

Principles of Child Development

Dr. Suheli Mehta, Associate Professor, Dept. of Home Science, MMC
E-Content for B.A, Part-I

To identify and depicting growth and development with severe patterns and processes are necessary because it describes which type of model and development are going on inside the minds of children. With the help of given child development principles, we can easily identify how children are developing and which stage they are in. And these also help us to predict children's development rates and which order they will follow. Further study can be done by keeping in mind the individual's similarities as well as individual differences. The process of development is wide, complex and continuous. Therefore, one has to follow some of its principles in order to understand it (development). Some of the principles are the following:

Principle of Continuity:

Development follows continuity. It goes from womb to tomb and never ceases. An individual starting his life from a tiny cell develops his body, mind and other aspects of his personality through a continuous stream of development.

Principle of Uniform Pattern:

The process of development has uniformity and few individual differences. But uniformity is in functions like development of language in children. The physical development is also in a uniform manner. This development starts from head. Thus, milk teeth fall first. Thus, the development of similar species has a definite uniformity.

Principle of Individual Differences:

Psychologists give due importance to the principle of individual differences. The process of development has been divided into different age-groups and as every age group has its specific features and have different behavior; these differences cannot be ignored. Even twin-children have differences. Thus, every individual has individual differences.

Principle of Integration:

Development involves a movement from the whole to the parts and from the parts to the whole. It is the integration of whole and its parts as well as of the specific and general responses that make a child develop satisfactorily in various dimensions of his growth and development.

Principle of Inter-relation:

The growth and development in various dimensions like physical, mental, social, etc. are inter-related and inter-dependent. Growth and development in any one dimension affects the growth and development of the child in other dimensions. For example, children with above average intelligence are generally found to possess above average physical and social development. The lack of growth in one dimension diminishes the bright possibility in other dimensions. That is why, the child having poor physical development tend to regress in emotional, social and intellectual development.

Principle of Maturation and Learning:

In the process of growth and development, maturation and learning plays an important role. In maturity, growth and development get effected towards learning. Any child needs to be mature to do a work. Maturity also has different levels. These levels affect his learning process. For instance, if a child is keen to learn something and lacks maturity then he will not be able to learn it.

Principle of Joint product of Heredity and Environment:

Child growth and development is the joint product of heredity and environment. The effect of both of these cannot be separated. Heredity is the foundation of the personality of a child.

Principle of Total Development:

The physical development in human beings takes place simultaneously with the development of various aspects of human personality such as social, physical, emotional, mental, etc. All these aspects are dependent on each other and affect each other.

Principle of Development Direction:

Growth and development have their own definite direction. In human body, first of all, head becomes of adult size and legs in the end. In the development of embryo, this principle is very clear. Thus, development has different direction:

i. *Cephalo Caudal Sequence:*

Human child growth from head to legs and not vice versa.

ii. *Proximo-distal Sequence:*

This development starts from back and then external proximo-distal sequence starts. Thus, we can say that at embryo stage, firstly head develops, then lower portion of the body. Similarly, spinal cord develops first, then heart, chest, etc.

iii. *Structure Precedes Function:*

Firstly, all the body parts develop, and then they are used; but before that their muscles should develop.

Development Proceeds from General to Specific Response:

In all phases of child's development, general activity precedes specific activity. His responses are of a general type before they become specific. For example, the boy waves his arms in general, random movements before he is capable of so specific a response as reaching.

Principle of Predictability of Development:

It is possible to predict development. For example, the interests, disliking, growth of a child.

Principle of Outer Control to Inner Control:

Small children depend on others for values and principles. When they grow up, they develop their own value system, conscious, inner control and outer control.