

Erik Erikson's theory presented ideas that children need positive reinforcements to allow for a healthy upbringing and self image. The main point of his theory was that the social and personal development of a child was based on and connected to environmental influences and believed life was a series of 8 stages.

Stage one occurs from 0-1 years old. During stage one of the series of life, Erikson believes the infant is most dependent on the caregiver and hence the child develops a sense of trust or possible mistrust depending on the relationship with the caregiver.

Stage 2 occurs in children from the ages of 2-3 years old and throughout this phase, the child's level of confidence develops and increases depending on the amount of freedom the child is given. This is often over things such as choices of food and clothing. Children who experience this stage successfully feel secure and confident.

During stage 3, the child develops language skills and imagination. Encouragement helps to create a positive self image and being put down creates a negative self image. This stage occurs from the ages of 4-5 years old.

Through out the ages of 6-11, children begin to form close relationships with teachers and others. Children who are encouraged by others feel capable in their skills. Those who receive little or no encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers will doubt their ability to be successful. This is stage 4.

In stage 5, which is the ages of 12-18, there are many crucial influences including peers, family impacting on the independence and development of identity. Acceptance of these people lead to security and a sense of identity whereas seclusion and rejection can lead to a low self esteem.

During the sixth stage, young adults begin to form relationships and develop the need for the relationship to be strong. Erikson also believed that a strong sense of personal identity was important to develop these intimate relationships.

Throughout the seventh stage, middle age adults begin to focus more on their career and families, and develop relationships with a wider group of people and society.

The elderly years account for stage eight. In this stage, an individual may feel a sense of accomplishment, success, failure or despair depending on their accomplishments and general feeling of satisfaction of life.