



Age differences in Children

Are obvious;
we will try to help you relate those
differences to your teaching.

Children at different stages of development have different needs:

A storyteller's perspective:

Youngest listeners respond to rhythm and repetition, simple direct plots in which familiarity is mixed with surprise,



*short dialog, clear
and simple images,
action that quickly
builds to a*

*Climax and a
satisfying ending....*



6-8 year olds

- *have a peak interest in traditional folktales and fairy-tales. Through the story*
- *content they work through their inner fantasies and come to terms with the "real" world....*



9-11 year olds

- *enjoy more sophisticated folktales. They are looking for something that will*
- *appeal to their developing power of reason and judgment and to their concern about*
- *competency. These children enjoy hero tales, myths and legends....*



11-13 year olds

are experiencing sexual awakening and are involved in a search for personal identity.

They are ready to appreciate the development of plot, the beauty of language and the deeper meanings that lie behind the words.“

-Baker and Greene, *Storytelling: Art and Technique*



➤ *"Pre-school children understand you literally. They don't distinguish clearly between fantasy and reality...."*



Younger elementary children

For younger elementary children, going to school, making friends, enjoying creating things,

- *struggling to be persons in their own right, and handling the tension between being safe and taking*
- *risks dominate their lives. They need role models and affirmation as persons of worth....*



Older elementary children are trying hard to master and control reality... competition is uppermost in their minds."



Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development

- He identifies four developmental stages and the processes by which children progress through them.



The four stages are:

1. Sensorimotor stage

(birth - 2 years old)

The child, through physical interaction with his or her environment, builds a set of concepts about reality and how it works.

This is the stage where a child does not know that physical objects remain in existence even when out of sight (object permanence).



2. Preoperational stage (ages 2-7)

- The child is not yet able to conceptualize abstractly and needs concrete physical situations.



3. Concrete operations (ages 7-11)

As physical experience accumulates, the child starts to

- conceptualize, creating logical structures that explain his or her physical experiences.
- Abstract problem solving is also possible at this stage. For example, arithmetic equations can be solved with numbers, not just with objects.



Moral Judgment and Reasoning

An aspect of children's personal-social development is their ability to reason and judge morally

- how to decide between right and wrong and to judge how people should behave in certain circumstances.



VALUES

For years, teachers, parents, and psychologists have debated over whether values should be taught in school.

In recent years this is no longer a question.

- The new debate is not whether values should be taught, **but which values should be taught.**



Social Cognition

The past two decades, Lawrence Kohlberg has been one of the most influential theorists and researchers in the area of social cognition dealing with judgement and moral reasoning.

Kohlberg believed that as people develop, they create a pattern of increasingly complex moral reasoning.



Preschoolers will:

- Base their moral reasoning on good and bad acts.
- Worry about being punished by adults and people they view as authoritative.
- Want to satisfy their own needs if they can. They will form friendships in terms of "what can you do for me?".



Stage 1: Respect for power and punishment

Motto: "Might makes right."

- A young child (age 1-5) decides what to do--what is right
- According to what he/she wants to do and can do without getting into trouble. To be right, you must be obedient to the people in power and, thus, avoid punishment.



Stage 2: Looking out for

"What's in it for me?"

Children (age 5-10) tend to be self-serving.

- They lack respect for the rights of others but may give to others on the assumption that they will get as much or more in return.
- It is more a matter of "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," instead of

"loyalty, gratitude, or justice".



Stage 3: Being a "Good Boy" or "Nice Girl." (age 8-16)

- **"I want to be nice."**
- People at this stage have shifted from pleasing themselves to pleasing important others, often parents, teachers, or friends.
- They seek approval and conform to someone else's expectations. When they are accused of doing something wrong, their behavior is likely to be justified by saying "everyone else is doing it" or "I didn't intend to hurt anyone."



Stage 4: Law and order thinking.

Motto: "I'll do my duty."

The majority of people 16 years old and older have internalized society's rules about how to behave.

They feel obligated to conform, not any longer to just family and friends, but also to society's laws and customs.



Leaders

Leaders are assumed to be right; individuals adopt social rules without considering the underlying ethical principles involved.

- Social control is, therefore, exercised through guilt associated with breaking a rule; the guilt in this case is an automatic emotional response, not a rational reaction of conscience based on moral principles (as in stage 6).
- People at this stage believe that anyone breaking the rules deserves to be punished and "pay their debt to society."



Stage 5: Justice through democracy.

Motto: "I'll live by the rules or try to changethem."

People at this stage recognize the underlying moral purposes that are supposed to be served by laws and social customs; thus, if a law ceases to serve a good purpose, they feel

- the people in a democracy should get active and change the law.
- Thought of in this way, democracy becomes a social contract whereby everyone tries continually to create a set of laws that best serves the most people, while protecting the basic rights of everyone.



There is respect for the law and a sense of obligation to live by the rules, as long as they were established in a fair manner and fulfill an ethical purpose.

Only about 20-25% of today's adults ever reach this stage and most of those that do supposedly only get there after their mid-twenties.



Stage 6: Deciding on basic moral principles

Motto: "I'm true to my values."

These rather rare people have considered many values and have decided on a philosophy of life that truly guides their life.

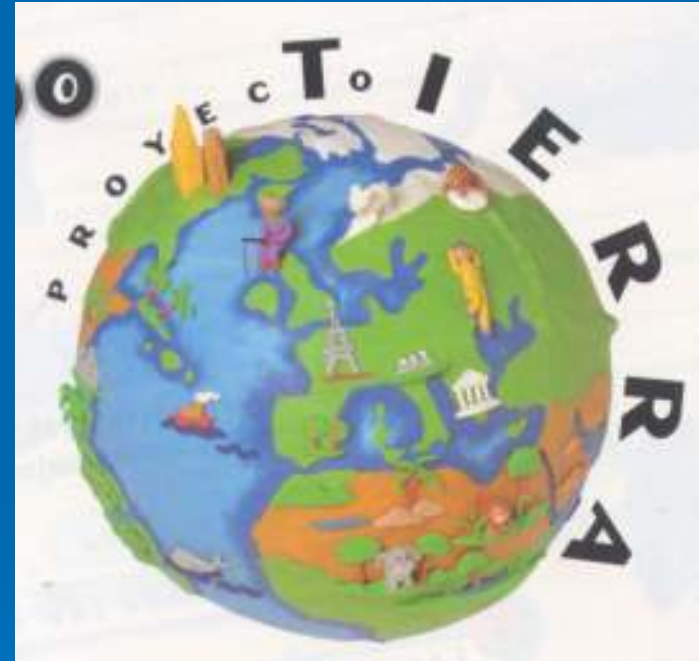
They do not automatically conform to tradition or others' beliefs or even to their own emotions, intuition, or impulsive notions about right and wrong.



Stage 6 people carefully choose basic principles to follow:

Caring for and respecting every living thing, feeling that we are all equal and deserve equal opportunities, or, stated differently, the Golden Rule.

- They are strong enough to act on their values even if others may think they are odd or if their beliefs are against the law, such as refusing to fight in a war.



General criticisms of Kohlberg's Stages

Kohlberg's conception of moral development is based on thinking and logic, not on feelings for others.

Surely feelings cannot be neglected. Likewise, Kohlberg believed that morals were based on age and "wisdom," rather than real life experience and empathic identification with others.

The truth is that children of 3 or 4 can and do empathize with others and try to help. Kohlberg's focus is on the individual, not on what makes for a moral community.



- he doesn't balance a self-orientation as opposed to a group-orientation.
- He doesn't ask, as the Greeks did, the question "what would accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number of people?"



Assessing one's own morals

Yet, these stages can be a useful way to begin assessing one's own morals.

- More current thinking suggests that Kohlberg and Piaget seriously underestimated the influence of parents on a child's moral development and that a great deal of moral learning takes place when children observe and interact with their parents.

