

Stages of Development and Successful Adult Response Styles

Stage 1: Responding to the environment with pleasure (Age 2)
Stage 2: Responding to the environment with success (Age 6)
Stage 3: Learning the skills for successful
group participation (Age 9)
Stage 4: Investing in the group process (Age 12)
Stage 5: Applying individual and group skills in new situations
(Age 16)

Assumptions of the Developmental Model:

Self-esteem and personal identity must develop within a social context.

It is the skills and attitudes of the adults and what they believe in that make the difference between successful and failed intervention.

If a child fails to master what is socially/emotionally necessary at any given stage, global delays in all domains will become evident- language, cognition, motor skills, behavior, academic skills.

Stage 1 Overview

Goal: Experience the environment with pleasure, trust adults

Central Concern: Comfort, being cared for, expressing impulses

Motivating Values: Comfort, security, pleasure

Developmental Anxiety: Abandonment, helplessness, deprivation, uncertainty

Approach to problems: impulsive responses, fight or flight, no problem-solving skills

Source of authority: psychological parent/caregiver

Type of adult needed: Adult who provides care and nurture

Effective Strategies: proximity control, nurturing touch, repetition of learning, simple, predictable order and structure

Materials, activities, and content themes: Pleasurable sensory based activities, familiar materials that allow simple movements, themes of nurturing and care

- Structure activities so it is fun and easy
- It will have to feel good most of the time
- Punishment is unacceptable
- Even time-out is questionable as an intervention
- Identifying one adult as the comforting provider, creating a bond of attachment and trust, forming the basis of all future relationships and attachments as well as self-esteem
- This is when the child transforms from an autistic interpersonal style to an interest in relating to others
- Most pleasure is derived from comfort in sensory experiences involving the body and other people

- Recognition of the caregiver as separate from the self is dependent on development of object constancy
- Behavioral intervention must not result in a sense of abandonment or deprivation

Characteristics of failed attachment

- Fragile relationships with adults
- Upset and anxious about almost anything new
- Absence of constructive, self-directed activity
- Rage reactions
- Resistance to new activities
- Impaired cognitive development

The overall goal for children in stage 1 :

Provide sensory-motor experiences involving adults that result in pleasure and satisfaction.

Thinking points

- What about children who have disruptions in the development in their sensory processing? Will their sensory system allow them to feel comforted by an adult, or might efforts to comfort fail to feel good?
- What do children look like who come from large infant to caregiver ratio orphanages?
- What does this mean to the instructor of a child with delays?

Conflict of age-appropriate vs. developmentally appropriate instructional goals.

Stage 2:

Responding to the environment with success.

Central concern: Measuring up to please adults

Motivating values: Adult approval, avoiding punishment, seeking recognition and praise

Developmental Anxiety: Inadequacy, failure to be accepted by adults, "I can't do anything right."

Approach to problems: Adults are responsible for law and order, wants to justify acts

Source of Authority: All powerful adults and magic entities

Type of adult needed: One who approves, ensures success, solves problems, admires child

Effective strategies: Praise for accomplishments, redirection, modeling

Materials, activities, and content themes: Movement, exploration, and imagination, good defeats evil, make-believe, animals, children as invulnerable, adults caring for and admiring children

They must experience a lot of success in order to develop self-esteem

They need to be assertive and aggressive as they transition from Stage 1, ie. Refusing food or toilet training, biting, ignoring adults. If not well managed becomes oppositional behavior and social immaturity.

Adult role and response style in Stage 2:

- Be predictable as the source of encouraging, expecting appropriate responses, motivating, reflecting success, holding limits, guiding successful exploration.
- Physical proximity and individual attention may be necessary.
- The key to the adult role for children in Stage 2 is the relationship between the adult and the child
- Stage 2 Management strategies:
 - Positive feedback and praise for participation
 - Motivating materials, non-competitive
 - Redirection
 - Reflection of positive effort and success
 - Verbal interaction between adults (models)
 - Rules
 - Control of materials
- Physical proximity, touch, eye contact

Stage 3: Giving up to Gain: Successful group participation

- Central concern: Looking good to others
- Motivating Values: fairness, law and order, looking good to others
- Developmental anxiety: Guilt over failure to meet expectations of others
- Approach to problems: self-protection, need to justify, adults responsible for order and problem resolution

Source of authority: rules, all powerful adults

Type of adult needed: fair but strong leader who keep others in line while recognizing individual good points

Effective strategies: positive feedback and praise for individual contributions to group, reflection, adult model, life-space intervention

Stage 4: Investing in the group process

Central Concern: getting approval from adults and peers, belonging

Motivation: developing personal qualities that are approved by others

Anxiety: conflict over dependence vs. independence

Approach to problems: to conform or not, responsibility to self

Authority source: others expectations and approval

Needs from adults: supportive, approves, facilitates

Effective strategies: positive feedback, interpretation

Activities and content themes: real-life experiences, successes with peers, recognition from adults and peers

Students in stage 4 need help from adults interpreting their feelings behind their behavior. They need help noticing the behaviors and poor choices that result in rejection. This can be a painful process as they confront the fact that their personal choices result sometimes in negative feedback from peers and adults. Adults need to provide limits and boundaries but it is important that students in this stage be involved in the decision making process. This is the age of gaining insight into your own motivations behind your mistakes; they need to learn to gauge the separate feelings and motivations of others and make adjustments in their own behavior based on feedback and prediction.

Failure to perceive acceptance from the group can result in withdrawal, isolation, anger, depression, and blaring defiance.

Stage 5: Applying individual and group skills to new situations

"Who am I and what will I become?"

Central concern: being valued by others while being oneself

Motivation: justice, individual rights, freedom to choose, obligations of friendship

Anxiety: self-doubt, identity, multiple value systems and roles

Approach to problems: finding one's own solutions through experimentation

Authority source: others' expectations and approval, values of right and wrong

Adult needed: counselor, adviser, role model of desired attributes

Effective Strategies: analysis of salient events and qualities in both universal and personal context, exploration of values that guide conduct, interpretation, positive feedback and recognition

Activities and themes: behavior and communication styles in pluralistic society, regulation of people by institutions such as government, church, school, family, social groups, employers, sports.

My LPC supervisor, Michael Sliwa, having been in private practice for 23 years and weathered 4 teenagers, made the following comment to me, scary as it sounds. "When one of my kids proposes an action they want to try to me that I think may not work out for them very well, I say, "That sounds like a good idea, why don't you try that

out and let me know how it works out for you.'"

At this stage, peer influence typically becomes more important than parent influence. When children in this stage think their parents are over-controlling and untrusting, and do not allow the teen to have input into rules and exceptions to rules, the teens often rebel and become defiant, refusing to perform household chores and participate in the family with helpful contributions. They keep their problems and distress to themselves and no longer request parental advice for problem solving. Often they seek advice from friends or develop an "emotional parent," a coach or a teacher or another friend's parent, with whom they become close, seek, and often follow advice.

•Source:

Wood, M., Davis, K., Swindle, F., Quirk, C. (1996) Developmental Therapy-Developmental Teaching: Fostering Social-Emotional Competence in Troubled Children and Youth, Third Edition. Austin, Tx: Pro-Ed.

Oppositional-defiant behavior can also result when a child feels that adults only notice what they do wrong. You can not win a power struggle with a child who is being ODD, they win every time by not doing. And you can't make them. And they don't care what you are taking away from them. The smart approach to this type of behavior is to get control over the things this kid enjoys, and sell them the time with what they like based on how well they do at meeting adult expectations. Then you don't get the explosions when you punish and take things away, you wait and encourage them to do well so you can celebrate their success with them by sharing some of what they want from you. This also allows you to keep your interaction positive instead of negative and draining.

