UNIT 11 : ROLE OF HOME FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

UNIT STRUCTURE

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11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the influence of home on personality development of children;
- identify the developmental hazards of children; and
- discuss the developmental hazards of children during early childhood

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier units of this course, you have gone through the various aspects of development of children starting from the pre-natal period (unit 5) to the school – age children (unit 10). So, it may be assumed that you have developed a thorough understanding on the concept of growth and development of children including the various dimensions of their development, viz., physical, cognitive, social etc. You have also acquired some ideas regarding the factors or conditions that influence development

of children.

It is known to us that the period of childhood can be divided into two parts – early childhood and late childhood. Early childhood extends from two to six years, and the late childhood extends from age of six years to the time when children attain their puberty, which is approximately eleven years for girls and twelve years for boys. A child belonging to late childhood is also generally referred to as a school-age child as the formal school education begins at this age.

This unit focuses on the role of home in personality development of children at their early and late childhood period. The unit also explains the developmental hazards of younger children. With regard to the developmental hazards, hazards that come in the way of development of older children or children in their late childhood are particularly related to their school environment. As such, development hazards of older children (6 to 12 years age) have been discussed in the next unit, i.e., unit 12 entitled, "Influence of School on Personality Development".

Here, in this unit, developmental hazards of younger children, i.e., children in their early childhood (between two to six years age) are being discussed.

11.3 INFLUENCE OF HOME ON PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Personality pattern of children generally begins in their early childhood yeas. Of course, the foundations for personality development of children have been laid in their babyhood stage itself. As we know that the core of the personality trait is the self-concept. Therefore, the treatment and care that young child in their early childhood period receive from their parents, siblings and other family members plays an important role in shaping their self-concept and thereby cast a remarkable influence on the personality of children. It is said that the child's self-concept is formed within the womb of family relationships. This is why, the early years of life are the most crucial years in personality development. Further, many of the factors that

influenced the personality development in early childhood continue to do so as the child grows older with passing time.

11.3.1 Early Childhood Period

Environment of young children, to a large extent, is limited to their homes and to their family members. As such, home or family of children is considered as the most important determinant in shaping the personality pattern of a child. Given below are some of the influences of home on personality development of young children:

- **Parental attitudes:** All the family members play a very significant role in the life of a child. Yet the most important role is played by their parents and their attitude towards the child. How parents feel and respond to their children regarding their appearance, abilities, and their achievements have a marked influence on how the children feel about themselves. A favourable parent-child relationship produces develops happy and friendly children who grows up to be constructive with an appealing personality. Poorly adjusted children are usually the product of unfavourable parent-child relationships.
- **Child-training method:** Child-training methods used in home plays an important role in shaping young children's development of concept of self and personality. Strict, authoritarian discipline accompanied by corporal punishments tends to build up resentment in young children. The parents must be very careful regarding the disciplinary techniques they use. Criticising in public and always finding faults in children make them withdrawn, frustrated and even hostile. Praising the children's strengths instead of finding their faults help them to feel good and happy.
- **Aspiration of parents:** The aspirations that parents have for their children play an important role in developing their personality. If the aspirations are unrealistically high, the children may fail to fulfil those. This failure thereby leaves an

indelible mark on the self-concepts of young minds and results in laying the foundations of feeling of inferiority and inadequacy in children.

- **The ordinal position of the child in the family:** The ordinal position of a child in a family has a remarkable effect on his/her developing personality. There may be several reasons for this, some of which are - (i) due to the fact that each child in a family usually learns to play a specific role according to his/her ordinal position, (ii) due to the differences in child-training methods used by parents with different children, (iii) due to the success or failure children have in their competition with their siblings.
- **Influence of family relationships:** Family relationships play a very important role in the child's personality development. The first seed of emotional security fertilises in strong family relationship. Broken family relationships, whether due to death, divorce, separation or social mobility affects the self-concepts of young children unfavourably as children feel insecure and different from their peers.

11.3.2 Late Childhood Period

As the children grow older, even though their social development broadens, home and family relationship still continue exert a marked influence on their developing personality. The quality of relationship with parents, siblings and relatives, the way older children feel about the child-training methods used in their homes, all these play important roles in determining the sort of individuals they will become in their lives.

As the children grow older, their ordinal position become even more important now than it was in their early childhood period. It is because, children's attitude towards the roles associated with their position in their family have a greater effect on the way they feel about themselves than they formerly did. For example, a first-

born child, as he or she is expected to help with the care of the younger sibling may either feel self-important or martyred. On the other hand, only child may become increasingly dependent or increasingly more mature than children with siblings, depending on the way their parents treat them.

It has been observed that an unstable home environment generally has less effect on the personality development of older children than that of younger ones.



CHECK YOU PRPGRESS

Q 1: In how many periods is childhood further divided into? Name the periods along with the age range.

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Q 2: Why is home considered as one of the most important determinants in shaping the personality of children in their early childhood?

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Q 3: Mention any two reasons why the ordinal position of a child in a family has a remarkable effect on his/her developing personality.

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11.4 DEVELOPMENTAL HAZARDS DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Similar to the developmental hazards of babyhood, developmental hazards of childhood period can be physical, psychological or both. Poor

nutrition, for example, may affect the development of both physical and mental health. In the same way, excessive family friction can also lead to stress which in turn affect the development of children.

With regard to the developmental hazards of early childhood period, it has been found that during this period psychological hazards are more numerous than the physical hazards and are more damaging to the personal and psychological adjustment of a child.

Physical Hazards of early childhood, such as, illness, accidents, awkwardness, etc. have both psychological as well as physical repercussions. Some of the physical and psychological hazards of early childhood are discussed below.

11.4.1 Physical Hazards

- **Mortality:** The mortality rate usually declines during the early childhood period than the babyhood. Deaths during this period are more often due to accidents than due to illness. It has been found that boys have more accidents than the girls and as such death rate of boys is higher than girls.
- **Illness:** Though young children are highly susceptible to all kinds of illness, but respiratory diseases are found to be most common among them. Due to compulsory and affordable immunisation and availability of medicines in the modern days, the duration of illness of children is much shorter. While most of the illness is found to be of physiological origin, however some are psychosomatic too and result from family tension.
- **Accidents:** Young children often experiences minor accidents such as cuts, bruises, infections, burns, broken bones, strained muscles, and the like and as stated earlier accidents are more common for boys. Some may even experience serious accidents which may disable them temporarily or permanently. Although most accidents are not fatal, yet many of them may leave permanent physical or psychological scars on the minds of the young children.

- **Unattractiveness:** It has been observed that children usually tend to become increasingly unattractive as the early childhood period progresses and reaches a low point as they enter the late childhood period. There may be several reasons for this. Firstly, children start looking skinny and gawky as their body shape undergoes changes. Secondly, their hair becomes coarser and thereby making it difficult to manage which gives them an un-kept look. Thirdly, the permanent teeth which have erupted in place of fallen baby teeth are proportionately too large in size and fourthly, the young children often looks dirty and ill-groomed as they care more about having a good time playing rather than looking neat and tidy. The less attractive appearance of young children added to their changing behaviour makes them less appealing to their family members and other adults which they often interpret as rejection and feel bitter about it.
- **Awkwardness:** Awkwardness in childhood occurs due to delay in motor as well as intellectual development. Awkward children are unable to keep up with their age-mates and as a result, they are left out of their play. This develops an inferiority complex in them. Delay in development may be due to brain damage at birth leading to intellectual deficiency, or may be due to over protectiveness, over rejection, over indulgence by parents.
- **Obesity:** Like people of any age group, children who are obese are more likely to develop health issues like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, etc. than their peers with normal weight. In addition to being a health hazard, obesity also acts as hazard to attractiveness, as obese children are likely to be scorned by their peers and labelled as 'Fatty'.
- **Left-handedness:** Though there found to be no physical reason why it is better to be right-handed, yet people are right-handed in general. As such, being left-handed makes an

individual different and most of the time being different is usually interpreted as being unequal, particularly during the childhood and adolescence years. There are other reasons too for considering being left-handed a hazard. It is difficult for a left-handed child to follow or imitate a right-handed person while learning a skill. Left-handedness can also affect children's educational success and later, their vocational success or their social adjustment. Some parents put a lot of pressure on their children to use right hand and may even punishes them for it. This type of parental behaviour can also be hazardous because this emphasises their difference, which young children interpret as their weakness and this in the long run cast a negative impact on their personality development as well.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Fill in the gaps

i) The mortality rate usually ..... during the early childhood period than the babyhood.

ii) ..... diseases are found to be most common among the young children.

iii) Awkwardness in childhood occurs due to delay in ..... as well as ..... developmentiv. In addition to being a health hazard, obesity also acts as hazard to .....

11.4.2 Psychological Hazards

The most common psychological hazards associated with the early childhood period are discussed below:

- **Speech Hazards:** Speech is a tool for communication and is essential for social belonging. Children who are unable to communicate with their peers due to speech related problems will be socially handicapped and this leads to a feeling of

inadequacy and inferiority in them. Speech hazards generally occur due to four reasons as follows:

i. If the elders use unfamiliar words or speak too fast while speaking to children, it is difficult for the young children to understand or follow their elders. As a result, they fail to communicate effectively and this jeopardises their social contacts.

ii. Ability of young children to communicate with others is even more jeopardised if their speech is unintelligible to others. This may happen due to imitating a poor model leading to mispronunciation and grammatical errors in their speech, or due to other speech defects like stuttering, lisping, or slurring.

iii. Bilingualism also acts as a hazard to the social development of young children. When children speak in their mother tongue at home, but have to speak in a different language in school, their communication with their school mates gets adversely affected owing to limitation in their vocabulary, particularly during the early school years.

iv. The fourth serious speech hazard in early childhood is use of language. Use of abusive language while speaking, making critical and derogatory comments about others or speaking in an unsocial way may, in time, play havoc with their social adjustment. In this regard, parents have to be very careful about the language they use in front of their wards.

- **Emotional Hazards:** The emotional hazards of early childhood arise due to dominance of unpleasant emotions, such as, anger, jealousy, hatred, fear etc. There may be various reasons for development of unpleasant emotions in young children. For examples, absence of warm and stable relationship with the mother/mother substitute during babyhood which later on

makes them unable to establish the *emphatic complex*- an emotional linkage between an individual and significant people in his or her life; lack of love and affection received from others likely to make them self-bound or egocentric; too strong attachment to one person may lead to feeling of insecurity in the absence of or change in behaviour of that particular person; failure to become emotionally attached to their toys or other inanimate objects, such as blankets etc. which may lead to feeling of insecurity in a new situation.

In general, if young children experience too many of the unpleasant emotions and too less of the pleasant ones, then it tends to distort their outlook on life and encourage development of an unpleasant disposition. Children may also tend to acquire a facial expression that makes them look surly, sullen or generally disagreeable, a condition that contributes to the decline of their appealing-ness.

- **Social Hazards:** There are a number of common hazards in the way of good social adjustments in early childhood period. There are five types of social hazards which are specially identified to be common to all children. They are as follows:

  i. Some children due to their socially unacceptable behaviour or speech become unpopular amongst their peer and feel alienated or isolated. As such, they are deprived of the opportunities to learn socially approved behaviour and their chances of getting social acceptance worsen as time goes on.

  ii. Secondly, if children are put under tremendous pressure to play in a sex-appropriate way, sometimes they may overdo it and becomes unpopular amongst their peers. For example, young boy when try to be very masculine and aggressive in their play may annoy their peers and are avoided or rejected by the peer group.

  iii. Sometimes children in their early childhood receive

negative or adverse treatment from their peers their due to their race, gender or ethnicity. Due to such unfavourable early social experiences, such children may develop unhealthy social attitude and shun contact with people outside the home and to some extent, even in the home.

iv. The fourth social hazard of early childhood is the use of imaginary companions and pets to compensate for lack of real ones. Children are very often likely to develop the habit of dominating such imaginary companions. However, when they move out with real companions and come to realisation that they cannot dominate the real ones, they may start showing maladjusted behaviour.

v. It is observed that young children are sometimes unable to stay away from their play mates. This often occurs in cases of those children who were put into child-care centres, nurseries or kindergarten from a very young age where they get lots of play mates. In such cases, children when left alone may fail to amuse themselves and no matter how many toys or play equipment are given to them, they still feel lonely and deserted.

- **Play Hazards:** When children do not get play mates to play with them, they often engage in solitary forms of play. Though a certain amount of solitary play is beneficial as it teaches children to be self-sufficient, yet in absence of play mates of their age, they do not get the opportunity to learn the social skills. Another issue with lonely children is that they often spend too much time in front of television. Even though there are benefits of learning many things from the television programmes, but on the other side it has lots harmful effects on the young children which included lack of exercise, sleeplessness, increased aggression and formation of distorted impression or misconception regarding certain matters or facts

due to their inability of understanding the telecasted programmes properly. Even toys can also act as play hazards for young children sometimes. Some toys, such as a fully equipped doll house can destroy the creative urge of young children whereas some other toys such as guns, pistols etc. may make them aggressive.

- **Hazards in Concept Development:** There are three common hazards in development of concept in the early childhood. They are as follows:
  i. Hazard may arise due to inaccuracy in understanding. Because of their limited experience with people and thing, or because of their limited knowledge of vocabulary, children may not be able to understand properly what is being said to them and thus may develop inaccurate or faulty concepts. This may also happen if children learn from their peers or from adults having limited knowledge.
  ii. The second common hazard in concept development in early childhood is the development of concepts below the level of those of their peers. Situation like this greatly affect their personal and social adjustment. For example, young children having limited opportunities to associate with people outside the home do not develop the needed social concepts to understand people better. As a result, sometimes they may say things which seem rude and their behaviour may annoy others.
  iii. The third hazard in the way of concept development is the emotional weighting of concepts. For example, young children usually build up the concepts of Christmas in relation to Santa Clause. But when they discover that there is no Santa Clause, they may still be resistant to change their concept of Christmas because of its pleasurable emotional weighting and they may feel deceived by the elders.

- **Moral Hazards:** There are four common hazards with regard to moral development are observed during early childhood. They are as follows:
  i. Inconsistent disciplinary act on the parts of the elders hampers their process of learning as per social expectations. This often happens when different people have different rules relating to the same behaviour.
  ii. Secondly, if the children are not given punishment for their misbehaviour, it encourages them to repeat the same again and again.
  iii. Next, if punishment and rewards are not used judiciously, i.e. too much emphasis on punishment for misbehaviour and too little emphasis on reward for good behaviour can lead to unfavourable attitude in the minds of the young children towards those in authority. One should be very careful while giving punishment to the young children and a child should be punished only with regard to three justifications, viz., (i) when there is no other way to communicate a prohibition to a child, (ii) only when punishment can be given when the forbidden act is being carried out and (iii) it must be a rare event to be effective or otherwise it desensitizes the child to the entire purpose of punishment.
  iv. The last one and the most serious of all from the long-term point of view is giving more emphasis on authoritarian discipline that puts major emphasis on external controls. In case of authoritarian discipline, children are not encouraged to develop the internal controls over their behaviour that forms the foundation for the later development of their conscience. Development of internal controls must begin early and it can be accomplished through democratic forms of disciplines. This helps children in learning to conform to group expectations.

- **Hazards in Sex-Role Typing:** It is observed that there are three common and serious hazards with regard to sex-role typing during early childhood years. They are as follows:
  i. If children do not learn the sex-role stereotype commonly accepted by their peers, they will be treated differently than their peer group. The situation becomes more and more serious as a child approaches the school going age.
  ii. Secondly, in those families where girl children are trained to conform to traditional stereotypes for members of their sex, they develop a feeling that female in general mare physically and psychologically inferior to their male counterpart.
  iii. Next, if children do not learn to behave according to the accepted stereotypical behaviours of their sex groups, they may find themselves socially misfits in their groups. This failure to sex-role type young children can be a social handicap to both boys and girls.
- **Family Relationship Hazards:** Deterioration in any human relationship is hazardous to good personal and social adjustment and more so in case of relationship between children and their parents. Strained family relationships bring about a feeling of insecurity in the minds of young children. The conditions responsible for deteriorated relationship between young children and their family members are observed to be different for boys and girls. In those families where boys are given more preferences over everything, the girl child may develop resentful attitude towards their parents as well as towards their brother(s). The boys of such families also tend to develop an attitude of smug superiority. With regard to boys, if there is lack of emotional warmth between the father and son, the boy child may develop more closeness with their mothers and in turn may acquire such interests and behaviour

patterns which may cause their peers to regard or make fun of them as “sissy”.

Other threats to good parent-child relationship during early childhood are working mothers and step parents, sibling quarrelling, which can deprive them of their companionship at an age that is most crucial in learning the rudiments of social behaviour, deterioration in relationship with the other family members due to various reasons, such as, on playing the role of substitute parents, child abuse by the elder family members or care-takers.

- **Personality Hazards**: The most serious personality hazard during early childhood is the development of an unfavourable self-concept. Unfavourable self-concept may be due to the treatment young children receive from family members and peers or also due to persistent egocentrism. Sometimes if the parents have unrealistically high aspirations which children are unable to fulfil, then they feel themselves as failures and develop negative self-concepts. Seriousness of unfavourable self-concepts is that they are tends to be persistent. However, as personality is dynamic, thus certain personality pattern of early childhood may change with time as a result of advancing maturity, experience and social and cultural environment in which they live. Difficult children may become more docile, whereas contented, happy children may develop into sullen ones as they grow older.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Name any four most common psychological hazards associated with the development of children in early childhood.

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Q 6: How does bilingualism act as a developmental hazard in young children?

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Q 7: The emotional hazards of early childhood arise due to dominance of ..... etc. (complete the sentence)

Q 8: How many types of social hazards are identified to be common to all children?

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Q 9: Give one example of emotional weighing of concepts that may stand as a hazard in concept development.

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Q 10: State some of the causes of formation of unfavourable self-concept in young children.

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11.5 LET US SUM UP

- Personality pattern of children generally begins to take form in their early childhood year, although the foundations were laid in their babyhood stage itself. The treatment and care that young child in their early childhood period receive from their parents, siblings and

other family members plays an important role in shaping their self-concept and thereby cast a remarkable influence on the personality of children.

- Environment of young children, to a large extent, is limited to their homes and to their family members. As such, home or family of children is considered as the most important determinant in shaping the personality pattern of a child.
- Role of home on personality development of children in early childhood are largely related to the attitude of parents towards the child**,** child-training methods used in home**,** aspirations that parents have for their children, the ordinal position of the child in the family and influence of family relationships.
- As the children grow older, even though their social development broadens, home and family relationship still continue exert a marked influence on their developing personalities. The quality of relationship with parents, siblings and relatives, the way older children feel about the child-training methods used in their homes, all these play important roles in determining the sort of individuals they will become in their lives.
- Similar to the developmental hazards of babyhood, developmental hazards of childhood period can be physical, psychological or both. With regard to the developmental hazards of early childhood period, it has been found that during this period psychological hazards are more numerous than the physical hazards and are more damaging to the personal and psychological adjustment of a child.
- Some of the common physical hazards of early childhood are - mortality, illness, accidents, unattractiveness, awkwardness**,** obesity, left-handedness, etc.
- Some of the most common psychological hazards associated with the early childhood period are - speech hazards, emotional hazards, social hazards, play hazards, hazards in concept development, moral hazards, hazards in sex-role typing, family-relationship hazards, and personality hazards.



11.6 FURTHER READING

1) Agarwalla, S. (2021). Developmental Psychology. Guwahati: Union Book Publication.

2) Goswami, G. (2008). Child Development and Child Care. Guwahati: Arun Prakashan.

3) Hurlock, E. B. (2016). Developmental Psychology: A Life-Span Approach. New Delhi" McGraw Hill Education (India) Pvt. Ltd.

4) Sarma, P.D. & Goswami, G. (2017). Developmental Psychology. Guwahati: Shanti Prakashan.



11.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Childhood period is divided into two parts – early childhood and late childhood. Early childhood extends from two to six years, and the late childhood extends from age of six years to the time when children attain their puberty, which is roughly eleven years for girls and twelve years for boys.

Ans to Q No 2: **Environment** of young children, to a large extent, is limited to their homes and to their family members. As such, home is considered as the most important determinant in shaping the personality pattern of a child

Ans to Q No 3: Due to the fact that each child in a family usually learns to play a specific role according to his/her ordinal position and due to the differences in child-training methods used by parents with different children.

Ans to Q No 4: (i) Declines (ii) Respiratory (iii) Motor, Intellectual (iv) Attractiveness

Ans to Q No 5: Any four psychological hazards associated with the development of children in early childhood are: Speech Hazards, Social Hazards, Emotional Hazards and Play Hazards

Ans to Q No 6: When children are bilingual, that is they speak in their mother tongue at home, but have to speak in a different language in school, their communication with their school mates gets adversely affected owing to limitation in their vocabulary, particularly during the early school years. This is in turn act as a hazard in the social development of young children.

Ans to Q No 7: The emotional hazards of early childhood arise due to dominance of unpleasant emotions, such as, anger, jealousy, hatred, fear etc.

Ans to Q No 8: Five types

Ans to Q No 9: Emotional weighting of concepts often acts as a hazard in the concept development of young children. As an example, young children usually build up the concepts of Christmas in relation to Santa Clause. But when they discover that there is no Santa Clause, they may still be resistant to change their concept of Christmas because of its pleasurable emotional weighting and they may feel deceived by the elders.

Ans to Q No 10: Unfavourable self-concept may develop in young children due various reasons. They may develop due to the treatment they receive from family members and peers or also due to persistent egocentrism. Sometimes if the parents have unrealistically high aspirations which children are unable to fulfil, then they feel themselves as failures and develop negative self-concepts.



11.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

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

Q 1: "The child's self-concept is formed within the womb of family

relationships" - explain how.

Q 2: How do the aspiration of parents regarding their children affect the personality development in children?

Q 3: Why is the death rate more for boys than the girls in case of children in their early childhood?

Q 4: "The ordinal position of children become even more important as they grow older than it was in their early childhood period" – why?

Q 5: Why do children in general tend to become increasingly unattractive as the early childhood period progresses?

Q 6: Is left-handedness a hazard in the developmental process of children? Give reasons for your response.

Q 7: Explain briefly any two reasons for speech hazards in young children.

Q 8: State some of the reasons for arise of emotional hazards in early childhood period.

B. Long Questions (Answer each question in around 300- 500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the influence of home on personality development of children.

Q 2: Describe the physical hazards related to the development of children in their early childhood.

Q 3: How do sex-role typing and family relationship act as psychological hazards in young children? Explain with suitable examples.

Q 4: Discuss some of the most common psychological hazards associate with the early childhood period.

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