UNIT 10 : DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

UNIT STRUCTURE

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able -

- acquire the concept of school aged child
- understand how physical and cognitive development take place in the school aged child
- comprehend the process of social development in the school aged child.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

We know that every stage of human development has its own unique qualities and characteristics. Development follows a definite pattern as such each stage is interlinked with the later one. But when we reach the end of one period, we find it different from that of the previous one. Childhood period is sub divided into two stages - early and late childhood period. Both gives a clear but different picture of developmental features of this important phase of children 'life. Unit 9 of this block was a detail discussion of pre-childhood stage which is popularly known as early childhood period. The

different developmental characteristics of this early childhood period have clarified your idea how they attain developmental changes from different perspectives of development. Here in this unit, you will come across different developmental changes that take place in child when they enter into the later stage of childhood. The stage of late childhood is a sort of pseudo maturity, because at this stage, the child achieves a good degree of adaptation to his or her environment as compared with the children of the early childhood stage. The purpose of this unit is to familiarize you with the late childhood stage which is also known as school period, its different important developmental characteristics.

10.3 THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

School aged child falls in the age range of 6 years to 12 years. This period is marked by the beginning of child's entry into formal schooling and ending in the advent of puberty. At both its beginning and end, late childhood or school age is characterized by conditions that profoundly affect a child's personal and social adjustment. This late childhood period is called by the ***educationists as school (elementary) age*** as it is the time when the child is expected to acquire the rudiments of knowledge that are considered essential for successful adjustment to later life. This period is significant as the child is expected to learn certain essential skills, both curricular and co-curricular. There are several other terms which are being used to describe late childhood or school period. Parents call it ***"troublesome"*** period as children are more influenced by the peers than the parents or older, they again use the term ***"Sloppy Age"*** as children tend to be careless. Again psychologists call this period as ***"Gang Age"*** as it is the time when children's major concern is accepted by their age mates and membership in a gang. The other two term used by psychologists to describe late childhood are- ***"age of conformity"*** and ***"Play Age", "Creative Age"*** etc.

The beginning of late childhood is marked by the child's entrance into first grade in school. As such they are regarded as school aged children. For most of the young children, this is a major change in the pattern of their lives, even when they have had a year or more of experience in some pre-

school institution. Entrance into first grade is a milestone in every child's life; therefore it is responsible for many of the changes that take place in terms of attitudes, values and behavior and as such in term of personality. When children develop the habit of working up to their capacities, the habit becomes persistent and tends to spread to all areas of child's life.

Characteristics of school aged Child:

The following features are exhibited in the school aged children-

- School age children falls in the age category from the age of six years to the time the individual becomes sexually mature.
- School age children are marked by excellence and pseudo - maturity.
- New interests are developed for the school aged child.
- Besides attaining maturity in sex; the school aged child also develops certain amount of physical and mental growth.
- The school age children form the habit of being achievers, under achiever or overachiever, hence school age period is called as critical period in the achievement drive.
- The school age children' major concern is acceptance by their age mates and membership in a gang with prestige.
- School age children tend to form group -approved standards in terms of appearance, speech and behavior.
- School age children attain slow and relatively uniform growth until the changes of puberty begin, approximately two years before the school aged child becomes sexually mature at which time growth speeds up markedly.
- Many new interests are developed in the school age children such as- appearance, clothes, religion, the human body, health, sex, school, status symbols etc.
- Thinking becomes more logical and systematic in school age children particularly in respect of concrete objects, events and experiences.
- School age children learn most of the social standards regarding sex roles and accept their gender as an unchanging aspect of themselves and their personality.



LET US KNOW

Psychologists on the basis of their studies revealed that boys mature sexually later than girls and as a result have a slightly longer childhood.

10.4 PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

This late childhood period or school period is a period of excellence and pseudo - maturity. New interests develop for the child and besides some maturity in sex; the child also develops certain amount of physical and mental growth. As regards sex, it remains dormant, but it emerges with great force at the end of this stage. This stage, is therefore, called 'latency period'.

It is already mentioned that school age children attain slow and relatively uniform growth until the changes of puberty begin approximately two years before they become sexually mature. Physical development follows a predictable pattern in the school age children though variation occur. Body build affect both height and weight of the school age children.

One of the important characteristics of physical development in school age child is that the child with a thin body are expected to weigh less than those with heavier body. Again the children with muscular body build grow faster than those with fat body or thin body and these children reach puberty sooner.

The physical development in school age children can be discussed under the following headings-

- **Height:** The annual increase in height of school age children is 2 to 3 inches. The average eleven year old girl is 58 inches tall and the average boy of the same age category is 57.5 inches.
- **Weight:** During this school age or period, weight increases are more variable than height increase ranging from 3 to 5 more pounds annually. The average eleven year old girl weighs 88.5 pounds and the average boy of the same age weighs 85.5 pounds.

- **Body Proportion:** Regarding body proportion, the following features are seen among the school age children-
  - The head is proportionality too large for the rest of the body.
  - Some of the facial disproportion disappear as the mouth and jaw become larger.
  - The forehead broadens and the nose become larger.
  - The lips are filled out.
  - With the enlargement of nose the face acquire more shape.
  - The trunk elongates and becomes slimmer.
  - The neck becomes longer, the chest broadens and the abdomen got flattened.
  - The arms and legs are lengthened though they appear spindly and shape less because of underdeveloped musculature.
  - The hands and the feet grow larger but with a slow rate.
- **Teeth:** By the onset of puberty and end of late childhood stage, the school age child normally has twenty-eight of the thirty-two permanent teeth. The last four -the wisdom teeth erupt during adolescence period.
- **Muscle:** During the late childhood period, the school age children develops more fat tissue rapidly than muscle tissue which has a marked growth spurt beginning at puberty.
- **Lymphatic system:** It is involved in the elimination of waste and the destruction of bacteria from the body. From birth onwards, this system shows the sign of rapid development. It reaches to its maximum at the end of late childhood period between ages of 11 to 12 years. After twelve it starts decreasing.

Though, the physical development in school age children follows a predictable pattern, yet, good health and good nutrition are important factors in the child's growth and development. The better the health and nutrition, the larger children tend to be, age for age, as compared with those whose nutrition and health are poor. Children who are immunized against disease during the early years of life grow larger than those who are not immunized. Emotion too play a great role in the physical development of the school age children as emotional tension or stress affects the physical growth. As such,

the parents, teachers and the person surrounded by the child must pay attention for proper nutrition and a sound and healthy environment for proper physical development of the child.

Sex differences in the physical development in school age children:

Sex difference in physical growth is relatively slight in earlier years or pre-school period but it becomes more pronounced in the school age or late childhood stage. School age boys begin their puberty growth spurt approximately a year later than girls. They tend to be slightly shorter and lighter in weight than girls of the same age until they become sexually mature. Girls get their permanent teeth slightly earlier than boys. Again boy's head and face grow larger than girls.



LET US KNOW

- Sex difference in physical growth is more pronounced in the school age or late childhood stage.
- Girls get their permanent teeth slightly earlier than boys.
- The skills developed in school age children can be categorized into four -
  1. Self-help skill **(Eating, dressing)**
  2. Social help skill **(Dusting, sweeping, washing)**
  3. School skill **(Writing, drawing, painting)**
  4. Play skill **(Throwing, catching, swimming)**



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the other names used to refer late childhood period?

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Q 2: Why do educationists called late childhood period as school (elementary) age?

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Q 3: Why do psychologists call the late childhood period as "Gang Age"?

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Q 4: State two characteristics of School Age Children?

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Q 5: What is the annual increase in height of school age children?

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Q 6: How is sex difference in physical growth pronounced in the school age?

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10.5 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

As we discussed in the preceding unit, cognitive development or mental development is a continuous process which continues without interruption in every stage of growth. The process of mental growth and development of an individual's cognitive, mental or intellectual abilities like sensation, perception, conception, generalization, interpretation. These abilities are inter related and never developed in isolation. Late childhood is a rapid mental growth and development. New interests develop in the school child as such the child develops certain amount of mental growth. The child's mental functions and mental capacities which relate to his perception, memory, reasoning, concept formation, problem solving and creative thinking are important for tackling the many different problems of life and intimately related to his performance as a learner. Mental development comes from the maturation of the intellectual capacities of the child and from knowledge acquired by learning over a period of time. The third stage of cognitive development as analyzed by **Jean Piaget** is termed as ***the Concrete Operational Stage*** which extends from 7 to 11 years of life. During this

period, the school age child 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.

The following are the developmental characteristics in terms of cognition in school age children-

- **Increased Understanding:** With the entrance into formal schooling, the school age children expands their world so do their interests. With the broadening of interest comes an understanding of people and things which formerly had little or no meaning becomes more meaningful. During this stage, the vague and meaningless concepts of early childhood become specific and concrete in school age children.
- **Association of new meaning with old one:** School age children can associate new meanings with old concepts on the basis of what they learn after starting school. In addition, they derive new meanings from the mass media, especially movies, radio and television. In building up social concepts, they can associate cultural stereotypes with people of different racial, religious, sex or socio-economic group. School experiences too help the child in associating new meaning with old one.
- **Development of sensory power:** During this period, the sensory powers increases in the school age children rapidly and the child becomes more accurate in his observation. The child starts thinking on creative lines. The likes and dislikes and thought plans begin to shape themselves. Moreover, his power of deductive and inductive reasoning increases and he is able to generalize from the data given to him.
- **Development of reasoning abilities:** The school age children develop reasoning abilities. As per Jean Piaget's theory, the abstract reasoning ability however appears in the school age children only when he is 11 or 12 years old.
- **Development of Intellectual Abilities:** Late childhood is an age of intellectual advancement. Intellectual activities are clearly visible at

this stage. The school age child is in a position to exercise his or her power of memory, attention, thinking and imagination and can solve problems intelligently.

- Capacity to Learn: The child acquires mental readiness to learn at this school stage. He/she can pay attention to and develop interest in reading, writing and arithmetical activities. They are able to shows awareness and sense of subordination to the school rules, laws and discipline. A sense of discipline and some sense of responsibility to school work find are acquired by them. School age children try to learn new knowledge and experience through imitation
- Development of Creativity: Late childhood is the stage then one can identify the creative talent in a child's individuality. The native talent, potentiality and prospect inherent in the child find expression through the suitable outlets provided to him by school or other experiences. He no longer remains a blind imitator but gives evidence of his creative ability in thought, feeling and action. The school age child is in a position to observe anything through the exercise of reasoning and understanding.
- Development of Concepts: The school age children develop many of the new concepts which they earn through their common learning experiences as well as school experiences. The concepts that change most and the new ones most commonly developed in late childhood are associated with- Life, Death, Bodily functions, Space, Numbers, Money, Time, Self, Sex Roles, Social Roles, Beauty, Discipline etc.

Some of the common concept developed in the school age children are discussed here-

- **Life:** School age children are capable of understanding the concept of life. They become aware about the movement of life.
- **Death:** School age children who experiences the death of a family member or pet have a good understanding of the meaning of death and emotional weightage of death
- **Life after Death:** The concept of life after death depends mainly on the religious instruction children receive and on what their peers

believe.

- **Bodily function:** The study of health and hygiene in the school helps the school age children to develop the concept about bodily functions.
- **Space and numbers:** With the use of scales and ruler and solving arithmetic problems, counting skills the school age children are able to develop the concept of space and numbers.
- **Money:** School age children can understand the value of various coins and bills when they start using money.
- **Time:** The time table of the school day enables the children to develop the concept of what they can accomplish in a given period of time. Subject like social studies help them to develop concept of historical time.
- **Self:** Self-concept is one of the important concept developed in children in late childhood period. Through comparison with their classmates and description from the teachers and peers, they get a better image of their abilities and disabilities.
- **Sex Roles:** Both boys and girls of late childhood period develop clear concepts of approved sex roles.
- **Social Roles:** School age children are aware of their peer's social, religious, racial and socio-economic status and they accept cultural stereotypes and adult attitudes towards these statuses.
- **Beauty:** School age are capable of judging beauty in terms of group standard rather than according to their own aesthetic standards.

Thus, it can be established that as children grow they acquire an understanding of the world in which they live. The kind of adjustment they would make to life is greatly influenced by their understanding of the environment, of the people and themselves. For mental or cognitive development, the child's brain and nervous system must develop and the sense organs must functionally mature. Learning and experiences too play important role in the development of children's cognition.

10.6 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL AGE CHILD

Social development occupies very important place in the overall process of growth and development. The aim of social development is to gain social maturity and social qualities like patience, respect for others, kindness, co-operation, sympathy etc. It also indicates the adaptability and adjustability in various social situation. It has been repeatedly mentioned that late childhood is often referred to as the "Gang Age" as it is marked by interest in peer activities. The school age children develop increased strong desire to be in group, to be accepted as a member of gang.

The following characteristics mark the social development in school age child -

- **Period of Gang:** School age period or late childhood period is often termed as "Gang period". During this period, the children develop an increased interest in peers and they are most influenced by them. Moreover, they develop strong desire to be in group and accepted member of the group. They feel lonely and dissatisfied when they are not with their peers.
- **Development of belongingness:** One of the most significant social development that take place in the school age children is in terms of belongingness. This is the effect of gang. Children's gang help them to socialize. This comes primarily from conforming to the patterns of behavior, the values and the attitudes of gang members. They develop belongingness to the other members of the gang.
- **Increased social awareness:** The late childhood period is marked by greater degree of social awareness. They learn to share, co-operate and do and follow things with others. There is a great expansion of child's social world.
- **Sense of independence and self-reliance:** During this period, the school age children like to spend more time with their peers and less with parents and family. They try to seek independence from their parents and other elders. The sense of independence and self-reliance

are developed in them.

- **Social Activeness:** Being in the play group or gang, they realize the importance of group and they tend to be active to earn acceptance as a member of the group. This activeness leads to development of so many other social qualities in them like-leadership, brotherhood, mutual respect etc.
- **Period of socialization:** The true socialization age begins with formal entrance into the school. During this period, the child learns to adapt himself to others and to co-operate in group play activities. Most of the important types of social behavior necessary for individual and social adjustment begin to develop in this period.
- **Development of social consciousness:** With the entrance into formal school and contact with more children, the children develop social consciousness. The childhood gangs help them to learn to get along with age-mates and to behave in a way that is socially acceptable to them. Through gang and school experiences, children learn appropriate social attitude such as how to like people and how to enjoy social life and group activities.

Generally the social behavior and attitude of a child develop reflect the treatment he/she receives in the home or in the formal school. Hence, it is very much essential for the parents and the teachers to create conducive social environment at home and school so that sound social behavior can be expected from these children. Proper care should be taken by the parents in selection of the gang as it bears significant effect on child's overall development.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Mention some of the common concept developed in the school age children.

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Q 8: Why is late childhood period is considered as period of socialization?

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, it can be summarized as-

- Late childhood is a sort of pseudo maturity, because at this stage, the child achieves a good degree of adaptation to his or her environment as compared with the children of the early childhood stage.
- School aged child falls in the age range of 6 years to 12 years. This period is marked by the beginning of child's entry into formal schooling and ending in the advent of puberty.
- The other names used to refer late childhood period are-"troublesome" period, Sloppy Age" "Gang Age, age of conformity" and "Play Age", "Creative Age" etc.
- Physical development follows a predictable pattern in the school age children though variation occur. Body build affect both height and weight of the school age children.
- School age boys begin their puberty growth spurt approximately a year later than girls.
- Late childhood is a rapid mental growth and development. New interests develop in the school child as such the child develops certain amount of mental growth.
- Social development occupies very important place in the overall process of growth and development. Late childhood is often referred to as the "Gang Age" as it is marked by interest in peer activities. The school age children develop increased strong desire to be in group, to be accepted as a member of gang.
- One of the most significant social development that take place in the school age children is in terms of belongingness.



10.8 FURTHER READING

1) Ahlawat Neetu (2010): Developmental Psychology, RBSA Publisher, Jaipur.
2) Chetry Krishna Kumari (2016): Developmental Psychology, Ashok Book Stall, Panbazar, Ghy.
3) Goswamee Gayatree (2008): Child Development and Child Care, Arun Prakashan, Guwahati, Assam.
4) Hurlock Elizabeth B (1980): Developmental Psychology: A life-span Approach, Mc Graw Hill Companies, Inc., New York.



10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The other names used to refer late childhood period are- "troublesome" period, Sloppy Age" "Gang Age, age of conformity" and "Play Age", "Creative Age" etc.

Ans to Q No 2: This late childhood period is called by the educationists as school (elementary) age as it is the time when the child is expected to acquire the rudiments of knowledge that are considered essential for successful adjustment to later life.

Ans to Q No 3: Psychologists call the late childhood period as "Gang Age" as it is the time when children's major concern is accepted by their age mates and membership in a gang.

Ans to Q No 4: Two characteristics of School Age Children are-

- The school age children form the habit of being achievers, under achiever or overachiever, hence school age period is called as critical period in the achievement drive.
- The school age children' major concern is acceptance by their

age mates and membership in a gang with prestige.

Ans to Q No 5: The annual increase in height of school age children is 2 to 3 inches.

Ans to Q No 6: Sex difference in physical growth is more pronounced in the school age or late childhood stage. School age boys begin their puberty growth spurt approximately a year later than girls. They tend to be slightly shorter and lighter in weight than girls of the same age until they become sexually mature.

Ans to Q No 7: Some of the common concept developed in the school age children are here- Life, Death, Life after Death, Bodily function etc.

Ans to Q No 8: Late childhood period is considered as period of socialization as the true socialization age begins with formal entrance into the school. During this period, the child learns to adapt himself to others and to co-operate in group play activities.



10.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: Why do parents call late childhood period as "troublesome" period?

Q 2: State the common characteristics of school age children.

Q 3: Why is late childhood period called as "latency period'?

Q 4: Mention the changes that take place in body Proportion among the school age children.

Q 5: Why is late childhood period referred as Gang Age?

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

Q 1: Discuss the physical development of School Age children.

Q 2: Elaborate the cognitive changes that take place in school Age children.

Q 3: Discuss the common concept developed in the school Age children.

Q 4: Explain how Play Gangs do influence on social development in school age children.

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