Chapter 8

Ecology of the Peer Group
Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.

Aristotle
Peer Group Influences

• As a Socializing Agent
• Psychological Development: Emotions
• Social Development: Social Competence and Conformity
• Cognitive Development: Social Cognition
• Peer Group Socializing Mechanisms
The Peer Group as a Socializing Agent

• Peer Groups serve as socializing agents when:
  
  – They satisfy certain belonging needs
  – They are often preferred to other socializing agents.
  – They influence not only social development, but cognitive development as well.
# 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>
The Peer Group’s Influence on Psychological Development: Emotions

• In terms of psychological development, peer groups serve as a child’s barometer for measuring how well they are accepted or rejected within the group.
The Peer Group’s Influence on Social Development: Social Competence and Conformity

• Social competence involves behavior informed by an understanding of other’s feelings and intentions.

• Social competence depends on:
  – Age
  – Situation
  – Personal Values
Peer Group’s Influence on Cognitive Development: Social Cognition

• Social cognition refers to the connection between social and cognitive development.

• Social Cognition differs in the
  – Preoperational Stage
  – Concrete Operational Stage
  – Formal Operational Stage
Peer Group Socializing Mechanisms

• Reinforcement
• Modeling
• Punishment
• Apprenticeship
Macrosystem Influences
Macrosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Developmental Tasks

- Getting along with others
- Developing morals and values
- Types of morality
- Learning appropriate sociocultural roles
- Achieving personal independence and identity
Types of Morality

• **Morality of Constraint**
  – Behavior based on respect for persons in authority

• **Morality of Cooperation**
  – Behavior based on mutual understanding between equals
Chronosystem Influences
Chronosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Play/Activities

- The significance and development of play
- Infant/Toddler Peer Activities
- Early childhood peer activities
- Middle childhood/Preadolescent peer activities
- Adolescent peer activities
## 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>
# Play: Sutton-Smith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Category</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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

• Development of friendship
  – “Just friends”
  – “Good friends”
  – “Best/close friends”
## Selman & Selman

<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
Acceptance/Neglect/Rejection

• Acceptance
• Neglected
• Rejected
Peer Sociotherapy

• **Sociometry**
  – Techniques used to measure patterns of acceptance, neglect, and rejection among members of a group

• **Sociotherapy**
  – An intervention to help children who have trouble making and keeping friends learn to relate to others
Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

• Clique inclusion and exclusion

• Bullies and victims
Peer Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

• **Clique Inclusion and Exclusion**
  
  – Inclusion (recruitment of new members, treatment of wannabes friendship realignment, ingratiation)

  – Exclusion (out-group subjugation, in-group subjugation, compliance, stigmatization, expulsion)
Peer Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

• Bullies and Victims

  – Bullying is aggressive behavior intended to cause harm or distress.

  – Victimization is being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions, or harassment.
Antisocial Behavior: Gangs

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

• 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.
Prosocial Behavior: Peer Collaboration, Tutoring, and Counseling

- Collaborate
- Tutor
- Counsel
Mesosystem Influences
Mesosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Adult-Child Interaction

- Adult-structured peer groups
- Adult-mediated group interaction
- Adult leadership styles
- Team Sports
Adult Mediation

• How adults mediate, or structure, groups influences children’s behavior
  – Frustration and competition lead to hostility between groups.
  – Competition *between* groups fosters cohesiveness *within* groups.
  – Intergroup hostility can be reduced by setting up a superordinate, or common, goal.
Adult Leadership Styles

• Authoritarian

• Democratic (Authoritative)

• Laissez-faire (Permissive)
Team Sports

• Team sports are a form of recreation.
• Team sports are a means of achieving physical health.
• Team sports are a way to learn leadership skills, loyalty, and other desirable traits.
• Team sports are a vehicle for promoting the development of talent.