

Emotional Intelligence and Child Development

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence was the name that Peter Salovey and John Mayer gave to the collection of personal, emotional and social abilities in 1990. They have done numerous researches in the past 20 years to define the theory, to develop a valid, and to explore its significance. Emotional Intelligence (EI) became popular in 1995 by a book, "Emotional Intelligence", written by Daniel Goleman.

Emotional Intelligences is an intelligence that is unique to human. We have that to enable us both know and manage ourselves well. On the other hand, Emotional Intelligence also helps us to understand, manage and motivate other people.

1) Intrapersonal Intelligence

Intrapersonal is the relation to the internal aspects of an individual, especially emotions. This Intelligence enables us to understand our own feelings, thinking, emotions, and the relationship among all these aspects. With it, you can understand more about yourself, emotions, and feelings toward yourself. You can learn how to take charge of your emotions without being furious and confused by unhelpful emotions.

2) Interpersonal Intelligence

Interpersonal concerns relationship with other people. Our capacity to understand others, to empathize with them, to communicate them, to motivate them, and to understand relationship you and the others; therefore we have the ability to choose appropriate responses in different situations.

Child Development

An embryo, an early stage following conception up to the end of the eighth week, has begun to develop. After that period, this new life is being classified as a fetus. The development of these two stages are mainly physiological, however some suggest that the emotion and behavior of the mother could influence not only the biological but also the mental development of the unborn.

Here is going to focus on the emotion, social and cognitive development of children. Psychologists have started developing theory of child development since the early of 19th century. Since children have developed their emotion in an early age, therefore understanding developmental theories could help us to understand them easier, especially when enhancing their emotional intelligence.

Jean Piaget's Model of Cognitive Development in Childhood

This model has differentiated cognitive development in four stages:

1) Sensorimotor: Infancy (0-24 months)

- Reflex activity
- Primary circular reactions involve the child's body
- Secondary circular reactions involve repeating interesting activities, manipulating objects and searching for disappearing objects
- Secondary schemata , and mental combinations.

2) Preoperational thought: Childhood (2-7 years)

- This stage involves the development of using symbols, languages, imagination, incomplete or illogical concept; and children are still being egocentric in social communication and intuitive rather than logical.

3) Concrete operations: Middle Childhood (7-11 years)

- This stage involves the use of logic to make sense of things and relationships
- Has ability to conserve
- Develops understanding of number
- Still in the stage of concrete rather than abstract thinking
- Reversibility of thought
- Develops empathy for another's position
- Greater capacity for attention, concentration, and memory

4) Formal operations: Adolescence (11-15 years)

According to Mayer and Salovey (1990, p.10), Emotional Intelligence involves four of the following,

- (1) The ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion;
- (2) The ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought;
- (3) The ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and
- (4) The ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

These abilities range from relatively simple and basic psychological processes to higher, more psychological integrated processes. We have started developing these abilities at an early stage to adult stage.