

Review Article

Pre-School Period of Development

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Abstract

This study aims to describe mental, social and cognitive development of pre-school period child. Pre-school period is the time when the individual starts to experience his independence and develops many habits essential to the adult life. Child starts to socialize in these ages. His environment and the received stimulus play a crucial role in physical, mental, social and cognitive development and growth of the child. Therefore, development of a child in pre-school period is a subject that should be analysed with great care and importance.

Keywords

- Child
- Growth
- Development
- Pre-School
- Monitoring
- Family

INTRODUCTION

Pre-school period covers the ages between 3 and 6 [1]. Monitoring the growth and development of the child in this period is one of the essentials of pediatric practice because growth and development can be affected from every case that disturbs mental and physical wellbeing of the child. On the other hand, a normal period of development and growth indicates at least that there has been no serious health problem affecting the child [2,3,4]. Over the last decades, there have been several studies in literature to focus on the children in pre-school period [1]. This study aims to describe general features of children in pre-school period. It is a critical period in which many habits essential to adult life are acquired. Therefore, knowledge on the peculiarities of children in the period has an important place in paediatrics.

GENERAL FEATURES OF CHILDREN IN THE PRE-SCHOOL PERIOD

Healthy grown children are the key to future healthy societies. The wellness of children and the possibility of their being healthy adults depend on their growing in a healthy environment starting from mother's womb [1]. Pre-school period is one of the most sensitive periods of life and these are the ages when the individual starts to experience his independence. Supporting physical and cerebral development contributes much to the development of pre-school children. Child starts to socialize in these ages. His environment and the received stimulus play a crucial role in physical, mental, social and cognitive development and growth of the child [4,5,6,7]. In their studies conducted on 321 pre-school children in East Africa, Malmberg et al. (2011) applied cognitive development program on 168 children. 153 children were not included in the program and the success rates of both sample groups were compared. It was observed statistically that the group of pre-school period children who had gone through the program were significantly more successful [8].

If children in the previous age groups learn the general rules they enter into a more harmonious pre-school period [4,8,9]. 3-6 years of age are defined as the creativity period. The child in the period shows great interest to animals. Drawing pictures, playing a musical instrument start in these ages. Playing with play dough, water filled cups, paints, etc., give great joy. The child might use everything at home as toy. He likes to play imaginary games with these materials [4,6,8,9].

In this period, children are also curious about sexual differences. While girls in the pre-school period experience Oedipus complex and penis envy, boys experience Oedipus complex and fear of castration. As the libido (centre of attention) is on the genitalia, masturbation can be observed. Oedipus complex starts as boy falls in love with mother. If the child is rebuffed by his father due to the feelings he nourishes for his mother, his sexual identity might be formed in an affectation towards woman, and sexual deviation might be observed. On the other hand, the girl is in love with father. Similarly, if the girl receives a negative response from her mother, this might give way to formation of a wrong sexual identity [2,10].

Pre-school children start to adopt particular and sharp attitude against food. In this period, the position of the family is important in the struggle against this case. The least favourite food of this group is vegetables. Moreover, they do not like to mix their food while consuming them. They want to see the food in a definable form and tend to love the food better if they can eat with hand [4]. In his work, "The Role of Family in the Manner and Attitude of Nursery Children of 3-6 years of age against Food," Mermer (2003) applied questionnaire form, observation form and anthropometric measurements by interviewing with families and children. As a result of the study, it was found that the attitude and the position of the family played a crucial role in the food habits of children [11]. Researches has shown that children in pre-school period's tool use learning is highly sensitive to the

behaviour and characteristics of adult models [6,12]. A child is an inseparable part of a family. Family relations and influences are important determiners concerning the growth and progress of children. It is essential that parents are consistent and serve as good models. It should not be forgotten that habits acquired in these ages would continue in the later ages [4,13]. In addition to family, teachers' and children's patterns of thinking have been associated in several studies. A growing body of research show that similar cognitive biases are shared by teachers, parents and children [5,12].

CONCLUSION

Pre-school period is one of the most sensitive periods in which children acquire skills that effect their adulthoods. In pre-school period, families should treat their children as children want them to and they should be consistent and employ a positive language. While communicating they should be open and clear. Expectations should be appropriate to the child and the child should be trusted. As the parents are the models for the children, if they apologize in cases when they are wrong that would also teach children to apologize. It should not be forgotten that healthy grown children are the key to future health societies.

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