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NOTES:

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD

Have you observed infants and toddlers?Have you ever noted the emotions each displays, the cues you rely on to interpret the baby's emotional state, and how caregivers respond? Researchers have conductedmany such observations to find out how babies convey their emotions and interpret those of others. They have discovered that emotions play powerful roles in organizing the attainments that Erikson regarded as so important: social relationships, exploration of the environment, and discovery of the self (Saarni et al.,)

Emotions are an integral part of young children'sdynamic systems of action. Emotions energizedevelopment. At the same time, they are an aspect of the system that develops, becoming more varied and complex as children reorganize

their behaviour to attain new goals (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004; Camras, 2011).

Because infants cannot describe their feelings,determining exactly which emotions they areexperiencing is a challenge. Cross-cultural evidencereveals that people around the world associate photographs of different facial expressions with emotions in the same way (Ekman & Friesen, 1972; Ekman & Matsumoto, 2011). These findings inspired researchers to analyse infants' facial patterns to determine the range of emotions they display at different ages.

But to express a particular emotion, infants, children, and adults actually use diverse responses—not just facial expressions but also vocalizations and body movements—which vary with their developing capacities, goals, and contexts. Therefore, to infer babies' emotions as accurately as possible, researchers must attend to multiple interacting expressive cues—vocal, facial, and gestural—and see how they vary across situations believed to elicit different emotions (Camras & Shuster, 2013).

Basic Emotions

Basic emotions—happiness, interest, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, and disgust—are universal in humans and other primates and have a long evolutionary history of promoting survival. Do infants come into the world with the ability to express basic emotions?

Although signs of some emotions are present, babies' earliest emotional life consists of little more than two global arousal states: attraction to pleasant stimulation and withdrawal from unpleasant stimulation (Camras et al., 2003).

Sensitive, contingent caregiver communication, in which parents selectively mirror aspects of the baby's diffuse emotional behaviour, helps infants construct emotional expressions that more closely resemble those of adults (Gergely & Watson, 1999).

With age, face, voice, and posture start to form organized patterns that vary meaningfully with environmental events. For example, Caitlin typically responded

to her parents' playful interaction with a joyful face, pleasant babbling, and a relaxed posture, as if to say, "This is fun!"

In contrast, an unresponsive parent often evokes a sad face, fussy sounds, and a drooping body (sending the message, "I'm despondent") or an angry face, crying, and "pick-me-up" gestures (as if to say, "Change this unpleasant event!") (Weinberg & Tronick, 1994).

Gradually, emotional expressions become well-organized and specific—and therefore provide more precise information about the baby's internal state.

Four basic emotions—happiness, anger, sadness, and fear—have received the most research attention. Let's see how they develop.

Happiness.

Happiness—expressed first in blissful smiles and later through exuberant laughter—contributes to many aspects of development. When infants achieve new skills, they smile and laugh, displaying delight in motor and cognitive mastery. The baby's smile encourages caregivers to smile responsively and to be affectionate and stimulating, and then the baby smiles even more (Bigelow & Power, 2014).

Happiness binds parent and baby into a warm, supportive relationship that fosters the infant's motor, cognitive, and social competencies. During the early weeks, new born babies smile when full, during REM sleep, and in response to gentle touches and sounds, such as stroking of the skin, rocking, and a parent's soft, high-pitched voice. By the end of the first month, infants smile at dynamic, eye-catching sights, such as a bright object jumping suddenly across their field of vision.

Between 6 and 10 weeks, the parent's communication evokes a broad grin called the social smile (Lavelli & Fogel, 2005). These changes parallel the development of infant perceptual capacities—in particular, sensitivity to visual patterns, including the human face.

Social smiling becomes better-organized and stable as babies learn to use it to evoke and sustain pleasurable face-to-face interaction with their caregivers.

Laughter, which typically appears around 3 to 4 months, reflects faster processing of information than smiling. But as with smiling, the first laughs occur in response to very active stimuli, such as the parent saying playfully, “I’m going to get you!” and kissing the baby’s tummy. As infants understand more about their world, they laugh at events with subtler elements of surprise, such as a silent game of peekaboo. Soon they pick up on parents’ facial and vocal cues to humour (Mireault et al., 2015).

From 5 to 7 months, in the presence of those cues, they increasingly find absurd events—such as an adult wearing a ball as a clown’s nose—funny.

During the second half-year, babies smile and laugh more when interacting with familiar people, a preference that strengthens the parent–child bond. And like adults, 10- to 12-month-olds have several smiles, which vary with context—a broad, “cheek raised” smile in response to a parent’s greeting; a reserved, muted smile for a friendly stranger; and a “mouth-open” smile during stimulating play (Messinger & Fogel, 2007). By the end of the first year, the smile has become a deliberate social signal.

Anger and Sadness.

New-born babies respond with generalized distress to a variety of unpleasant experiences, including hunger, painful medical procedures, changes in body temperature, and too much or too little stimulation.

From 4 to 6 months into the second year, angry expressions increase in frequency and intensity (Braungart-Rieker, Hill-Soderlund, & Karrass,)

Older infants also react with anger in a wider range ofsituations—when an interesting object or event is removed, an expected pleasant event does not occur, their arms are restrained, the caregiver leaves for a brief time, or they are put down for a nap (Camras et al., 1992; Stenberg & Campos, 1990; Sullivan & Lewis, 2003).

Why do angry reactions increase with age? As infantsbecome capable of intentional behavior (see Chapter 5), they want to control their own actions and the effects they produce (Mascolo & Fischer, 2007). Furthermore, older infants are better at identifying who caused them pain or removed a toy. Their anger is particularly intense when a caregiver from whom they have come to expect warm behavior causes discomfort.

Cross-cultural research reveals that infant-rearing practices can modify stranger anxiety. Among the Efe hunters and gatherers of the Republic of Congo, where the maternal death rate is high, infant survival is safeguarded by a collective caregiving system in which, starting at birth, Efe babies are passed from one adult to another. Consequently, Efe infants show little stranger anxiety (Tronick, Morelli, & Ivey, 1992).

In contrast, among infants in Israeli kibbutzim (cooperative agricultural settlements), who live in isolated communities vulnerable to terrorist attacks, wariness of strangers is widespread. By the end of the first year, when infants look to others for cues about how to respond emotionally, kibbutz babies display greater stranger anxiety than their city-reared counterparts (Saarni et al., 2006).

The rise in fear after age 6 months keeps newly mobilebabies' enthusiasm for exploration in check. Once wariness develops, infants use the familiar caregiver as a secure base, or point from which to explore, venturing into the environment and then returning for emotional support. As part of this adaptive system, encounters with strangers lead to two conflicting tendencies: approach (indicated by interest and friendliness) and avoidance (indicated by fear). The infant's behavior is a balance between the two.

As cognitive development enables toddlers to discriminate more effectively between threatening and nonthreatening people and situations, stranger anxiety and other fears of the first two years decline. Fear also wanes as toddlers acquire more strategies for coping with it, as we will see when we discuss emotional self-regulationAnd inreased parental limit setting once babies crawl and walk contributes to babies' angry responses (Roben et al., 2012).

The rise in anger is also adaptive. Independent movement enables an angry infant to defend herself or overcome an obstacle to obtain a desired object. Finally, anger motivates caregivers to relieve the baby's distress and, in the case of separation, may discourage them from leaving again soon.

Although expressions of sadness also occur in response to pain, removal of an object, and brief separations, they are less frequent than anger (Alessandri, Sullivan, & Lewis, 1990). But when caregiver–infant communication is seriously disrupted, infant sadness is common—a condition that impairs all aspects of development (see the Biology and Environment box on the following page).

Fear

An unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger, pain, or harm.

Like anger, fear rises from the second half of the first year into the second year (Braungart-Rieker, Hill-Soderlund, & Karrass, 2010; Brooker et al., 2013). Older infants hesitate before playing with a new toy, and newly crawling infants soon back away from heights. But the most frequent expression of fear is to unfamiliar adults, a response called stranger anxiety. Many infants and toddlers are quite wary of strangers, although the reaction does not always occur. It depends on several factors: temperament (some babies are generally more fearful), past experiences with strangers, and the current situation.

When an unfamiliar adult picks up the infant in a new setting, stranger anxiety is likely. But if the adult sits still while the baby moves around and a parent is nearby, infants often show positive and curious behavior (Horner, 1980). The stranger's style of interaction—expressing warmth, holding out an attractive toy, playing a familiar game, and approaching slowly rather than abruptly—reduces the baby's fear.

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Understanding and Responding to the Emotions of OthersInfants' emotional expressions are closely tied to their ability to interpret the emotional cues of others. We have seen that in the first few months, babies match the feeling tone of the caregiver in face-to-face communication. Around 3 months, they become sensitive to the structure and timing of face-to-face interactions (see Chapter 5, page 176). When they gaze, smile, or vocalize, they now expect their social partner to respond in kind, and they reply with positive vocal and emotional reactions (Bigelow & Power, 2014; Markova & Legerstee, 2006). Within these exchanges, infants become increasingly aware of the range of emotional expressions (Montague & Walker-Andrews, 2001).

According to some researchers, out of this early imitative communication, they start to view others as “like me”—an awareness believed to lay the foundation for understanding others’ thoughts and feelings (Meltzoff, 2013).

By 4 to 5 months, infants distinguish positive from negative emotion in voices, and soon after, in facial expressions, gradually discriminating a wider range of emotions. Responding to emotional expressions as organized wholes indicates that these signals are becoming meaningful to babies. As skill at establishing joint attention improves, infants realize that an emotional expression not only has meaning but is also a meaningful reaction to a specific object or event (Thompson, 2015).

Once these understandings are in place, beginning at 8 to 10 months, infants engage in social referencing—actively seeking emotional information from a trusted person in an uncertain situation (Mumme et al., 2007). Many studies show that the caregiver’s emotional expression (happy, angry, or fearful) influences whether a 1-year-old will be wary of strangers, play with an unfamiliar toy, or cross the deep side of the visual cliff (see page 140) (de Rosnay et al., 2006; Stenberg, 2003; Striano & Rochat, 2000).

The adult’s voice—either alone or combined with a facialexpression—is more effective than a facial expression alone (Kim, Walden, & Knieps, 2010; Vaish & Striano, 2004). The voice conveys both emotional and verbal information, and the baby need not turn toward the adult but, instead, can focus on evaluating the novel event.

As toddlers start to appreciate that others’ emotional reactions may differ from their own, social referencing allows them to compare their own and others’ assessments of events. In one study, an adult showed 14- and 18-month-olds broccoli and crackers and acted delighted with one food but disgustedwith the other. When asked to share the food, 18-month-olds offered the adult whichever food she appeared to like, regardless of their own preferences (Repacholi & Gopnik, 1997).

In sum, in social referencing, toddlers use others' emotional messages to evaluate the safety and security of their surroundings, to guide their own actions, and to gather information about others' intentions and preferences. These experiences, along with cognitive and language development, probably help toddlers refine the meanings of emotions—for example, happiness versus surprise, anger versus fear—during the second year (Gendler, Witherington, & Edwards, 2008).

Emergence of Self-Conscious EmotionsBesides basic emotions, humans are capable of a second, higher order set of feelings, including guilt, shame, embarrassment, envy, and pride. These are called self-conscious emotions because each involves injury to or enhancement of our sense of self. We feel guilt when we have harmed someone and want to correct the wrongdoing.

Envy arises when we desire something that another possesses, so we try to restore our sense of self-worth by securing that possession. When we are ashamed or embarrassed, we have negative feelings about our behaviour, and we want to retreat so others will no longer notice our failings. In contrast, pride reflects delight in the self's achievements, and we are inclined to tell others what we have accomplished and to take on further challenges (Lewis, 2014).

Self-conscious emotions appear in the middle of the second year, as 18- to 24-month-olds become firmly aware of the self as a separate, unique individual. Toddlers show shame and embarrassment by lowering their eyes, hanging their head, and hiding their face with their hands. They show guilt like reactions, too.

After noticing Grace's unhappiness, 22-month-old Caitlinreturned a toy she had grabbed and patted her upset playmate. Pride and envy also emerge around age 2 (Barrett, 2005; Garner, 2003; Lewis, 2014)

Besides self-awareness, self-conscious emotions require an additional ingredient: adult instruction in when to feel proud, ashamed, or guilty. Parents begin this tutoring early when they say, "Look how far you can throw that ball!" or "You should feel ashamed for grabbing that toy!" Self-conscious emotions play important roles in children's achievement-related and moral behaviours. The situations in which adults encourage these feelings vary from culture to culture. In

Western nations, most children are taught to feel pride in personal achievement—throwing a ball the farthest, winning a game, and (later on) getting good grades.

In cultures such as China and Japan, which promote aninterdependent self, calling attention to individual success evokes embarrassment and self-effacement. And violating cultural standards by failing to show concern for others—a parent, a teacher, or an employer—sparks intense shame (Lewis, 2014).

REFERENCE- Santrock, J. W. (1987). *Adolescence: an introduction*. Wm C Brown Publishers.