

UNIT TWO: The Child

Introduction

In the last chapter, the definition of child, family, and community as well as its interaction among itself were discussed. Thus, in this chapter, the issues related to the full meanings of a child, needs of children, and influences in childhood, and the nature-nurture debts on child development, the issues of peer groups, caregiver and media influence on child development, based on various developmental psychology theories are addressed. Today's Children, Emerging Trends, and the future: focus on Ethiopia is also part of this unit.

Hence, after the end of this unit student will be able to understand:

- What the child means.
- Needs of children
- Influences in childhood development
- The Nature VS. Nurture issues in child development
- Peer Groups
- Caregivers Influence
- Media influences
- Today's Children, Emerging Trends and the future: focus on Ethiopia

2.1. Understanding child and it's needs

Understanding children helps teachers become better teachers, parents become better parents, child-care workers become better at taking care of kids, grandparents do a better job of grandparenting, and health-care providers give more compassionate and competent health care. Understanding children just makes the world a better place and that's the bottom line.

Children have their own distinctive developmental needs and stages they pass through with. Therefore, they demand to pass through these stages by fulfilling their respective developmental needs. These needs are practically expected to be resolved by their potential caregivers across circumstances. Based on these, various scholars indicated these needs and developmental stages at different times. Among others, the following theorists and theories are mentioned: Each theorists' ideas are independent of each other (they are different ideas), but when put together,

they give us a good overall understanding of how children develop as they age.

A. Sigmund Freud: The Mind / Personality (1856-1939): Austrian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst

He believed that the mind was divided into 3 levels of consciousness. As conscious mind (tip of the iceberg allows individuals to choose their actions based on whether it is right or wrong), preconscious mind (memories recalled), and unconscious mind (represents the individual's internal wants and desires).

Psychoanalytic Theory: Freud distinguished 3 structures of personality which form the basic parts of human personality and motivate our behavior:

- ID: unconscious inborn biological wants and desires needs immediate gratification (e.g. Sex & aggression)
- EGO: realistic part of our personality that tries to balance the ID and SUPEREGO in making socially and morally acceptable decisions – understands cause & effect – starts to develop at 2 to 3 years of age.
- SUPEREGO: our moral guide between right and wrong – starts to develop at 6 to 7 years of age.

He also believed that an individual's personality develops through a series of stages based on their ability to control their internal needs and wants and depends on changes in the distribution of sexual energy. Failure to progress smoothly through a particular stage can result in adult behaviors fixated with that stage.

Freud distinguished 5 stages:

- Oral (Birth – 18 months): Oral gratification/sucking/biting

Adult issues: orally dependent (passivity; smoking)/ orally aggressive (cruel)

- Anal (18 months – 3 years): Bowel pleasure/toilet training

Adult issues: anal-retentive (e.g. cleanliness)/anal-expulsive (e.g. sloppiness)

- Phallic (3 – 5 years): Genital awareness/love-hate relationship with the same-sex parent (i.e. Oedipus complex)

Adult issues: selfishness; poor opposite-sex relationships; manipulative

- Latency (6 years – puberty): Same-sex friends and few opposite-sex friends

Adult issues: Lack of close friends

- Genital (adolescence): intimate relationships & sexual attraction

Adult issues: Poor sexual relationships; guilt about sexuality; inadequacy

Why are Freud's ideas significant?

He believed that the experiences children have will have a profound effect on their adult life. Freud believed that the decisions children make shape the personality they have as teenagers and adults. Also, caregivers of children should be understanding and empathetic of children's emotional states. Hence, if children are supported emotionally, then their personality and emotional well-being are likely to be secure and stable.

B. Erik Erikson: Personality (1902-1994): German psychologist; later moved to America studied under Freud and later refined Freud's theory.

In refining Freud's theory, Erikson postulated that personality developed in 8 stages, starting in infancy and ending with old age. Each stage had a unique psychological crisis whose outcome is dependent on how caregivers and significant others respond to the needs at that stage. If a person has a problem in any of the stages they would develop an identity crisis that would affect them later in life.

Age	Conflict	Successful Resolution
Birth to 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust	The infant develops a sense of security and learns to trust caregivers.
18 to 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame and	The infant achieves a sense of Independence.

4 -6 years	Initiative vs. Guilt	The child finds a balance between spontaneity and restraint. Learns to think independently.
7-12 years	Industry vs. Inferiority	The child attains a sense of self-confidence. Learns to think about others.
Adolescent	Identity vs. Role Confusion	The adolescent experiences a unified sense of self-based on a combination of previous learning.
Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	The adult forms close personal relationships.
Middle Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	The adult promotes the wellbeing of others.
Late adulthood	Integrity vs. Despair	The adult enjoys a sense of satisfaction by reflecting on a life well-lived.

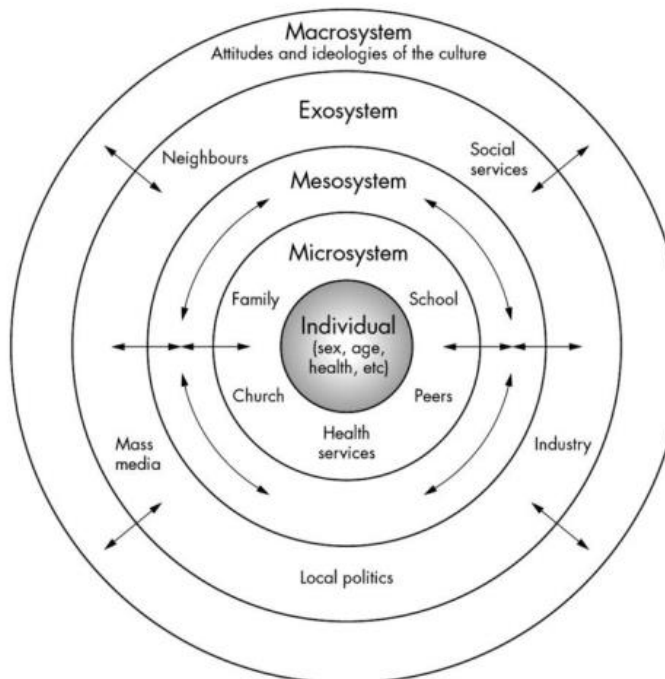
Why are Erikson's ideas significant?

His theory is still considered valid. Caregivers can use this theory to effectively meet the different emotional needs of each age from infancy to adolescence. One of the only theorists to tackle young, middle, and older adulthood stages of life Parents can look at their development and assess where they are.

C. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) :American psychologist and lecturer

He studied children and their families in light of the social changes that occurred in the 20th century. He founded the Ecological Systems Theory to understand the complex relationship between the infant, the family, and society and how they impact child development. Influenced the way psychologists and other social scientists approached the study of human beings in their environment. He studied child psychology to sociology (the study of the family) to anthropology (the study of society) to economics to political science to study how all areas impact development instead of studying each area separately.

Theories concern the well-being of children in families in today's society (e.g. 2-income families; family breakdowns; single-parent families).



Why are Bronfenbrenner's ideas significant?

Parents, caregivers, and politicians can use Bronfenbrenner's theories to support requests for more money and social support for families in general. His theories and concerns for children give support to the real challenges of raising a family in the 21st century.

D. Jean Piaget: Intellectual Development (1896-1980): Swiss biologist, psychologist, and educator

He became interested in the scientific study of intellect when his three children were born and used his children to observe and make scientific notes on intellectual development. Piaget was the first person to study children scientifically, through real-life observations and obsessive note-taking. He discovered that all children's intellectual development progressed through four stages, beginning in infancy and is completed by adolescence. Thinking becomes more and more complex as the child ages. Each stage of thinking causes the child to see the world differently. He indicated that a child must 'master' one stage before they can move onto the next stage. If they cannot master a stage, they will never reach their full potential. Piaget believed that

intellectual development controls every other aspect of development.

➤ **Sensorimotor Stage (Birth – 2 years)**

Children develop an understanding of the world through their 5 senses and muscles—learn by doing. Learn basic shapes, textures, and object permanence through touching, grasping, hearing, and ‘tasting’ objects.

➤ **Preoperational Stage (2 – 7 years)**

Children develop an understanding through language and images - learn through their actions, thoughts, and feelings. Knowledge is based on their personal feelings, not reality. No logical thinking. Egocentrism: the inability to perceive reality from other's points of view.

➤ **Concrete Operational Stage (7 – 12 years)**

Children can think logically and empathetically but still learn best through experience. Children begin to understand patterns, other people's feelings, and points of view. They start to understand patterns, reversibility, cause-and-effect relationships, and develop object conservation.

➤ **Formal Operations Stage (13 – adult)**

Individuals develop an understanding of using abstract thinking. Individuals begin to see and understand different perspectives and imagine hypothetical situations or scenarios. Use logic, deductive reasoning, comparison, and classification.

Why are Piaget's ideas significant?

His theory reinforces the idea that nurturance (comfort, teaching, and play) should be suitable for the child or adolescent's stage of thinking. Piaget's ideas have greatly influenced our understanding of what children can and cannot do based on their age and intellectual ability. If children are given tasks that are too difficult for them, they will not be able to succeed, which may affect them negatively, psychologically, and emotionally. His theory describes children's ways of thinking and how it develops as they gain experiences.

E. Maria Montessori: Intellectual Development (1870-1952) Italian physician and educator

She believed that children from poverty-stricken areas needed a better start in life to promote success in the education system. She used Piaget's theories as a base for her teaching methods and theory. Montessori stressed that children learn best by using their senses and pursuing their interests, rather than forcing them to learn what is expected. (Self-directed learning) children have innate skills and talents. There are sensitive periods that indicate when the child is ready to learn.

Educational philosophy focuses on the idea that children develop and think differently from adults. Discourages many traditional forms of achievement (e.g. grades, tests), Montessori schools around the world (including Canada) implement her ideas as closely as possible.

To maximize children's learning, Montessori believed that teachers should provide the necessary resources for children to learn independently, and intrude on the children's learning experience as little as possible. If children are guided with love they will learn on their own.

In essence, group lessons are kept to a minimum and independent exploration of things such as language, geography, and math is stressed. Real-life experiences and hands-on activities are also stressed. If age-appropriate learning materials are provided, children will take over the learning process.

6 concepts to describe her theory:

- Independence: let the child choose
- Observation: watch how they enjoy themselves; learn what the child needs
- Following the child: be non-directive; the child will show you what they need
- Correcting the child: do not yell at the child for unintentional mistakes
- Prepared environment: most important – adult's role is to construct the child's learning environment

- Absorbent mind – a properly prepared environment for the child to absorb the learning absorb through experience.

Why are Montessori's ideas significant?

Montessori made it clear that children need to be given the resources to learn, they cannot find the resources themselves. She stressed that adults play an important role in children's learning by making available the necessary resources children need to learn, grow, and develop intellectually. One of the first theorists to see the value of 'hands-on' learning, described as a form of work. Later, others interpreted her concept of work as play (i.e. play-based learning). Her learning theory explains why students learn best when they are self-motivated or in control of their learning.

F. Lev Vygotsky: Social Learning Theory (1896-1934): Russian psychologist and lecturer.

He started laboratory research in his twenties and then died of tuberculosis in his thirties. In the nature vs. nurture debate, Vygotsky believed that nurture influenced development more than nature. Vygotsky's basic premise was that social interaction is an essential role in learning. The child's development appears twice: first on the social level, then on an individual level. He believed skills develop to a higher level with social interactions of adult guidance or peer collaboration. Vygotsky saw adults as a tool that children used to solve "knowledge problems", to learn how their culture worked and how they fit in. He believed that thinking skills and language skills reinforce each other.

Five-step process of sociocultural development:

1. Adults provide tools, modeling, guidance, interaction, and encouragement,
2. A child performs tasks under adult supervision,
3. Adults help the child divide tasks into smaller segments and assess the child's understanding,
4. Adults provide support or scaffolding, and

5. Adults guide a child and aid in their transition into new situations

Why are Vygotsky's ideas significant?

Vygotsky's theory attempts to explain consciousness as the end product of socialization i.e. the learning of language is first for communication; it then becomes internalized and allows "inner speech". Makes us realize that social contacts are essential for children's learning. Caregivers who can provide plenty of opportunities for social contact for children will encourage good language and thinking skills development.

G. B. F. Skinner: Social Learning Theory (1904-1990): American psychologist and educator.

Most of his work was done with small rats in mazes. No systematic research was done on children. Skinner's theory is based on "operant conditioning" behavior is followed by a consequence and the nature of the consequence modifies the tendency to repeat the behavior a method of learning through rewards and punishment. He introduced the concepts of positive reinforcement (i.e. if desired behavior occurs something good happens) and negative reinforcement (i.e. when bad behavior is stopped by the desired behavior).

Extinction is when nothing happens when the behavior happens and eventually the behavior will stop. **Intermittent reinforcement (mix positive reinforcement with extinction)** was the best way to ensure behavior continued. The hope for a reward is the most powerful motivator.

Skinner believed that parents play a very important role in teaching children through the use of positive and negative feedback. He argued that children will repeat rewarded behavior to get more rewards (**reinforcing stimuli**) increased the probability of the behavior occurring in the future. Similarly, children will stop "bad" behavior that gets repeatedly punished (**aversive stimuli**) decreased the probability of the behavior occurring in the future.

Key concepts of Operant Conditioning:

- **Reinforcement:** any event that strengthens or increases the behavior it follows.

- **Positive reinforcement:** a particular behavior is strengthened by the consequence of experiencing a positive condition. Behavior is more likely to occur again if the person finds the consequence rewarding.
- **Negative reinforcement:** a particular behavior is strengthened by the consequence of stopping or avoiding a negative condition.
- **Punishment:** any events that weaken or eliminate a response rather than increase it.

Schedules of Reinforcement based on his study of rats:

- Continuous reinforcement: reinforces the behavior every time it occurs
- Fixed ratio schedule: the ratio between behavior and reinforcement (3:1; 5:1)
- Fixed interval schedule: 1 behavior /period followed by reinforcement (1 behavior every 20 seconds yields a reinforcement)

Why are Skinner's ideas significant?

Skinner's ideas are significant because it shows that children can learn through trial and error. His ideas are also important for parents and caregivers. His ideas encourage parents and caregivers to provide positive feedback and negative feedback to try to influence a child's behavior. There is support for the notion of simple rewards, such as positive support for children's emotional needs, but "punishment" is not supported.

H. Albert Bandura: Social Learning Theory (1925-): Canadian psychologist (born in Alberta). Influenced by Skinner but did not agree with all of his theory. He performed numerous well-planned and highly controlled experiments in children's behavior and the environments in which children's behavior is shaped. Bandura argues that children's behavior is shaped by the environment but that the behavior also shapes and changes the environment in a back and forth way (i.e. "reciprocal determinism"). He studied personality as it interacted with the environment, behavior, and a person's psychological processes.

Famous Bobo Doll Study & Observational Learning or Modeling:

A film was taken of one of his students beating up a bobo doll (an inflatable egg-shaped balloon with a weighted bottom that makes it bob back up when knocked over Bobo the clown). The student punched the clown, kicked it, sat on it, yelled at it, hit it with a hammer, etc. The film was shown to kindergarten students. Once let out to play in the playroom with a new bobo doll, hammers, etc. Observers saw the kids beat the bobo doll, imitated by the woman in the film (kicked, punched, shouted at it, etc.)Steps in the Modeling process:

- **Attention:** one has to pay attention to learn anything Things that put a damper on attention decrease learning (e.g. sleepy, drugs, sick), whereas, if a model is colorful and attractive, one pays more attention to it (e.g. TV and its effect on kids).
- **Retention:** must retain and remember what you have paid attention to
- **Reproduction:** reproduce the behavior the ability to imitate improves with practice and when we imagine ourselves performing.
- **Motivation:** one must be motivated to imitate (reinforcement) negative motivation (punishment) is a reason not to imitate.

The notion of self-regulation the ability to control one's behavior is an important part of human personality.

Three steps:

- **Self-observation:** keep tabs on your behavior, being aware of what you are doing
- **Judgment:** compare your behavior with the standard
- **Self-response:** one rewards or punishes self in comparison with the standard. This results in self-esteem are positive (meeting standards and rewarding self) or negative (failing to meet standards and punishing self).

Why are Bandura's ideas significant?

The main influence is to support what most parents and caregivers know by intuition: good role models are essential to produce good behavior. Bandura has made the public and political affairs realize that violence causes aggression in children.

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) Moral Reasoning Theory: American psychologist and educator. Work influenced by Piaget's theories and done during the time of Skinner. He studied male children in an attempt to chart moral development in children. Kohlberg believed there were 6 identifiable stages in moral/ethical reasoning that classified into 3 levels.

Kohlberg believed that individuals pass through stages 1 at a time: cannot jump stages. He believed that most moral development occurs through social interaction.

- **Level 1: Pre-conventional:** found at the elementary school level - egocentric

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment: Behave as told by an authoritarian figure (i.e. parent, teacher). Obedience is compelled by threat or punishment. To the young child, the focus is on consequences and avoided because "wrong" actions get you punished.

Stage 2: Individualism, Instrumentalism & Exchange: The right behavior means acting in one's own best interests. For the child, the focus is away from the consequence but now more about self-interest and consequences are just risks.

- **Level 2: Conventional:** found in society; norms and conventions necessary to uphold society.

Stage 3: "Good boy/girl": Characterized by an attitude that seeks to do what will gain the approval of others (behaving the "right" way). Shared feelings, agreements, etc. have priority over individual interests. To the now teen, the focus is on interpersonal feelings, and going good is to help others.

Stage 4: Law and Order: Abiding by the law and responding to obligations of duty. It moves from local norms and role expectations to the larger social systems. To the young adult, the focus is now on the duties one holds to the society or group.

- **Level 3: Post-conventional:** felt not reached by the majority of adults everything is taken into consideration.

Stage 5: Social Contract: Understanding of social justice and interest in the welfare of others.

To the adult, their morals become basic rules (e.g. the protection of human life).

Stage 6: Principled Conscience (Universal Principles): Based on respect for universal principles and demands of individual conscience. To the adult, a just decision is met at everyone's best interest and places everyone equally.

Why are Kohlberg's ideas significant?

Kohlberg's theory brought together science and moral reasoning for the first time and still inspires research today. As children gain social and intellectual skills, they are better able to understand the complexities of right and wrong. Parents, especially boys, should be able to identify parts of this theory that apply to their sons at a particular age.

2.2. Influences on child development

In the last unit and in the previous section of this unit, how the child, family, and community interacts with each other, and what is a child and its developmental needs based on various developmental psychologists' theories were discussed respectively. Hence, the circumstances of these three elements influence child development positively or negatively. Thus, these points are sorted out as risk and protective factors for children's development as follows.

i. Child Risk Factors

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| A. Prematurity, birth anomalies | E. Temperament: difficult or slow to warm up |
| B. Genetic syndromes | F. Mental retardation/low intelligence |
| C. Exposure to toxins in utero | G. Childhood trauma |
| D. Chronic or serious illness | H. Antisocial peer group |

ii. parental/Family Risk Factors

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Insecure attachment | C. Single parenthood (with lack of support) |
| B. Parent: insecure adult attachment pattern | D. Harsh parenting, maltreatment |

- E. Family disorganization; low parental monitoring
- F. Social isolation, lack of support
- G. Domestic violence
- H. High parental conflict
- I. Separation/divorce, especially high-conflict divorce

iii. Social/environmental Risk Factors

- A. Poverty
- B. Lack of access to medical care, health insurance, and social services
- C. Parental unemployment
- D. Homelessness
- E. Inadequate child care
- F. Exposure to racism, discrimination

- J. Parental psychopathology
- K. Parental substance abuse
- L. Parental illness
- M. Death of a parent or sibling
- N. Foster care placement

iv. Child protective Factors

- A. Good health
- B. Personality factors: easy temperament, positive disposition, active coping style, positive self-esteem, good social skills, internal

- G. Poor schools
- H. Frequent change of residence and schools
- I. Exposure to environmental toxins
- J. Dangerous neighborhood
- K. Community violence
- L. Exposure to media violence

locus of control, the balance between help-seeking and autonomy

- C. Above-average intelligence
- D. History of adequate development
- E. Hobbies and interests
- F. Good peer relationships

v. Parental/Family Protective Factors

- A. Secure attachment; positive and warm parent-child relationship
- B. Parent: secure adult attachment pattern

- C. Parental support of the child in times of stress
- D. Household rules and structure; parental monitoring of child

- E. Support/involvement of extended family, including help with caregiving
- F. A stable relationship between parents
- G. Parental modeling of competence and good coping skills
- H. Family expectations of prosocial behavior
- I. High parental education

vi. Social/environmental protective

Factors

- A. Middle-class or above socioeconomic status
- B. Access to health care and social services
- C. Consistent parental employment
- D. Adequate housing
- E. Family religious faith and participation
- F. Good schools
- G. Supportive adults outside the family who serve as role models/mentors to child

2.2.1. The Nature VS. Nurture issues in Child Development

There is a debate on the influences of nature and nurture influences on human personality development. When it says Nature stands for the genes or biological influences of child development whereas on the nurture side, it is assumed that human development is largely influenced by the environment where the individuals live in. Or, scholars today classified human personality as a character trait and temperament. They argued that temperament is springing from human inborn traits or labeled as a biological part of human personality. Whereas they assumed that character trait are developed through the interaction of humans with their environment through time.

Moreover, as indicated in 2.2., the above scholars mentioned risk and protective factors for child development stems from the child himself, the family, and the community /environmental/ circumstances. Thus, one can conclude that both nature and nurture influence the development of the child. Or, it can be said that human development is the contribution of nature and nurture.

2.2.2. Peer, caregiver, and media influences on child development

As we explained, in the last and this unit as well as under its respective sections, child development is predicted by various contexts. These contexts broadly categorized as biological makeup of the developing children and the environment where he/she lives in. Therefore, peers, caregivers, and media are outside of the child but impact the development of the child negatively or positively. Of these influences:

Peer: The peer group is a microsystem in that it comprises relationships, roles, and activities. Peers are equals, individuals who are usually of the same gender, age, and social status and who share interests. Although outwardly the peer group appears to comprise equals, inwardly the dynamics of the peer group reveal that some members are more equal than others.

A. Interactions, dynamics, and social hierarchies in the peer group will be discussed later.

Experiences with peers enable children to acquire a wide range of skills, attitudes, and roles that influence their adaptation throughout life. Peer groups are significant socializers, contributing beyond the influence of family and school because:

- They satisfy certain belonging needs.
- They are often referred to as other socializing agents.
- They influence not only social development but cognitive and psychological development as well.

Today, as more mothers are being employed outside the home, more and more children are being cared for in group settings. Consequently, children are experiencing social interaction with peers today earlier and for longer periods than they were a generation ago. Also, school-age children and adolescents who are not supervised by adults after school are more likely to turn to their peers for support.

The Significance of Peers to Human Development

Peer groups are significant to human development because they satisfy certain basic needs: the need to belong to a group and interact socially, and the need to develop a sense of self (a personal identity). Belonging to a peer group enables one to have social interactions with others

and have experiences independent of parents or other adults. By interacting socially with others, we derive an opinion of ourselves. We think of ourselves as having pretty hair, cute freckles, or a large nose because others tell us so. We think of ourselves as clever, as fast runners, or as good at drawing by comparing our skills to those of others.

Generally, child development can be determined by peer interactions. For instance, Preschool children's social interactions are affected not only by how secure they feel in their attachment to their mothers but also by the willingness of adults to provide opportunities for social interaction. For example, where the family resides determines the number of same-age children living nearby. The willingness of parents to invite other children to their home or to take their child to another's home, and whether or not a child attends a preschool program, affect the amount of social interaction that can take place.

A. **Caretakers:** Children's well-being intrinsically linked with that of their parents: this means that the risks to which parents or other care-givers are exposed will also affect the children. More importantly, child development is contextual i.e., one cannot assume the healthy development of children without the circumstance of these contexts, such as primary, parents, families, and communities (caregivers) who are the first socializing agents.

Thus, as indicated in 2.2., under this unit, how protective and risk factors of parents/ families/ account for child development can be the best indicator of the influence of caretakers on child development. I.e., risk factors associated with parents negatively impact a child's holistic development. Whereas, protective factors facilitate the development of the child positively.

B. **Media:** Media is one of the immediate contexts that affect the development of the child in either dimension. Hence, caretakers should be aware of the characteristics of the media that allows their child to watch. Their regulation of media choice for the children should understand their developmental level. I.e., media have a much positive contribution to children's holistic developments, such as physical, social, and cognitive, and at the same time, it alters these developments inversely. Students, you can refer to your course of child and media if you want to have a further explanation of it.

2.3. Today's children emerging trends and the future: focus on Ethiopia

Dear learners, based on your knowledge obtained from your various courses regarding factors that influence children's development, and needs, please explain the emerging trends of today's children and the future based on their:

- *Physical development paces and needs to be gained from potential caregivers, and other services provider aiming to facilitate their healthy development.*
- *Psychological development paces, and its enabling and disabling factors upon with the scope of the fast-changing world across dimensions of human lives.*
- *Social development paces, and its enabling and disabling factors upon with the scope of the fast-changing world across dimensions of human lives.*

Having these in mind, please assume today's Ethiopian children, and emerging trends and the future based on:

- *Your understanding in contexts of your community's changing trends of parenting*
- *Your knowledge of child development theories that theorize the contexts and factors that facilitate children's development positively, or negatively.*