Chapter 8

Ecology of the Peer Group
Learning objectives

• Define peer group and explain its functions as a socializing agent.
• Discuss developmental tasks relating to the peer group.
• Delineate the stages of play and exemplify peer activities during early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence.
• Describe the stages of friendship.
• Describe peer group dynamics and the effects of peer group social hierarchies, including bullies and victims.
Student Characteristics

- Gender
- Culture
- Socioeconomic status
- Learning style
- Disability
- Risk and resilience
Peers as Socializing Agents
Activity: Poem or Song

Using PEERS write a song or a poem about how your peers influenced you.

Pivotal in my life growing up

Embraced my ideas

Educated me about life as a teen

Responded to my wonders

Satisfy my desire to live and grow

Share with class.
Peers

- Individuals who are of approximately the same gender, age, and social status and who share interests
Peers

- Satisfy certain belonging needs
- Are often preferred to other socializing agents
- Influence social, cognitive, psychological development
Peers

- Influential from late childhood through adolescence and early adulthood
- Learn how to form relationships without adult supervision
- May encourage good and bad interests
- May guide short term choices
- Change behavior and personality to be accepted by peers
Peer Interactions- Dyad

Activity: Pages 250-255

1. Read *The Significance of Peers to Human Development*.

2. Select a developmental stage.

3. What are the characteristics of peer interaction of the stage selected?
# Peer Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Belonging Needs and Socialization</th>
<th>Sense of Self</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy/Toddlerhood</td>
<td>Awareness of peers</td>
<td>Relationships become more reciprocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>Parents facilitate</td>
<td>Children play alone and together in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Childhood</td>
<td>Opportunities for social interaction increase</td>
<td>Peers become important source of self-confirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Growth of relationships and closeness</td>
<td>Peer activities escalate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Group Socializing Mechanisms

- Reinforcement
- **Modeling**
  
  *The extent to which modeling influences behavior depends upon the*
  
  - Situation
  - Model
  - Observer

- Punishment
- Apprenticeship
Chronosystem Influences
## Play: Parten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solitary</td>
<td>Child plays alone and independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onlooker</td>
<td>Child watches other children play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>Child plays alone, but with toys like those other children are using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative</td>
<td>Social interaction and communication with little or no organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Social interaction in a group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepare and present an activity that will demonstrate the type of play selected.
**Play: Sutton-Smith**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Play Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imitative</td>
<td>Baby imitates parent; Children imitate roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Exploring- taste, touch, manipulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Testing abilities and emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model-Building</td>
<td>Building- putting elements together in new ways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Group Interaction
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Friendship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>Momentary playmateship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early to Middle Childhood</td>
<td>One-way assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Childhood</td>
<td>Two-way, fair-weather cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Childhood-Adolescence</td>
<td>Intimate, mutually shared relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Autonomous interdependent friendships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Group Dynamics

• Bullies and victims

The Bullying Project

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dVX0tWiG2E
Gang

- A group of people who form an alliance for a common purpose and engage in unlawful or criminal activity

Americas Deadliest Gangs
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFGvPnvhXUU
Gangs

• Gangs give members companionship, guidance, excitement, and identity.
• Gang members have significantly lower levels of self-esteem than their non-gang peers.
• Gang members can name fewer adult role models in their families and communities.
What would be strategies to prevent gangs?
Coordinated intervention Strategy: 
Gangs

- Community and law enforcement personnel work to reduce the likelihood that high-risk youth will become involved in gangs.
- **Essential to success**
  Involvement of police agencies, educators, job-training resources, parents, and community groups

http://www.sanjoseca.gov/mayor/goals/pubsafety/MGPTF/mgp.tf.asp
Strategy: Sports

• Organized interactions of children in competitive and/or cooperative team or individual enjoyable physical activities