



# **Parenting - Knowing What to Expect in Your Child's Development (Part One)**

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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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There are many theorists in the field of psychology who use their ideas to help explain why people think, feel and behave as they do. Erik Erikson is one of those who has outlined eight specific developmental stages that each person experiences as they grow and mature. They are based on the chronological age of the individual and identify two outcomes that can result from the struggles within the stage.

**Infancy: Birth to 18 months (Trust vs Mistrust)** is also referred to the Oral Sensory Stage. The most significant relationship is with the maternal parent or most significant and constant caregiver. Emphasis is on visual contact and touch. If the child passes through this stage knowing that needs were met, s/he learns to trust and have confidence in the future. Strength results in drive and hope. If needs were not met, the child can be constantly frustrated and end up with a feeling worthlessness and general mistrust of the world.

**Early Childhood: 18 Months to 3 Years (Autonomy vs Shame)** is a stage in which the most significant relationships are with parents and we learn to master skills for ourselves. Learning to walk, talk and feed ourselves will build self-esteem, self-control, courage and will. At the same time, however, vulnerability shame, doubt and low self-esteem can result from inadequacies and may result.

**Play Age: 3 to 5 Years (Initiative vs Guilt)** is a stage when children desire to copy adults around them and take initiative in creating play situations. They begin to ask "Why?" Their relationships are primarily with the basic family as they develop social role identification and a strength of purpose. If frustrated over natural desires and goals, however, guilt may result.

**School Age: 6 to 12 Years (Industry vs Inferiority)** is often call the Latency. Learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge can result in a sense of industry and strength with method and competence. In this stage, however, our most significant relationship is with the school and neighbourhood and, although parents are still important, they are no longer the complete authorities they once were. Serious problems with self-esteem and lack of competence can result from unresolved feelings of inadequacy and inferiority among peers

Each stage consists of tasks for the person to negotiate and results in one of two outcomes. This theory helps psychologists and clients to understand and treat problems based on what happened in each stage.