UNIT 8 : DEVELOPMENT IN THE TODDLER

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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of development in the toddler
- explain the physical changes in a toddler
- describe the development of language in a toddler
- comprehend the cognitive development in a toddler
- explain the social development in a toddler
- realize the importance of family and peers in the development of a toddler.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

The life of an individual starts from the very moment of conception in the mother's womb. The birth of the individual is a natural event of life. It enables him to come out of the internal environment of the mother's womb

and be in communion with the external environment wherein he has to promote his growth. This growth is continued till death and it has to undergo several changes of all types- physical, mental, emotional, and social, etc. The successive changes that occur from time to time in these types are known as development. The first stage of an individual's life after birth is infancy. The first year of a child is infancy period and from the first year (12 months) to 2-3 years is the period of toddler. A toddler is a child approximately 12 to 36 months old, though its definitions vary. The toddler years are a time of great cognitive, emotional and social development. The word toddler is derived from the word "toddle" which means to walk unsteady like a child of this age.

8.3 PHYSICAL CHANGES IN A TODDLER

There is no exact age at which all infants should be able to grasp object or hold up their heads without support. Physical development occurs at different times for all children depending on many factors such as the child's unique characteristics, the family's values and culture and available resources certain conditions must exist for a toddler to grow and develop. A young child's basic need or physical needs include: Food, shelter, warmth, clean air and environment, health and dental care and activity and rest.

Physical development including gross and fine-motor skills, consumes the interest of toddlers as they practice learned skills and look to develop new ones. Healthy physical development is dependent upon nutrition, brain development, the central nervous system, muscles, bones and the interactions and experiences that are offered to toddlers. Recognizing developmental delay during toddlerhood for the early intervention is more effective than if the delays were not acknowledged until childhood. Delays in physical development may affect more than gross and fine-motor skills. For example: - If a toddler is unable to smile at his parents or lift his arms to be picked up than this can impact social and emotional development.

8.3.1 Physical Development Aspects in a Toddler

There are marked changes reading the different development aspects in a toddlerhood, these are discussed below:-

Physical Development aspects:

Toddlerhood is a period of rapid growth and development. There are marked changes regarding the different developmental aspects from birth till the period of infancy ends, i.e., at the end of two years. The different aspects are discussed below:

The physical development of a toddler is very rapid and it can be easily studied under the following heads-

- **Height and weight:** At four months after birth the infant measured almost 23 and 24 inches and at one year he measures between 28 and 30 inches and at two years between 32 and 34 inches. The toddler's weight is almost double when the infant is four months old. At one year, babies' weight, on the average, is three times their weight at birth. This is mainly due to the increase in fat tissue.
- **Nervous proportion**: Head growth gradually slows down while the chest and limbs growth increases. Thus the toddler slowly becomes less top heavy and appears more slender, though the head covers one-fourth of the body at birth.
- **Bones development**: The number of bones increases during toddlerhood, particularly the second year of life. The soft spot on the skull closes by the age of the end of two years.
- **Muscles and fat**: Muscles are developed at birth. They grow slowly and are weak during the initial period of toddlerhood. On the contrary, fat tissues develop very rapidly during toddlerhood mainly due to the fat content of milk, the main food of the baby.
- **Sense organ development**: By the age of three months the eyes of muscles of the babies are well developed and coordinated to enable him to see clearly and distinctly and

also to see colors. Hearing capability also develop very rapidly during this time. Smell and taste which are well developed at birth continue to improve further during toddlerhood. Toddlers respond quickly to touch stimuli because of the thin texture of their skin. They relate very well to pressure, pain and temperature.

8.4 DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A TODDLER

Language plays a vital role in the personality and social development of the child. The development of language is connected with the physical and mental development of a person. One is able to use language only after attaining a definite physical and mental maturation. So long as his vocal organs do not mature properly, he cannot pronounce words correctly and clearly. Speech is the main medium of communication between individuals. To be able to communicate with others, all individuals must be capable of two functions-

a) The ability to understand the meaning of what others are trying to communicate.

b) To communicate to others what they can understand.

Communication can be in any form of language- written, spoken, gestures, postures, musical, artistic expression but the most common is the spoken form. The foundation of speaking is laid in infancy itself though the ability to understand clearly happens generally in toddlerhood. Babbling which occurs after few months is important because speech develop from it eventually.

The first sound of the toddler is natural and its differentiation is not possible. But after some days, it may be connected with hunger, heat, cold and thirst because its sounds for all these are of particular nature. In the beginning, its sounds are mainly vowel sounds, as ‘aaa’ ‘ee’ ‘al’ etc. After that it can produce consonant and vowel sounds both as MA, MAMA, PA, PAPA, etc with all these haphazard sounds, it gradually improves its language skills.

When the toddler reproduces the sound MAMA, MUM, PA or PAPA, it shows a response to it by considering it a stimulus for listening. When it hears itself reproducing the sound MAMA several times, it connects the sound 'MAMA' with its speaking activity. When the toddlers has learnt to speak 'MAMA' any adult can stimulate or condition it to speak some meaningful word like CAT, DOG, or RAT by pointing to these animals when present nearby. Thus with the help of some stimulus, the child learns to speak MAMA or CAT. A growing child can imitate some meaningful word only when it has reproduced the sound in its spontaneous language response.

The development of the child proceeds according to general principles of language development. Just as in motor development, the toddler succeeds in displaying distinct and definite movements by proceeding from indistinct and indefinite movements. Similarly in language development also it learns to reproduce specific and meaningful sounds by producing indistinct and indefinite sounds in the beginning

Language development involves the following

- **Pronunciation**: The toddlers learns to pronounce words clearly by end of second year by imitating parents and others adults. This is the second stage of language development. About the age of 18 to 24 months toddlers produce real words and partly trial and error sentences. While they are only capable of producing few short sentences at this time, it should be realized that they are able to understand more. Toddlers begin to understand language about twice as fast as they are able to produce it.
- **Vocabulary build up**: Toddlers learns and follows simple one-step direction and commands. The toddlers starts expanding vocabulary at this stage. By 24 months the toddlers starts using about 50 words regularly. The year between 12 and 24 months is the most exciting year in terms of language development. However they do not have idea about pronouns, preposition and conjunction. Vocabulary increase with age and maturation.
- **Sentences**: The toddles first real sentences usually appears between

eighteen and twenty-four months, and generally consists of simple words accompanied by a bodily gesture. Gradually the toddlers uses more words in their sentences but gestures are still predominant through infancy and well into childhood.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Which period is known as the period of toddlerhood?

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Q 2: The word toddler is derived from which word?

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Q 3: Mention the heads through which physical development of a toddler can be studied.

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Q 4: Mention one important aspect of language development in a toddler.

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8.5 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN A TODDLER

Cognitive development refers to the development of the capabilities of knowing, thinking, reasoning, understanding, remembering, etc. Cognitive units include images, symbols, concepts, etc.

Images retain in the mind the similarities and relations between significant elements of the child's experience.

Symbols represent objects, events or even actions. The most commonly used symbols are represented by sign letters.

Concepts are the abstracts characteristics of objects, events or actions. The development of concepts results from associations of meanings with objects, people and situations.

Cognition may be direct and indirect. Direct cognitive abilities refer to the processes that occurs when a child tries to solve a problem. Cognitive activities are indirect when the child engages in the free associations or refer to dreams. The behavior of a normal baby shows that ability to form concepts develops very rapidly.

8.5.1 Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

The famous Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget has made the most significant contribution in the study of cognitive development of children. We have already discussed briefly in the previous unit but let us discuss about the theory in detail -

Jean Piaget was the first to make systematic study of the acquisition of understanding how thinking in a child develops. According to him intellectual traits characteristic thoughts –"relation and "animism".

According to Piaget's realism is the tendency to the child to treat thoughts and dreams as physical events and the tendency of the child to give psychological attributes to physical objects is called animism.

Piaget believed that cognitive development takes place through four fundamental stages. All children have to pass through these stages to reach the next higher level of cognitive thinking.

Piaget's Stages of Child Development-

Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development are divided into four Major stages are:

A. Sensory Motor Stage: (0—2 Years)

B. Preoperational stage: (2—7 Years)

C. Concrete Operational Stage: (7—11 Years)

D. Formal Operational Stage: (11 Years —Adulthood)

A. The Sensory Motor Stage (Ages: Birth to 2 years)

The main characteristic of this stage of development are:

- It involves the senses and motor activities.

- Children do reflexive activities such as sucking and grasping.
- The child observes and imitates his or her surroundings. Thought and memory also start to develop systematically.
- Children learn to recognize objects and understand that objects have their separate permanent existence

As infants grow older, they learn that even if an object is not in front of them, it still exists. Piaget called it to object permanence. It is also known as 'out of sight, out of mind

Children also learn to work in a particular direction. Catching a particular thing which they are asked to catch, playing with puzzles and so on are common activities they learn to do. They move from simple to complex logical action and thinking. This goal-directed thinking helps them to progress to a higher level scheme to achieve a goal

The Sensory Motor Stage is further divided into six sub-stages

There are six sub-stages of the first stage given by Piaget:

1. **Stages of Reflex Activities (0—1 month**): Inborn reflexes (sucking and looking) help the child to understand the surrounding.
2. **Primary Circular Reactions (1—4 months)**: Sensations and schemas get coordinated in this stage. Whatever children do in this stage, they tend to do it repeatedly as they derive pleasure from doing so. For example, if a child starts sucking thumb, he or she will continue with this action because it gives the child a soothing feeling.
3. **Secondary Circular Reactions (4—8 months**): younger Children become more focused on doing actions. They repeat their actions to get a response from the environment.
4. **Coordination of Reactions (8—12 months):** In this stage, children learn to make a difference between goal and means. They also develop ways to achieve their goals. They also try to generalize the learning and try to use it from one situation to another.

5. **Tertiary Circular Reactions (12—18 months)**: This is a stage of trial and error. Children explore the things around them. They make mistakes and also tend to repeat these mistakes. This stage is very important as children learn to be confident in this particular stage. They repeat many actions because they want attention from their caregiver.
6. **Early Representational Thought (18—24 months**): Children start focusing more on mental activities rather than physical actions and they start thinking about objects. At this age, they show the ability to recognize object permanence. They search for the toy even if it is not in their sight.

B. The Preoperational stage (Ages: 2 to 7 Years)

The Main Characteristics of this stage involves:

- Children begin to process their thoughts at this stage although in a manner that is far less efficient than the logical thought-processing of adults.
- Their vocabulary expands and develops during this time because they change their working style and habits and start behaving like little adults
- This stage is known as a pre-operational stage of cognitive development. It is called 'pre' because, in this stage, children cannot perform a logical operation.
- This stage is categorized in two parts: **pre-conceptual stage (2-4) and intuitive stage (4-7).**
- Their vocabulary expands and develops during this time because they change their working style and habits and start behaving like little adults

Some of the other important characteristics are:

- **Ego-centrism** is one of the main characteristics of pre-operational. Children focus on their perspective and feel that they are correct. They also believe that others also share the same perspective because they think that it is the only perspective which exists. But gradually they understand that

there are many perspectives and Piaget called it 'decentering: They start believing that they are not at the centre of everything.

- **Animism** is also a characteristic of the pre-operational stage. It is a characteristic by which children believe that all objects or things are living and has some consciousness. An example of this is that children often believe that a table also feels pain if it is hit or kicked; a car does not get started because it is tired and so on. A child believes that everyone is like him or her.
- Children also develop **the ability to use symbols, language, pictures, signs or gestures to represent actions or objects mentally**. Piaget called this semiotic function or symbolism. Along with this, their ideas of right and wrong are governed by the people around them.

C. The Concrete Operational Stage (Ages: 7 to 11 years)

The main characteristic of Concrete Operational stage are:

- Children can do operations on concrete objects and situations. However, they will find it hard to solve abstract problems and have difficulty with words like 'assume' that relate to mental conjecture.
- They can do logical thinking if they are allowed to manipulate objects. By comparison, however, it is seen that thoughts can be manipulated and the presence of the object is not necessary for the thought to take place in the formal operations stage.
- They start thinking more like mature persons and rarely believe in animism and ego-centrism.
- Children learn many things in this stage concerning conservation such as classification, grouping objects into categories, arranging of objects in sequential order according to one aspect, such as size, weight or volume

D. The Formal Operational Stage (Ages: 11 years to Adulthood)

The main Characteristics of formal operational stage are:

- This is the final stage of Piaget's cognitive development in this stage
- Children become capable of abstract thinking and can understand the combination and coordination of numbers and variables.
- Developed formal operational thought.
- Children move ahead from concrete objects to abstract concepts
- They develop a logical system of intelligence and try to incorporate all possible solutions while working on a problem.
- They also learn to coordinate between different variables.
- Children in this stage use the formal operations problem-solving strategy in which an individual begins by identifying all the factors that might affect a problem and then deduces systematically. Piaget called it hypothetico-deductive reasoning.
- This stage permits adolescents to reason beyond a world, of concrete reality to a world of possibilities. Sometimes, they just live in a world of imaginations with no concern about the real world.

Piaget believes that children overcome egocentrism, but they still tend to believe that everyone shares similar thoughts, feeling and concerns. They wonder why people do not understand their need and perspective and therefore, they develop adolescent ego-centrism. They feel that everyone notice them, what they do, how they walk, how they talk.

According to Piaget's the basis behavior starts through sensations and this stage is therefore called by him as the sensory-motor stage. He emphasized that the sensory -motor experiences have significant and probably irreversible effects on his later life.

Piaget described that between one and half years to 2 years a toddler starts understanding that objects have substance, occupy space and are permanent. He gradually can find difference between

himself and other people and things in the environment. The cognitive development determines the toddler's ability to think understand and manipulate things in his surroundings.

8.6 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN A TODDLER

Concept of social development:

Man is a social animal we see the truth of this statement since the birth of an infant. The manner in which an adult depends upon others for his various requirements in the same way a child is dependent on others. The social contacts immensely influence the child development. The first social contact of the child is with his family. Therefore, his early habits and attitudes are determined by the members because he shows his family. These habits and attitudes have an important place in his development because he shows his response towards various social stimuli on their basis. The child's behavior is not determined by a single influence of the home and the environment. In fact his behavior is determined by his personality and his personal relations with the entire environment.

One of the significant characteristic that a toddlers develops is social development i.e. acquiring the skill needed to become a member of a group. Toddler starts talking and interacting more with others as they grow older. When young children enjoy their contacts with others, their attitudes towards those people will become favorable in future and if the social contacts with certain people are not enjoyable, then such contacts are not favorable in future.

Social development starts in infancy but it becomes more pronounced from toddlerhood with increasing age the child expands his social interactions to the parents and relatives, friends and peers, teachers and others. The young child wants and needs companions of adults and other children. Social acceptability becomes a very important goal in the child's life.

At the start of toddlerhood period, children show interest in watching other children play but himself play independently. Then comes a period when children gradually start engaging in play activities with other children. This is called associative play. Toddlers learn to socialize mainly by watching

others make social contacts. Toddlers mostly imitates the behaviour and attitudes of parents as they admire them and want to be like them. The urge to establish social contacts and enjoy the associations with others become quite obvious in toddlerhood.

In toddlerhood, the toddlers mostly use toys in one form or another in their play activities and they attribute certain qualities to their toys. Towards the end of toddlerhood they lose interest in playing much with toys. The play interests during toddlerhood are very much influenced by their maturation level. Besides this, their interest are also determined by the socio-economic status of the family. Play activities during toddlerhood develop motor and communication skills in toddlers. They also become more creative. All these qualities and skills help the children to become more social.

The toddlers gradually learn social behaviour. This learning depends upon his social contact with others. His social development proceeds further as and when he comes in contact with others. A definite plan and guidance is necessary for the desired development of the child. Along with his social development, the personality of the child also gets better adjusted. Social development is usually associated with the development of power of self-expression which enables the child to stand on his own legs. Social development of toddlers proceeds in an order. So it is not difficult to predict the nature of social development at a certain age.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What do you mean by cognitive development?

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Q 6: Mention one significant characteristic of social development in a toddler.

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8.7 IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A TODDLER

Socialization occurs when one learns to become a member of the society by gaining the skills, values, behaviors and habits of the culture that one is living. Toddlers learn by listening and watching what their family members around them do and then imitates those actions to become a member of society.

- The family is the foremost agent of socializing a child. Social maturity of a child is an essential requisite for his harmonious adjustment in the society. Social acceptability is a goal for everyone and this should be recognized and promoted by parents at home.
- The ability to speak a language first starts in the family. The children learns the language of their parents by imitating the sounds and then understanding the meaning of the words. This helps to develop communication skills later.
- It is through the family that children learn about social customs, mores, traditions and norms. The family also exercises social control over the child, this helps to develop the sense of good judgement and social responsibility in children to make them proper citizen.
- The family help the children to imbibe the culture and develop a social identity. The family members provide companionship, love and security to the children and this provides the foundations for personality development. They learn to perform different social functions within the family.
- The family is the first institution that trains the children for the group life. Mutual affection, trust and distribution of responsibility socialize the children and they learn to participate and shoulder responsibility in the society in later life.
- The family performs educational functions also. The first alphabet and numbers are learnt at home. The mother is the first teacher and she teaches the children about discipline, obedience and manners.

8.8 IMPORTANCE OF PEERS IN THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A TODDLER

Peer relationships provide a unique context in which children learn a range of critical social emotional skills, relationships provide a unique context in which children learn a range of critical social emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation and problem solving strategies.

- Peers play an important role in the toddlerhood period. Toddlers begin to socialize among their age groups through play activities. Play activities helps toddlers to build a social connections among their groups through which they establish the feeling of belongingness and mutual trust.
- Peers also play a vital role in their language development. During the toddlerhood period, toddlers are not able to form clear phrases but can communicate with their fellow mates through their mutual understanding which gradually aids them in the formation and development of language.
- Another important role that peer plays in the social development of a toddler is the act of sharing and caring. Act of sharing is essential for emotional development of a toddler and during this period they develop the tendency of sharing and caring only towards their fellow mates after their parents.
- Socialisation process of a toddler starts in the family but they tends to open up more with children of same age group. Toddlers with their peers through play activities and communication develops feelings and emotions like empathy, kindness, sharing, caring, joy, sadness, etc. which helps in proper development of a socialisation process.
- Peer also plays a vital role in bringing out the personality of a toddler when they remain in a social group. Playing with their same age group is a favourite activity in the toddlerhood period which also helps the toddlers to develop the quality of leadership and companionship.
- When toddlers will remain and interact with their peers their curiosity level will increase to know more about their fellow mates and the things

surrounded around them which will help in developing their mental blocks and to understand different people and things in different situations.



8.9 LET US SUM UP

The unit can be summarized as-

- The birth of the individual is a natural event of life. It enables him to come out of the internal environment of the mother's womb and be in communion with the external environment wherein he has to promote his growth. This growth is continued till death and it has to undergo several changes of all types- physical, mental, emotional, social , etc.
- The first stage of an individual's life after birth is infancy. The first year of a child is infancy period and from the first year (12 months) to 2-3 years is the period of toddler. A toddler is a child approximately 12 to 36 months old, though its definitions vary. The toddler years are a time of great cognitive, emotional and social development. The word toddler is derived from "to toddle" which means to walk unsteady like a child of this age.
- Physical development including gross and fine-motor skills, consumes the interest of toddlers as they practice learned skills and look to develop new ones. Healthy physical development is dependent upon nutrition, brain development, the central nervous system, muscles, bones and the interactions and experiences that are offered to toddlers.
- The physical development of a Toddler is very rapid and can be easily studied under the following heads-
- Language plays a vital role in the personality and social development of the child. The development of language is connected with the physical and mental development of a person.
- One is able to use language only after attaining a definite physical and mental maturation. So long as his vocal organs do not mature

properly, he cannot pronounce words correctly and clearly.

- Communication can be in any form of language- written, spoken, gestures, postures, musical, artistic expression but the most common is the spoken form. The foundation of speaking is laid in infancy itself though the ability to understand clearly happens generally in toddlerhood. Babbling which occurs after few months is most important because speech develop from it eventually.
- Cognitive development refers to the development of the capabilities of knowing, thinking, reasoning, understanding, remembering, etc. Cognitive units include images, symbols, concepts, etc.
- Jean Piaget's is a Swiss-born psychologist who was the first to make systematic study of the acquisition of understanding how thinking in a child develops. According to him intellectual traits characteristic thoughts –"relation and "animism".
- Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development are divided into four Major stages are: Sensory Motor Stage: (0—2 Years),Preoperational stage: (2—7 Years),Concrete Operational Stage: (7—11 Years),Formal Operational Stage: (11 Years —Adulthood)
- Social development starts in infancy but it becomes more pronounced from toddlerhood with increasing age the child expands his social interactions to the parents and relatives, friends and peers, teachers and others. The young child wants and needs companions of adults and other children. Social acceptability becomes a very important goal in the child's life.
- Socialization occurs when one learns to become a member of the society by gaining the skills, values, behaviors and habits of the culture that one is living. Toddlers learn by listening and watching what their family members around them do and then imitates those actions to become a member of society.



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8.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The first year of a child is infancy period and from the first year (12 months) to 2-3 years is the period of toddler. A toddler is a child approximately 12 to 36 months old, though its definitions vary.

Ans to Q No 2: The word toddler is derived from the words “to toddle” which means to walk unsteady like a child of this age.

Ans to Q No 3: Height and weight, Nervous proportion, Bones development, Muscles and fat, Sense organ development.

Ans to Q No 4: One important aspect of language development in a toddler

is - Pronunciation: The toddlers learns to pronounce words clearly by end of second year by imitating parents and others adults. This is the second stage of language development. About the age of 18 to 24 months toddlers produce real words and partly trial and error sentences. While they are only capable of producing few short sentences at this time, it should be realized that they are able to understand more. Toddlers begin to understand language about twice as fast as they are able to produce it.

Ans to Q No 5: Cognitive development refers to the development of the capabilities of knowing, thinking, reasoning, understanding, remembering, etc. Cognitive units include images, symbols, concepts, etc.

Ans to Q No 6: One of the significant characteristic that a toddlers develops in social development is to acquire the skill needed to become a member of a group. Toddler starts talking and interacting more with others as they grow older. When young children enjoy their contacts with others, their attitudes towards those people will become favorable in future and if the social contacts with certain people are not enjoyable, then such contacts are not favorable in future.



8.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions (Answer each questions in about 150 words)

Q 1: Define Development.

Q 2: What is the approximate age of a toddler?

Q 3: What does the word 'Toddle' mean?

Q 4: Mention the physical developmental aspects in a toddler.

Q 5: Language development of a toddler is associated with the development of which aspect?

Q 6: Mention the important aspects of language development of a toddler.

Q 7: What do you mean by Cognitive development?

Q 8: What is Social development?

B. Long Questions (Answer each questions in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Explain the concept of Physical development of a toddler.

Q 2: Discuss the Physical changes in a toddler.

Q 3: How does language formation takes place in a toddler. Explain.

Q 4: What do you mean by Cognitive development? Explain the units of cognitive development.

Q 5: Explain Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development.

Q 6: What do you mean by Social development? Explain the importance of social development during toddlerhood.

Q 7: Discuss in detail the importance of Family in social development of a toddler.

Q 8: Discuss the importance of Peers in social development of a toddler.

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