Language
  - Peer culture
Friendship

• School-age children value personal friendship more than peer acceptance.

• Gender differences
  – Girls talk more and share secrets.
  – Boys play more active games.

• Friendships lead to psychosocial growth and provide a buffer against psychopathology.
Older children:
• Demand more of their friends
• Change friends less often
• Become more upset when a friendship ends
• Find it harder to make new friends
• Seek friends who share their interests and values
Social Awareness

• **Social cognition:** The ability to understand social interactions, including the causes and consequences of human behavior.
  – Begins in infancy and continues to develop in early childhood
  – Social cognition is well established by middle childhood
  – Children with impaired social cognition are likely to be rejected
Rejected Children

• **Aggressive-rejected children**: Children who are disliked by peers because of antagonistic, confrontational behavior

• **Withdrawn-rejected children**: Children who are disliked by peers because of their timid, withdrawn, and anxious behavior
Bullies and Victims

• **Bullying**: Repeated, systematic efforts to inflict harm through physical, verbal, or social attack on a weaker person.

• **Bully-victim**: Someone who attacks others and who is attacked as well
  – Also called a provocative victim because he or she does things that elicit bullying, such as stealing a bully’s pencil
Successful Efforts to Eliminate Bullying

• The whole school must be involved, not just the identified bullies.
• Intervention is more effective in the earlier grades.
• Evaluation of results is critical.
Morality in Middle Childhood

KOHLBERG’S LEVELS OF MORALITY

Lawrence Kohlberg (1963): Described stages of morality that stem from three levels of moral reasoning, with two stages at each level

1. **Preconventional moral reasoning**: Emphasizes rewards and punishments

2. **Conventional moral reasoning**: Emphasizes social rules

3. **Postconventional moral reasoning**: Emphasizes moral principles
TABLE 8.4 Kohlberg’s Three Levels and Six Stages of Moral Reasoning

Level I: Preconventional Moral Reasoning
The goal is to get rewards and avoid punishments; this is a self-centered level.
- **Stage One: Might makes right** (a punishment and obedience orientation). The most important value is to maintain the appearance of obedience to authority, avoiding punishment while still advancing self-interest. Don’t get caught!
- **Stage Two: Look out for number one** (an instrumental and relativist orientation). Each person tries to take care of his or her own needs. The reason to be nice to other people is so that they will be nice to you.

Level II: Conventional Moral Reasoning
Emphasis is placed on social rules; this is a community-centered level.
- **Stage Three: “Good girl” and “nice boy.”** Proper behavior is behavior that pleases other people. Social approval is more important than any specific reward.
- **Stage Four: “Law and order.”** Proper behavior means being a dutiful citizen and obeying the laws set down by society, even when no police are nearby.

Level III: Postconventional Moral Reasoning
Emphasis is placed on moral principles; this level is centered on ideals.
- **Stage Five: Social contract.** Obey social rules because they benefit everyone and are established by mutual agreement. If the rules become destructive or if one party doesn’t live up to the agreement, the contract is no longer binding. Under some circumstances, disobeying the law is moral.
- **Stage Six: Universal ethical principles.** General, universally valid principles, not individual situations (level I) or community practices (level II), determine right and wrong. Ethical values (such as “life is sacred”) are established by individual reflection and may contradict egocentric (level I) or social and community (level II) values.
Criticisms of Kohlberg

• Kohlberg ignored culture and gender.
• Kohlberg’s levels could be labeled personal (preconventional), communal (conventional), and worldwide (postconventional) → family is not included.
• The participants in Kohlberg’s original research were all boys.