

## IN CONTEXT

### Parental Script Messages . . .

What comes to mind, as though you were hearing a recording, when you think about what your parent(s) said about . . .

Doing work?

Getting an education?

Using money?

Making your own decisions?

Achieving success?

Developing talents?

## 2-2 Aims of Socialization

Socialization enables children to learn what they need to know in order to be integrated into the society in which they live. It also enables children to develop their potentialities and form satisfying relationships. More specifically, the aims of socialization are to develop a self-concept, enable self-regulation, empower achievement, teach appropriate social roles, and implement developmental skills (Laible & Thompson, 2007).

### 2-2a Develop a Self-Concept

**Self-concept** is an individual's perception of his or her identity as distinct from that of others. It emerges from experiences of separateness from others. The value one places on that identity, **self-esteem**, will be discussed later in the chapter.

When you were born, your parents named you and may have sent out announcements to relatives and friends signifying that a new individual had entered the world. Although everyone else treated you as a separate being, you were unaware of where your environment ended and you began.

As the months passed and you had some experiences using your senses, you noticed that when you touched your own hand you felt something in both your fingers and hand, whereas when you touched your mother's hand, you only felt sensation in your fingers.

Gradually, as people met your needs, you realized they existed even when you could not see them. As you developed language, you learned that objects have names and so did you, and each had an independent existence. Language enabled you to describe and compare. Sometime around 15 to 18 months, you put it together and understood that you are you. You could recognize yourself in a mirror. You could assert your wants ("Me do it!"), especially when you perceived that someone else was controlling you.

As you got older, your concept of self—your identity, your understanding of who you are—was influenced by significant others (such as family, teachers, friends, coaches). If your needs were met consistently and you were given opportunities to discover things on your own, you developed a sense of autonomy, or self-regulation and control. If, on the other hand, your needs were not met consistently and you did not get to explore your environment, you developed a sense of doubt. These significant others also acted as a mirror, providing constant feedback on your achievements and failures. And so, in developing a self-concept or identity, you also developed self-esteem.

As you entered adolescence, your self-concept included how you related to others. Being a member of a group was important to your identity. In the later part of adolescence, your self-concept expanded to include how you related to the larger community. Self-concept involves not only "who am I?" but also "where am I going?" and "how will I get there?"

Charles Horton Cooley, one of the founders of sociology, observed that through the experiences of interacting with others, children begin to distinguish themselves from others. Children call themselves "I" or "me"—"I hungry," "Me go." As they begin to act independently, they gradually become aware that others are evaluating them, saying "Good boy/girl" or "No, don't do that." Thus, their behavior is being judged ac-

What are society's goals for children?

How do you perceive yourself and why?

**self-concept** an individual's perception of his or her identity as distinct from others

**self-esteem** the value one places on one's identity

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understood before the individual is capable of self-evaluation. As children gradually learn these criteria, each develops a self-concept; this concept, which reflects the attitudes of others, is termed the “looking-glass self.” Cooley (1909/1964) summed up his postulate:

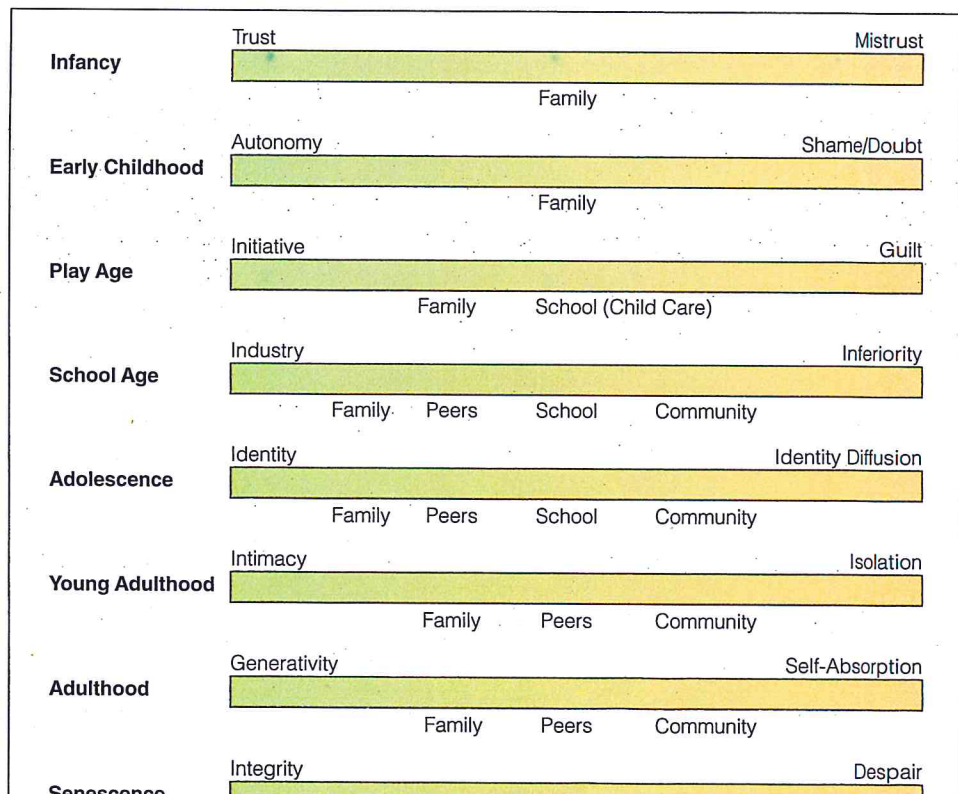
*Each to each a looking glass  
Reflects the other that doth pass.*

George Herbert Mead (1934), another important sociological theorist, referred to this gradually maturing way of looking at the self as the “generalized other.” When children refer to themselves as “shy” or “hardworking,” they have incorporated the standards of others into the description.

Thus, a self-concept develops when the attitudes and expectations of significant others with whom one interacts are incorporated into one’s personality, making it possible to regulate one’s behavior accordingly. One’s perceived competence in self-regulation and self-control is part of one’s self-esteem. Susan Harter (2006; Harter & Bukowski, 2012) studied various types of competence involved in self-esteem—behavioral, academic, physical, and social. These will be discussed in Chapter 11.

**Psychosocial Influences on the Development of Self**

Psychologist Erik Erikson (1963, 1980) has explained the personality development of individuals as the outcome of their interactions in their social environment. He identified eight critical stages of psychosocial development in a human’s life that affect the self-concept: *trust versus mistrust*, *autonomy versus shame and doubt*, *initiative versus guilt*, *industry versus inferiority*, *identity versus identity diffusion*, *intimacy versus isolation*, *generativity versus self-absorption*, and *integrity versus despair* (see Figure 2.2). How one



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cope with these normal challenges at one stage of development affects one's ability to overcome difficulties in the next stages.

Note that an individual's development could be described as being at any point on the horizontal dimension lines, rather than at one extreme or the other. The importance of interactions with one's social environment in the development of a self-concept is indicated by the socializing agents that are most significant at various stages.

**Infancy: Trust versus Mistrust (Birth to Age 1).** The first "task" of infants is to develop the "cornerstone of a healthy personality"—a basic sense of trust in themselves and of the people in their environment. The quality and consistency of care the infant receives determines the successful outcome of this stage. A child whose basic needs for nourishment and physical contact are met will develop a sense of trust. This sense of trust lays a foundation for positive self-esteem. A child whose care is negligent or inconsistent will develop a sense of mistrust, which may persist throughout life and result in negative self-esteem. Some mistrust, however, is healthy in that it can guard against danger and manipulation.

Contemporary research shows a positive relationship between parental nurturance and self-worth (Cheng & Furnham, 2004; Harter & Bukowski, 2012).

**Early Childhood: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt (Ages 2 to 3).** Physical and cognitive maturation enables children to behave autonomously—to walk without help, feed themselves, get things off the shelf, assert themselves verbally. If children are allowed to be self-sufficient according to their ability, the outcome of this stage will be a feeling of autonomy. If children are deprived of the opportunity to develop a will, if they are continually being corrected or reprimanded, later they may feel shame when being assertive and self-doubt when being independent. However, some shame is healthy in that it can prevent certain socially unacceptable behaviors such as picking one's nose in public.

Studying the influence of parental rearing style on self-esteem and self-criticism, Cheng and Furnham (2004) found a significant correlation between maternal rearing style and teenagers' reported self-esteem and self-criticism.

**Play Age: Initiative versus Guilt (Ages 3 to 5).** Children's increasing ability to communicate and to imagine leads them to initiate many activities. If they are allowed to create their own games and fantasies, to ask questions, to use certain objects (a hammer and wood, for example) with supervision, then the outcome of this stage will be a feeling of initiative. If they are made to feel that they are bad for trying new things and pests for asking questions, they may carry a sense of guilt throughout life. Probably the reason "Pinocchio" has remained a favorite story is that, like all children, Pinocchio was continually learning which activities he initiated were OK and which were not. Thus, some guilt is healthy in that it can control misbehavior.

In a study of preschoolers and their first years at school (Tudge, Otero, Hogan, & Etz, 2003), a relationship was found between initiating activities and conversation in preschool and academic competence, as reported by teachers two years later.

**School Age: Industry versus Inferiority (Ages 6 to Puberty).** During school age, while learning to accept instruction and to win recognition by showing effort and by producing things, the child is developing the capacity to enjoy work. The outcome of this stage for children who do not receive recognition for their efforts, or who do not experience any success, may be a feeling of incompetence and inferiority. Children who are praised for their efforts will be motivated to achieve, whereas children who are ignored or rebuked may give up and exhibit helplessness. Some feelings of inferiority are healthy, however, in that they can prevent the child from feeling invincible and taking dangerous risks.

A classic study of third to fifth graders (Skinner & Belmont, 1993) found a relationship between teacher involvement in students' classroom activities and children's motivation to achieve. Specifically, teacher provision of autonomous support and optimal structure led to higher levels of student engagement in schoolwork all year. In turn, student effort

led to teachers' increased responses. Based on their findings, the researchers suggest that disengaged students receive teacher responses that further undermine their motivation to achieve (hence, fostering helplessness).

**Adolescence: Identity versus Identity Diffusion (Puberty to Age 18+).** With rapid growth and sexual maturity, the young person begins to question people, things, values, and attitudes previously relied on and to struggle through the crises of earlier stages all over again. The developmental task (developmental tasks for all stages are discussed later) during adolescence, then, is to integrate earlier childhood identifications with biological and social changes occurring during this time. The danger in this stage is that while young people are trying out many roles, which is a normal process, they may be unable to choose an identity or make a commitment and so will not know who they are or what they may become (identity diffusion). Because adolescence is a time for exploration, some diffusion is healthy in that it can allow for learning what is suitable and what is not.

This exploration time has been labeled *moratorium* by psychologists (Marcia, 1966). The process of identity formation in a study of a sample of over 1,500 early and middle adolescents from various cultural groups (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008) actually identified five statuses in the process of developing an identity: (1) *achievement* (choices explored and commitment made), (2) *foreclosure* (commitment made without exploring choices), (3) *moratorium* (exploring choices in order to make commitments), (4) *searching moratorium* (reevaluating choices and commitments and reexploring choices), and (5) *diffusion* (little choice exploration and no commitments made). These statuses were associated with distinct personality features, such as high self-esteem in the achievement status, conformity in the foreclosure status, high anxiety in the moratorium as well as in the searching moratorium statuses, and depression in the diffusion status.

**Young Adulthood: Intimacy versus Isolation (Ages 18 to Middle Adulthood).** Individuals who have succeeded in establishing an identity are now able to establish intimacy with themselves and with others, in both friendship and love. The danger here is that those who fear losing their identity in an intimate relationship with another may develop a sense of isolation. Some isolation is healthy, however, in that it can enable one to learn about oneself and provide time for individual pursuits.

Researchers (Kacerguis & Adams, 1980) found a relationship between identity development and intimacy. Male (44) and female (44) college students were assessed via measures of identity and intimacy. Those more advanced in identity formation, especially occupational identity (they had made a commitment to a particular field of work), scored higher on intimacy measures.

**Adulthood: Generativity versus Self-Absorption (Middle Adulthood to Late Adulthood).** From the development of intimate relationships comes **generativity**, an interest in establishing and guiding the next generation. This interest can be manifested by becoming a parent; by being involved with the development of young people through teaching, religion, Scouts, or other means; or through productivity and creativity in one's work. In this stage, a lack of generativity may result in self-absorption, which may show up as depression, hypochondria, substance abuse, or promiscuity. Yet some self-absorption is healthy, leading to creativity and the development of hobbies.

A sample of educated, midlife women were assessed for generativity at age 43, and again 10 years later. Those who scored high on the measure at age 43 reported a greater investment 10 years later in intergenerational roles (for example, daughter and mother), fewer subjective feelings of burden in caring for aging parents, and more knowledge about community resources for elders

**generativity** interest in establishing and guiding the next generation

A sense of initiative is influenced by having opportunities to produce things.

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**Senescence: Integrity versus Despair (Late Adulthood to Death).** The individual who has achieved an identity, has developed a satisfying intimacy with others, and has adapted to the joys and frustrations of guiding the next generation, reaches the end of life with a certain ego integrity or positive self-esteem—an understanding acceptance of personal responsibility for one’s own life (past and present). For those who have not achieved that integrity, this stage may produce despair or extremely negative self-esteem. Despairing individuals tend to be in ill health, to abuse drugs and/or alcohol, or to commit suicide. They may become burdens to their families physically, financially, or psychologically. On the other hand, individuals with a sense of integrity are likely to have friends, to be active (physically and mentally), and to look at life positively even though they know that death is imminent. Probably the only characteristic of despair that could be considered healthy is that which leads to change or greater appreciation of life.

A sample of older women living in a supported accommodation completed an anonymous self-report questionnaire. The results showed that accepting the past was a significant predictor of ego integrity, along with the variables of social support and positive affectivity. On the other hand, those who regretted or blamed things in the past, along with the variables of negative affectivity and physical dependence, were more likely to experience depression and “ego-despair” (Rylands & Rickwood, 2001).

## 2-2b Enable Self-Regulation

**Self-regulation** involves the ability to control one’s impulses, behavior, and/or emotions until an appropriate time, place, or object is available for expressing them. This can be interpreted as routing our feelings through our brains before acting on them according to the situation. Regulated behavior often involves postponing or modifying immediate gratification for the sake of a future goal. This implies being able to tolerate frustration. For example, you curb your urge to spank a child who has just thrown a plate of food on the floor in a tantrum, because you want to set an example of how to deal with frustration. When you are trying to maintain your weight, you postpone satisfying those hunger pangs until mealtime. You postpone sexual intercourse until marriage because of your religious or personal goals. Even though you hate to wake up early, you set your alarm in order to be at work on time because your supervisor depends on you.

Early relationships, especially attachment to parents, play a significant role in the development of emotional regulation (Bridges & Grolnick, 1995; Waters et al., 2010) and “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1995). As the child progresses from infancy to childhood, emotional and behavioral regulation gradually shifts from external socializing agents to internal, self-induced mechanisms (Eisenberg, 2006). Caregivers provide children with information (body language, facial expressions, verbal instructions and explanations) to help them deal with situations. As children develop cognitively and have more real experiences, they learn how to interpret events and how to express emotions appropriately. They develop strategies for coping with disappointment, frustration, rejection, and anger. Self-regulation/control is related to moral development, an outcome of socialization to be discussed in Chapter 12.

**self-regulation** the ability to control one’s impulses, behavior, and/or emotions until an appropriate time, place, or object is available for expressing them

How did you learn to control your feelings and behavior?

A child having trouble cooperating

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How did you decide what you were going to do as an adult?

How do we learn to act according to what is required in different social settings?

How do you meet your own needs while accommodating society's expectations?

### 2-2c Empower Achievement

Socialization furnishes goals for what you are going to be when you become an adult—a teacher, a police officer, a business executive. These goals provide the rationale for going to school, getting along with others, following rules, and so on. In other words, socialization gives meaning or purpose to adulthood and to the long process a child has to go through to get there. In order for Pinocchio to become a real boy, he had to go to school as well as learn right from wrong.

Significant adults and peers influence one's motivation to succeed. For example, adults who understand child development and provide the appropriate challenge at the "right" time with the "right" amount of support are likely to produce highly competent and motivated children (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Rosser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Among the socialization outcomes discussed later in the chapter are the motive to achieve and attributions of achievement (explanations for success and failure).

### 2-2d Teach Appropriate Social Roles

In order to be part of a group, one has to have a function that complements the group. For example, in a group of employees, the supervisor's function or role is to lead the employees; in a family group, the parents' role is to nurture the child; in a peer group, the role of friends is to provide emotional support. We have many social roles throughout life, some of which occur simultaneously, and we must assume the appropriate behavior for each at the appropriate time. I am a wife, a parent, a child, a teacher, and a friend—all at the same time. As a wife, I am a confidante; as a parent, I am nurturant; as a child, I am submissive; as a teacher, I am a facilitator; as a friend, I am emotionally supportive.

Gender is a social role, too, in that boys and girls learn gender-appropriate behavior from significant members of their society (McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003; Ruble, Martin, & Berenbaum, 2006). What is appropriate (Maccoby, 2000) is affected by culture, ethnicity, and religion (macrosystem influences), as well as time (chronosystem influence).

### 2-2e Implement Developmental Skills

Socialization aims to provide social, emotional, and cognitive skills to children so that they can function successfully in society. Social skills may involve learning how to obtain information from other people, use the telephone, or conduct business negotiations. Emotional skills may involve controlling aggressive impulses, learning to deal with frustration by substituting another goal for one that is blocked, or being able to compensate for mistakes. Cognitive skills may include reading, mathematics, writing, problem solving, geography, history, and science.

Psychologist Robert Havighurst examined how society's expectations with regard to certain behavioral skills change according to the maturation of the individual (chronosystem influence), using the term *developmental task* to explain this aspect of socialization, which is still applicable today. According to Havighurst (1972), "a *developmental task* is midway between an individual need and a societal demand." The developmental tasks of life are those things one must learn if one is to get along well in society (macrosystem influence). As we grow, we develop physically, intellectually, and socially. Our physical development will enable us to walk, control our bladders, and use a pencil. Our intellectual development will enable us to learn to read, do arithmetic, and solve problems. Our social development will enable us to cooperate, empathize, and interact with others. And our emotional development will enable us to regulate our impulses and express our feelings. Some examples of developmental tasks categorized according to societal demands for certain behaviors are listed here; how they change for the individual from birth to death can be accessed as a Digital Download.

1. Achieving an appropriate dependence/independence pattern

3. Relating to changing social groups
4. Developing a conscience
5. Learning one's "psychosociobiological" role
6. Accepting and adjusting to a changing body
7. Managing a changing body and learning new behavioral patterns
8. Learning to understand and control the physical world
9. Developing an appropriate symbol system and conceptual abilities
10. Relating oneself to the cosmos

As we develop along these dimensions, we face new expectations from significant socializing agents in the surrounding society. We are expected to learn to walk, talk, use the toilet, and dress ourselves. We are expected to read, write, add, and subtract. We are expected to share, develop a conscience, and achieve an appropriate gender role. We are expected to love other people and be responsible for our actions.

Thus, developmental tasks arise from societal pressures on individuals according to their development: "If the task is not achieved at the proper time, it will not be achieved well, and failure in this task will cause partial or complete failure in the achievement of other tasks yet to come" (Havighurst, 1972, p. 3). If children do not have experiences in language, such as being spoken to and making sounds during the critical stage of language development (first year), their ability to communicate will be handicapped for the remainder of their lives. A child who is not socialized to develop a conscience may engage in delinquent behavior in adolescence. A child who does not have experiences receiving and giving affection may not succeed in a marriage or family relationship.

### Developmental Tasks and Cultural Diversity

**Developmental tasks** differ from society to society, and each group in a society has its own developmental definitions and expectations. For example, a developmental milestone for many American, middle-class infants is to "sleep through the night." This expectation is usually fulfilled by about age 4 to 6 months and is often facilitated by parents' feeding the baby just before they go to sleep and/or playing with the baby and putting him or her to sleep for the night as late as possible. However, in other families where the infant sleeps with the mother and nurses on demand, "sleeping through the night" is not pushed as a developmental milestone. Differences in developmental definitions and expectations may account for some of the social adjustment problems in school among children from diverse cultural groups. For example, the developmental task for achieving an appropriate dependence/independence pattern may be interpreted differently by various families.

Most middle-class American mothers, as well as American teachers, expect children to be independent of adults by school age in that they can take care of personal needs and learn on their own with some direction. In Japan, however, mothers expect some of their child's dependency needs to be transferred to the teacher when the child goes to school, and Japanese mothers generally remain very involved in their



In this culture, the baby sleeps with its parents until it is weaned from breast feeding

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**developmental task** a task that lies between an individual need and a societal demand

→ child's learning throughout school. In other cultures, such as Latino and Hawaiian,

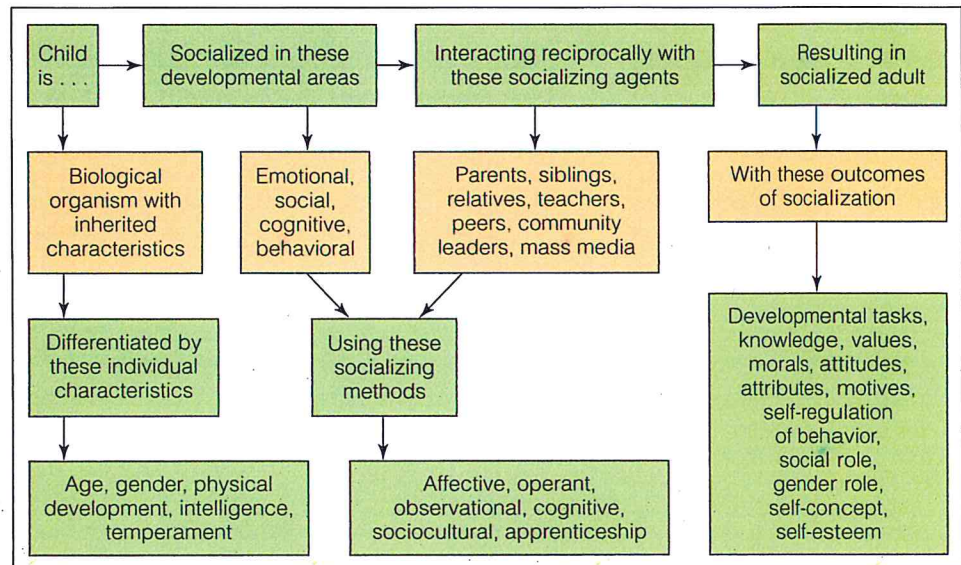


FIGURE 2.3 Socialization Processes and Outcomes

mothers expect their child's dependency needs to be transferred to older siblings, and interdependence, rather than independence, is encouraged. Thus, children from high-context cultures (such as Japanese, Latino, Hawaiian, and others) may experience conflicts between developmental skills taught by their families and those taught in American schools (Bennett, 2010).

Every individual in a society is the outcome of the process of socialization (along with his or her genetic traits). The success of this outcome in terms of society's expectations will depend on a series of interactions with significant socializing agents—such as parents, teachers, peers, and media—that constitute the community in which this individual lives (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Figure 2.3 illustrates the processes and outcomes of socialization.

Who was significant in shaping you?

## 2-3 Agents of Socialization

The generalized community is made up of many groups that play a part in socializing an individual. These agents of socialization exert their influence in different ways and at different times (Arnett, 2007).

In the early years, the family assumes the primary role of nurturing the child. As the child gets older, the peer group becomes a primary source of support. In primitive societies, training for competency occurs in the family in the form of learning to hunt or build a shelter, whereas in industrial societies it occurs in school in the form of learning to read, write, compute, and master a wide range of subject matter.

Each agent has its own functions in socialization. Sometimes the agents complement each other; sometimes they contradict each other. The value of getting along with others is usually taught in the family, the school, the religious community, the peer group, and perhaps in the media, with the agents complementing each other. The value of academic