

Teacher's Guide/Exploring Childhood

# A Child's Eye View

Seeing Development



**Teacher's Guide/Exploring Childhood**

# **A Child's Eye View**

**Seeing Development**

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EDC School and Society Programs  
55 Chapel Street  
Newton, MA 02160

|   |                    |               |  |               |                 |  |                  |                 |                 |
|---|--------------------|---------------|--|---------------|-----------------|--|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| We Are a Family   | Rachel at Home     | Oscar at Home | Michelle at Home                         | Seiko at Home |                 | Around the Way with Kareema  | Rachel at School | Seiko at School |                 |
| The Inquirer  | Childhood Memories | Howie at Home | Commentaries on Family and Society Films | Craig at Home | Jeffrey at Home | Beyond the Front Door  | At the Doctor's  | Howie at School | Oscar at School |
| Teacher's Guide Explaining what is transmitted in care-giving interactions. |                    |               |  |               |                 | Teacher's Guide Exploring how experiences outside the family affect a child's development. |                  |                 |                 |

**Family and Society Module** *Considering the effects of family and society on the growth of a child.*

|  |                            |                    |                 |   |                   |   |              |               |                         |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|-------------------|---|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Gabriel Is Two Days Old  | Bill and Suzi: New Parents |                    |                 |   |                   | Clay Play   | Racing Cars  |               |                         |
| Looking At Development   | Directions in Development  | Making Connections | All in the Game | Child's Play  | Half a Year Apart | Children's Art  | Drawing Sort | Painting Time | Fear, Anger, Dependence |
| Teacher's Guide Learning about children's development and how to support it. |                            |                    |                 | Teacher's Guide Examining the meaning of play for children. |                   | Teacher's Guide Learning about children's development from their art experiences. |              |               | Teacher's Guide         |

**Seeing Development Module** *Determining children's needs and abilities at each age, what children need to grow, and*

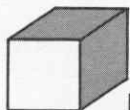
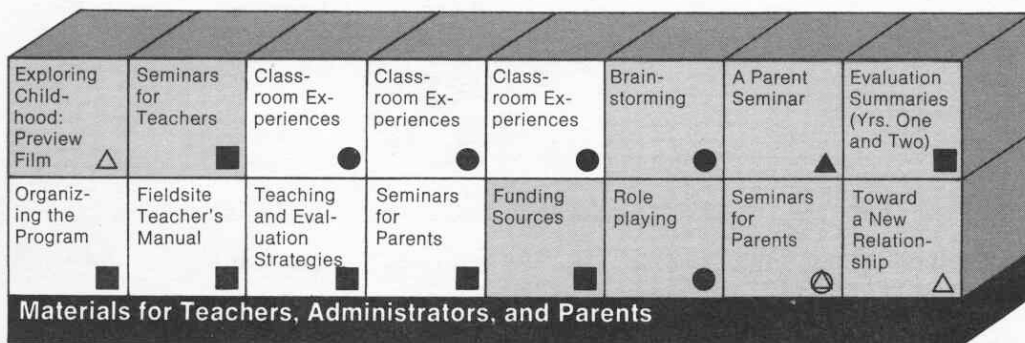
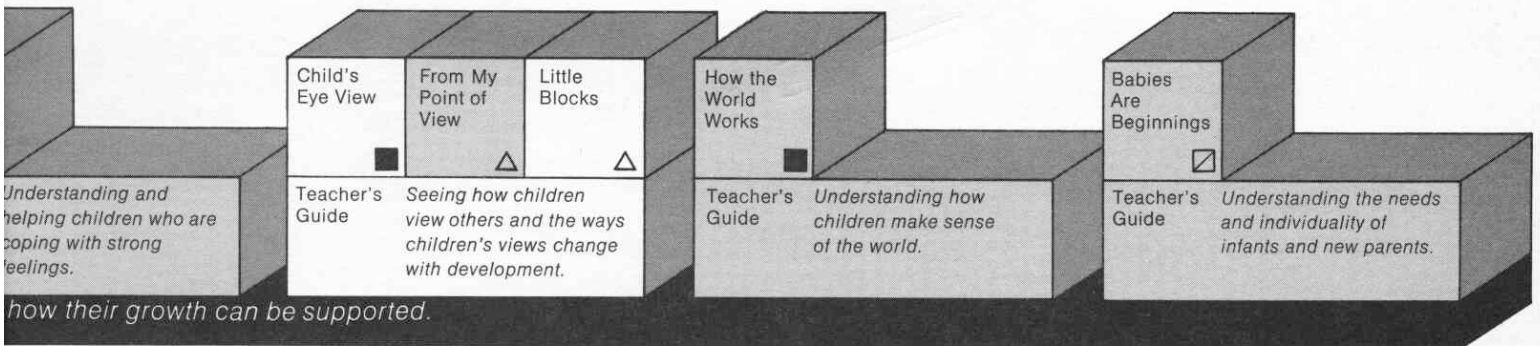
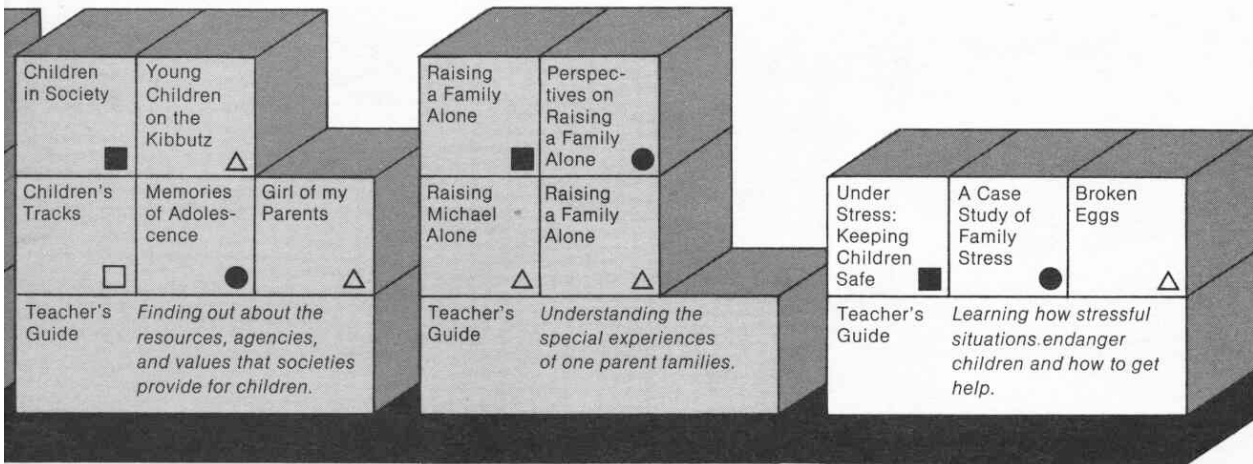
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|---|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| Helping Skills  | Helping Is ...            | Michael's First Day | Teacher, Lester Bit Me! | Water Tricks |                        |                  |   |  |                          |
| Getting Involved  | What Is a Preschool Like? | Storytime           | Being There             | Doing Things | What About Discipline? | What Is a Child? | No Two Alike  | Children with Special Needs Go to School | Sara Has Down's Syndrome |
| Teacher's Guide Preparing for work with children and learning ways to discuss field work. |                           |                     |                         |              |                        |                  | Teacher's Guide Examining feelings and developing skills for working with special needs children. |  |                          |

**Working with Children Module** *Preparing for work in fieldsites, and discussion of that work.*

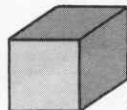
## Exploring Childhood

### Key

- |           |            |                        |
|-----------|------------|------------------------|
| ■ Booklet | △ Film     | ⊗ Filmstrip and Record |
| □ Poster  | ● Record   |                        |
| ⊞ Cards   | ▲ Cassette |                        |



Full Year Course Selection



Supplementary Materials



The full-year package of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials includes items selected from each module of the course. Important material from this unit which is not included in the full-year selection is: "From My Point of View."

This film may be obtained separately and used with this guide.

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ONE TEACHER'S PLAN FOR A CHILD'S EYE VIEW (20 Classes)

ORGANIZING QUESTIONS

How does a child's understanding of other people's points of view change with development?  
 How does a child's view shape the child's interactions with others?  
 How do adolescents deal with other people's points of view? How does this affect their work with children?

| <u>Suggested Activities*</u>  | <u>Class</u> | <u>Suggested Activities</u>   | <u>Class</u>  |
|---|--------------|---|---------------|
| Play "Password" (p. 3); distribute booklets. Discuss cover (p. 4) and "Understanding Others" (p. 3). Do "A Child's Eye View of What Is Fair," using guinea pig anecdote and debate (pp. 5-6).                                 | Class 1      | Discuss "Charles" (p. 17). Plan guessing games to play with children with a partner observing (p. 17). Do Larry and George's mutual problem (pp. 17-18). Have students select reading or film viewing for project (pp. 8, 25).  | Classes 10-12 |
| Discuss and role play Sally's dilemma (pp. 6-7), noting student decisions on the board. Prepare students for "Finding Out for Yourself" (p. 7). Review <i>Looking at Development</i> section, "Collecting" (p. 6).            | Classes 2-4  | Show and discuss last 2/3 of "Rachel at School." Discuss "A Child's Eye View of What Others Feel." Do "It Isn't Easy" (p. 20). Have students present results of Birthday Present Game, then add them to the development poster. | Classes 13-14 |
| Take a "blind walk" (p. 4). Read about Piaget's theory of egocentrism (p. 11 of student booklet). Do "A Child's Eye View of What Others See"; begin "A Child's Eye View of What Others Want" (p. 9).                          | Class 5      | Discuss Margaret and the apple (p. 20). How old do students think she is? Have students write descriptions of how they think a child sees them (pp. 21-22). Do "Your View and the Child's."                                     | Class 15      |
| View and discuss "From My Point of View" (p. 10). Prepare to do Birthday Present Game at sites (p. 14). Review <i>Looking at Development</i> , "Setting Up a Situation" (p. 10).  | Classes 6-8  | Do "Little Blocks" (pp. 22-24). Discuss providing help and empathy to someone whose actions you may disagree with. Review "Giving Help" and "Getting Help" from <i>Getting Involved</i> (p. 46).                                | Class 16      |
| Play "Guess Which Hand Has the Penny" (p. 4). Do "A Child's Eye View of What Others Think" (p. 16). Report on children's responses about what is fair; add responses to the development poster. Assign "Charles" as homework. | Class 9      | Do Carolyn's dilemma (p. 24). Have students make up and role play other dilemmas (p. 30). Have students present projects.   | Classes 17-19 |
|   |              | Consider adolescents' sense of self, referring to Erikson (student book, p. 28), Elkind (p. 27), and "Little Blocks." Discuss how it affects work with children.  | Class 20      |

\*Page numbers refer to teacher's guide unless otherwise indicated.

# Overview

The module Seeing Development asks the following questions of students:

What is development?

How does it change a person?

What are some differences and similarities between children and adults?

What are children's beliefs, abilities, interests, and fears, and how do these change with level of development?

What is special about the way I, as an adolescent, experience the world?

How have I developed and how am I developing now?

The goal of the Seeing Development module is to broaden the students' experience with children through insights about how children develop. The module attempts to help students see that a child's behavior at any one moment is a result of the child's past and may have an effect on how the child will develop in the future.

In order to think about these issues, students need to learn new ways to gather information about young children. These processes (collecting, setting up a situation) are applied throughout the module for the purpose of looking at children's play and art, how children view other people, how they explain the world, and how they feel.

## Goals

*A Child's Eye View* attempts to show how children view others and how their views change with development. It tries to

help students connect this information to their field work, and to apply it to their own views of others.

*Children's Art* and *Child's Play* are concerned with children's activities that reveal developmental patterns; *A Child's Eye View* more closely examines one of those developmental patterns--the way children progress from an awareness of only their own wants, thoughts, and feelings, to an ability to understand the point of view of others.

## Materials

The student booklet is divided into three major sections. "A Child's Eye View of What Is Fair" offers a concrete example of how children's point of view affects their behavior, in this case their judgment of fair actions in others. "Developing Awareness of Another's View" describes how children's point of view affects their understanding of what others see, want, think, and feel. "Your View and the Child's" asks students to think about situations in which they themselves consider the point of view of others: that of children at the fieldsite, friends, teachers, parents, etc.

## Relation to Other Materials

Two films, "From My Point of View" and "Little Blocks," provide students with opportunities to observe and analyze how egocentrism changes with age. Although films and booklets from all three modules contain materials that would enable students to explore how a child's understanding of others is affected by the egocen-

trism of childhood, several warrant specific mention. "Helping Skills" from *Getting Involved*, *What About Discipline?*, and *Fear, Anger, Dependence* provide students with opportunities to consider how a "child's eye view" affects problem situations at the fieldsite. *Looking at Development* offers help in setting up research situations and in relating what is learned to the "Directions in Development" poster. *Making Connections* offers opportunities for linking ideas from this unit to the rest of the course and to the larger context of Erikson's and Piaget's theories.

## Pedagogy

The best way to teach this unit is to help students work from their own experiences and from incidents and examples in the booklet and films toward an understanding of how children see others. To understand how this process works for the students, you should prepare by working through the booklet first on your own--actually answering the questions and drawing on your own experiences. This preparation will help you draw on student experience, keeping in mind that their perceptions will differ from your own.



# Understanding Others

**Purpose:** To help students realize their ability to consider that others have their own ideas, feelings, and ways of thinking.

**Materials:** *A Child's Eye View*, p. 4; buttons or pennies; words on slips of paper.

By now students have been working with children for some time. They are probably deeply involved in this work, perhaps liking the children and wanting to be liked by them, or wanting to understand the children, or feeling comfortable but not sure if their presence makes a difference to the children. Working from the immediateness of these experiences and the strength of these feelings, you can help students move toward a new understanding of children and a new feeling of confidence in themselves.

A good way to begin *A Child's Eye View* is to play "Password" or "Guess Which Hand Has the Penny," using the "Questions for Discussion" in this guide.

## Password

### PROCEDURE

Before class, make two different lists of five words which can be guessed through one-word clues. Clues can be associations, descriptions, synonyms, antonyms, or homonyms. For example:

### Word

giraffe  
mind  
doctor

touchdown  
candle  
traffic  
question  
farm

mayor  
milk  
desk

### Possible Clues

neck, long, Africa, zoo  
brain, thinking, find  
surgeon, medical, hospital,  
operation  
football, score  
light, wax, handle  
cars, rush-hour, expressway  
answer, query, test  
barn, animals, vegetables,  
tractor  
magistrate, city, boss  
cow, white, liquid  
school, seat, surface

You might ask four students who are perhaps familiar with the game to volunteer to do the activity first while the rest watch. Two partners compete against the other two as follows: One member of each pair is given the selected word. These players then take turns offering their partner a one-word clue.

Next, divide the class into pairs. Pass out the word lists so that each partner has a different list and has not seen the other's list. Tell students to help their partners guess the words by giving clues of only one word. Gesturing or words that include the correct word in them (e.g., "farmer" as clue for "farm") are not allowed. A record of the clues given will be useful in later class discussions.

### Discussion

How did you decide what clues to give your partner? How many clues did it take you to guess a word? Why? Did knowing

your partner help? How? How do you account for differences in the clues used by different pairs?

## Guess Which Hand Has the Penny

This familiar children's game may strike your students as "child's play." Encourage them to play, though, so they can compare their game with the children's later. Tell them that the purpose of playing it is to figure out what is involved that is beyond the ability of young children.

The class again divides into pairs. One partner hides a penny in one hand, while the other partner tries to "guess which hand...." Play the game three or four more times.

### Discussion

How did you decide which hand to hide the penny in? How did you decide which hand to guess? If you played "Password" with the same partner, did your experience in the previous game help in this game? How? How is considering another person's point of view different in the two games (helping versus fooling)?

## Introducing the Booklet

After students have tried these games, distribute the booklets and introduce the unit more formally. The student booklet cover presents an example of how one student was curious about children's behavior. Similar first-person journal accounts are used throughout the booklet; they can be used as a touchstone for discussing student experiences. Ask students what they might say to this student and what similar confusions they have felt.

Have students read the list of some ideas (p. 4 of the student booklet) about what considering another's point of view enables people to do. They can think of examples from their own experience, or from the behavior of the children they

work with. For example, how did considering another's point of view help them to get their ideas or information across better?

### OTHER INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS

Activities like the two games described above could be used several times throughout the unit to introduce the class and get students thinking about what is involved in figuring out another person's point of view. Ask students what guessing games they can invent that require the guessers to know something about the leader. For example, the leader might say, "I'm thinking of something I would like to buy; to do; something I did or saw yesterday; some place I would like to go; someone I know, like, am mad at." You might offer the winner a simple prize like a soft drink. Following each of these games, the class should talk briefly about what was involved in guessing someone else's point of view.

Another activity, working in pairs again, is to blindfold one person and have the other person direct him or her through an obstacle course (e.g., chairs on a path to a door), or around the school. Do it again, switching roles. What do the leaders have to do to help the blindfolded partner?

Students might like to try some of the above activities at the fieldsite and compare their own ability to read someone's mind with the children's ability. How are their reactions different? Why?

# A Child's Eye View of What Is Fair

**Purpose:** To show how a child's ability to consider another person's point of view determines how he or she judges fair actions in him- or herself and in others.

**Materials:** *A Child's Eye View*, pp. 5-10.

Ask students to write in their journals their own definition of the word "fair." What is the difference between fair and unfair? Several students could then read their ideas aloud.

Read the introductory paragraph (p. 5) aloud with students. Having considered their own definitions of fairness, they can look at examples of what children mean by fair. What differences do they find? For young children "fair" first means "in accordance with what I want."

As a class, generate a list of possible responses to the children in the guinea pig example (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 5) and to those in the introductory paragraph. An alternative to this brainstorming exercise would be to ask each student to write one or two responses to each situation in their journals. In either case, record the suggestions on the board.

Students write in journals and then discuss what each response would mean to children:

- How well would children understand it?
- How would it make them feel?
- What values would be transmitted?

## A Child's Eye View of What Is Fair

Somewhere around age three or four, children begin to use the phrase, "It isn't fair." To a child, it isn't fair when someone else goes first; it isn't fair for an older brother or sister to stay up later; it isn't fair for an adult to drink soda when the child must drink milk; it isn't fair for the baby to be held or cuddled more frequently; it isn't fair to be stopped from interrupting adults' conversation. Whose point of view does the child consider in each of these cases?

Children's early idea of fairness is reflected in the following example, which occurred at a fieldsite.

The December vacation is about to begin and arrangements must be made for someone to take the guinea pig home over the holiday. Jimmy had asked the teacher and also his parents if he could bring Spaghetti home. He'd brought a note from his parents giving their permission. When the other children hear that Jimmy is going to have Spaghetti home for ten days, they all want to have her.  
"I want to take Spaghetti home," screams Tim.  
Alice and Kent are both crying for their rights in the case.  
Richard won't let go of the guinea pig.  
"It isn't fair!" Francis storms.

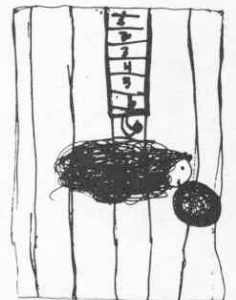
### What Would You Do?

- Brainstorm how you would respond to these children.
- Look through your list of responses and explain what you think each response would mean to a young child.
- Suggest how you think the child might respond to each.

### Questions for Discussion

Can you think of any similar incidents from your own experience with young children? What happened? Did the child seem able to consider any point of view other than his or her own?

Using the example above and others students have given, what do you think "fair" means to a young child?



Possible responses and meanings might be:

| <u>Possible Responses</u>  | <u>Possible Significance for Child</u>  |
|--|---|
| Say "Jimmy asked first," or "Jimmy has a note and is prepared to take care of the guinea pig." | Learns that whoever asks first is rewarded; is encouraged to be competitive; does not understand need to be prepared. |
| Say "You're right. I should have announced it and drawn lots. Next time I will."               | Feels recognized; is confused by word "lots"; finds "next time" infinite or meaningless.                              |
| Try to distract the children with another activity.  | Learns that situation is not so important; feels that importance of situation not understood.                         |

To consider how children might react to each of the suggested responses, students could act out each situation with different role players trying different adult responses and other role players answering as the children. Possible children's responses might be: crying; repeating, "It isn't fair"; feeling comforted; being distracted; becoming aggressive.

#### Discussion

In their journals, students should write answers to the questions for discussion (student booklet, p. 5). They might share their own thoughts about what "fair" means to a child, but you should not try to draw any definitive conclusions out of this discussion. The important task is to explore and start thinking about the questions, which will be considered again at the end of the "...What Is Fair" section.

## An Old Debate

The opposing views are introduced to help students consider the possible bases of moral judgments. Is it because people are naturally good or evil, or does it depend on people's ability or

willingness to understand another person's point of view?

You could give specific examples of teenagers' or children's behavior and ask *why* students think these examples occur.

For example: Why do students think children would trample another child's sand castle? Grab a toy? Squash a caterpillar? Why might teenagers call each other names? Steal from lockers? Do they do it to be mean? Are people born mean (reflecting belief that people are naturally bad)?

Do they do it because they have seen destructiveness on TV? Because someone else did it to them? Would they have been "good" if they had never seen "bad" examples (reflecting belief that people are naturally good, but are corrupted by the world)?

If students favor one side more than the other, you could play devil's advocate and argue against their position. For an example of a classroom discussion of this topic, listen to the record "Seeing Development Classroom Experiences," side 2, band 3.

## How You Think About Fairness

To examine their own process of making a moral decision and to practice trying to see a situation from several points of view, students are asked to read an unsolved dilemma (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 7) and decide what they would do. They could write their solutions individually in journals and/or discuss the problem in small groups, and then come together to share their responses.

You might divide students into groups of four and five, assign the parts of Sally, the four-year-old, the old man (and other characters as needed), and ask students to role play their responses to the situation. The entire class could then report and discuss the outcomes developed in each group.

Throughout these discussions, students' decisions and reasons should be briefly recorded on the board.



# Issues in Judging Fairness

Students can look at the notes on the board and label those that seem to address the issues of rewards and punishment, weighing values, motives, approval, authority, and universal principles.

Students have now seen some examples of how children judge what is fair and have had an opportunity to examine their own judgments. They could compare their judgments with the children's by comparing the extent to which children addressed the same issues they addressed. What accounts for the differences? The next section offers one explanation.

Children treat questions of fairness differently at different levels of development. Page 9 of the student booklet describes how children's concept of fairness changes with their increasing ability to understand the needs of others.

In preparation, the teacher might read the examples of early ways children view fairness (p. 8) with the students, and discuss the ways each child is defining fairness. For example, how does the three-year-old who says "because I wanted to" decide what is fair? Students should realize that children who do not consider others are not selfish but rather are unable to realize that other people are different from themselves, and have their own rights, interests, feelings, wishes, and concerns. They can practice their understanding of children's developing sense of fairness by discussing the anecdote of Bernice's boat (p. 9).

## Finding Out for Yourself

At their fieldsites, students have an opportunity to test both the booklet's statements about how children of different ages consider motives and their own conclusions about how children would solve the story about Bernice and her boat. Their observations should be entered on index cards which follow the format illustrated on page 10 of *A Child's Eye View*.

### SETTING UP A SITUATION

Students can fill in cards with incidents they remember from the fieldsite or have noted already in journals. If students prefer, they can "set up a situation" by asking children how they would respond to the "Bernice" story, to the broken cups question (p. 10), or to similar questions revealing children's thoughts about motives devised by students. Students who observe one or two children over time to follow their development should include these children in this situation.

### DATA FILE

Once students have filled in the cards and discussed *developmental* differences revealed by children's responses (considering as well some causes of *individual* differences discussed in *Children's Art* and *Making Connections*: uneven rate of development, environment and experience, mood and temperament), they could add their cards to the information being filed for the data poster.

Based on their observations and data collection, students should return to the question of what is "fair" to a child and summarize now what they have seen at the fieldsite and read in "A Child's Eye View of What Is Fair."

How do children at different stages of development deal with questions of fairness? Why do these differences occur?

|  |
|--|
| Child  |
| Age  |
| Response   |
| Did he/she seem to consider someone else's motives?<br>(give evidence)         |
|  |
| Did he/she seem to consider someone else's needs or wishes?<br>(give evidence) |
|  |
| Did he/she seem to consider someone else's feelings?<br>(give evidence)        |
|  |



# Developing Awareness of Another's View

**Purposes:** To examine what children understand about the experience of others (what others see, want, feel, think, and know), and how that understanding changes with development.

To build an understanding of how egocentrism in children affects what they do.

**Materials:** *A Child's Eye View*, pp. 11-27; film, "From My Point of View" (13 minutes); films from other units, "Helping Is..." and "Rachel at School."

In exploring children's understanding of fairness, students have already looked at one effect of children's growing ability to consider other people's point of view. Now students will look at the meaning of egocentrism and the effect this has on other areas of children's interactions with people.

In discussing Jean Piaget's use of the word "egocentric" be sure that students do not confuse children's *inability* to take another's point of view with an egocentric adult's *unwillingness* to. Rather than thinking that children are intentionally selfish, students should begin to see that children's apparently selfish behavior is often a factor of their level of devel-

opment. Such an understanding can help students both to be more tolerant of children and to begin to help children see other points of view when they are ready to.

## FURTHER READING

While discussing this section, students might choose from a number of stories told from a child's point of view: *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens; *A Member*

## Developing Awareness of Another's View

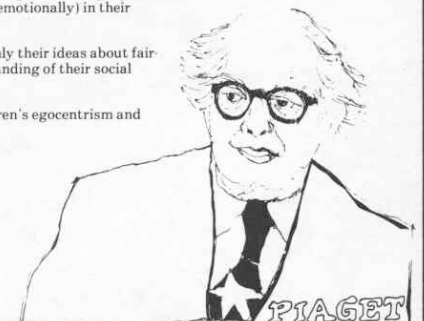
When children become able to take into consideration someone's good or bad intentions, they have made some major discoveries. Gradually these discoveries free the child from what has come to be called the *egocentrism* of early childhood—that is, from being unable to see the world from any other viewpoint than their own. Egocentrism means that stage of development at which children can consider things from only one point of view, their own.

### EGOCENTRISM: A CHILD'S EYE VIEW

Jean Piaget explored the thought and actions of children by closely observing children's conversations, game playing, and efforts at moral reasoning. He concluded that during the first seven years, a child gradually becomes *less egocentric*, that is, more and more capable of understanding that other people see the world (physically, mentally, and emotionally) in their own way.<sup>2</sup>

Children's egocentrism affects not only their ideas about fairness, but all aspects of their understanding of their social world.

Let's look at various aspects of children's egocentrism and how it affects their behavior.



of the Wedding by Carson McCullers; *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain; *A Death in the Family* by James Agee; *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee; *Southerner*, a novel by William H. Armstrong; and "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," a short story by Conrad Aiken. At the end of the section, students should report on how the child's viewpoint affected the story.

## A Child's Eye View of What Others See

The section on children's views of others begins with young children's assumptions about what other people are physically able to see. It is thought that very young children are not aware that others exist separately from them. Slightly older children think that other people see exactly what they are seeing no matter where the other people are; eventually children realize that other people see things differently depending on where they are.

In the examples in *A Child's Eye View* (pp. 12, 13), Alice, who is playing hide-and-seek, thinks the student can't see her because she can't see the student; a little boy standing across the room would not realize that someone standing in front of the window could see more of the ground and sky than he can; Marjorie would think that Grandpa could see her nod at the telephone because she was aware that she was nodding; the little girl making the visit would think her new friend could not see her father because she couldn't see him; Benjamin thinks his babysitter can see his yellow truck because he can; and the boy in the photograph thinks his mother won't see the icing on his face because he can't see it.

### Discussion

In thinking about the following questions, students can consider the examples in the booklet, examples from the fieldsite, and examples from their own childhood. Do they ever mistakenly assume someone else sees what they see? Have they ever asked someone driving a car to look at something outside, forgetting that the driver would not know where they were looking?

## A Child's Eye View of What Others Want

To understand what someone else wants, a child would need to interpret the person's mood, taste, intentions, etc. The process everyone undergoes in attempting to understand others assumes a deep level of conscious thought. Young children have not begun to think through the desires of others. Read the first four paragraphs of p. 14 together aloud.

### Discussion

Discuss the cartoon of the child giving mommy bubble gum as a birthday present. The child giving the gum is being generous, unselfish, and egocentric at the same time.

Since young children tend to see things according to their own tastes, they may feel that if a gift is pleasing to them, it will be pleasing to others. "If it's likeable to me, then it's likeable." Ask students:

How does the child perceive *pleasure* (the happiness that is derived from something you like), *giving* (the willingness to give an object that you like to someone else), and *appropriateness* (the utility of the object for the person receiving it) of a gift?

Is the child selfish or egocentric? What is the difference?

How do students decide what gifts are appropriate for their friends?

# "From My Point of View"

## STUDYING CHILDREN'S EGOCENTRISM

Students should examine the film, "From My Point of View," to see the extent to which children aged two-and-a-half to five can consider another person's point of view. The film begins by showing very brief clips of three children two-and-a-half-year old, then looks in more depth at four children. Notes can be made on what these four children do, perhaps on second viewing of the film.

Darren, 5:

Joy, 3:

Benjamin, almost 3:

Julie, 2-1/2:

What do the children's responses to the two games in the film, "Teddy-on-His-Head" and "Birthday Present Store," tell you about the children's ability to consider other points of view? To consider what others want? What evidence of centering on oneself do you notice?

The games played in this film are based on research conducted by John Flavell and his associates\* to examine Jean Piaget's ideas about the extent to which young children consider other people's points of view. It was part of a large study of egocentrism in children, which found that children around three years old and under had difficulty seeing other people's point of view in situations such as "Birthday Present Store."

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\*John Flavell *et al.*, *The Development of Role-Taking and Communication Skills in Children* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968).

## FILM TRANSCRIPT: FROM MY POINT OF VIEW

Susan: *Why does a child choose a toy to give to a parent? We wanted to find out more about how the age of children affects their ability to consider another person's point of view. So we developed two little games-- suggested to us by the work of a researcher, John Flavell.*

*I played these games with several preschool children. You'll catch on by watching what I do. Darren was first. He's just turning five.*

Okay, we're going to play a game. It's sort of a silly game. Underneath here is somebody. See if you can tell who this somebody is.

Darren: It's a bear.

Susan: It's a bear. Hard to miss that, isn't it? He's got a big fat tummy. Is he a real bear?

Okay, he can do funny things. He can dance. He can run. He can flip over. And now what's he doing?

Darren: He's standing on his head.

Susan: Okay, now he's lying down, he's resting because he's all tired out. Good bear.

Can you make him dance?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: Can you make him stand on his head?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: There he is! Okay, let's give him a rest because his ears are getting tired. Okay? Now let's see. Oh, I think I'd like to see him do it again. Can you show me him standing on his head?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: There he is standing on his head.

Darren: Whoops!

Susan: "Whoops" because he almost fell. It's hard to stand on your head, isn't it? Can you do that?

Darren: No.

Susan: Can you make him dance so I can see him dance?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: *Thinking of my point of view, Darren easily turned the teddy around so I could see it.*

Okay, let's put him over there and we'll play another kind of thing. We were just asking you about your birthday. Does your daddy have a birthday too?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: And your mummy?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: Okay. Supposing we played store and we pretended that you had a whole lot of money and you were going to go and buy some birthday presents for your mummy and your daddy and for Stevie and maybe even for me. Okay?

Darren: Okay.

Susan: Do you know what all these things are?

Darren: Pipe, shirt, book, and what is this again?

Susan: Well, I think this is called a Raggedy Andy, sort of a little boy doll. There's a book called *Benjamin Bunny*. See the bunny with the hat on? Okay. Whose birthday should we buy for first?

Darren: My brother's. It's this. (Chooses.)

Susan: Why are you going to buy your brother the truck?

Darren: Because...because!

Susan: Just because? Okay. Now let's pretend that it's your mother's birthday. What would you get for her?

Darren: I'd get this for her.

Susan: Okay, we'll get that. We did your mother. We didn't do your father. What would you get for him?

Darren: I'll get these.

Susan: Why are you going to get that?

Darren: Because I want to.

Susan: Because you want to?

Darren: Yeh.

Susan: *Darren's gifts suggest that he was considering the likely preferences of his mother, brother, and father. But his reasoning is not yet clear. It's just "because," or more egocentrically, "because I want to." I tried the games with Joy, who's just three.*

Stand up and sit down. Look at that! And then he can also stand on his head. And he can lie down. Can you make him lie down? Sure.

Can you stand him on his head so I can see him standing on his head?

Mother: Susan can't see that.

Susan: I can't see him standing on his head. Can you make it so I can see him standing on his head? Can you make it so I can see him standing on his feet? Oh, that's

really kind of nice orange there.  
But I can't see the teddy.

Would you like to sort of play,  
sort of playing that you went  
to a store to buy some presents  
for your mommy and daddy?

What's that?

Joy: A tie.

Susan: What's that?

Joy: A Raggedy Ann.

Susan: A Raggedy Ann.

He's going to have to lean on  
the trucks.

What's that?

Joy: Mittens.

Susan: What's that?

Joy: Dolly.

Susan: Now, would you like to pretend  
that you're going to the store  
and you're going to buy a birth-  
day present for mummy? Would  
you like to do that? You can  
pretend that all these things  
are at the store. What would  
you like to buy for your mummy?  
You have lots of money. What  
would you like to get for her?

Joy: This.

Susan: You'd like to get that for her?  
Why would she like that?

*In these games, Joy saw the  
world pretty much from her own  
point of view. But she was  
willing to play my game.  
Benjamin, on the other hand, at  
three, was absorbed in his own  
interest. His mind was on the  
trucks that he knew were under  
the table.*

Can you make the teddy bear

dance on his head?

Benjamin: Uh uh.

Susan: No? Can you make him dance on  
his feet? You can't. Oh dear.  
Poor teddy bear. Now he's just  
resting.

Benjamin: Play under here.

Susan: We will in a minute.

Benjamin, show me the teddy bear  
dancing on his feet. I can't  
see the teddy bear. Can you  
see the teddy bear? Can I see  
the teddy bear? There he is!  
Can you show him to me dancing  
on his feet? You're not going to  
show him to me dancing on his  
feet? No. Okay, let's put the  
teddy bear over there. We can  
make him dance later, maybe.  
Whose birthday do you want to  
buy a present for?

Benjamin: Me.

Susan: For yourself. Okay, let's buy  
a present for you first. What  
are you going to buy for your-  
self?

Benjamin: I'm going to buy two of them.

Susan: You're going to buy two of them  
for yourself.

*2 1/2-year-old Julie was full of  
curiosity. It took a little  
coaxing to get her to do what I  
was interested in.*

Jimmy's a bear, and he's got  
orange paper on his back for  
resting.

Mother: No, don't take it apart, honey.

Susan: And this bear is a very tricky  
bear.

Julie: There's a hole.

Susan: It comes apart. That's right.



When we're all finished, you can have the bear, all right?

Mother: Then you can take it apart, all right?

Susan: Okay. Here Julie, do you want to see the bear stand up?

Julie: Yeh.

Susan: See him standing up and dancing? Let's put him on the table again and give him a little rest. Now, look at what I'm going to do. He's a very clever bear. Now what's he doing?

Julie: He's kicking his legs.

Susan: He's kicking his legs in the air. Yes, and standing on his head. Right. He's very tired. His head is tired so he's going to rest again. There he is. Can you make him stand on his head?

Julie: What's in here?

Mother: Don't take it apart, honey. You can take it apart later on. Okay. Can you make the bear stand on his head?

Susan: Could you show him to *me* standing up?

Julie: Yes I can. And then I can sit him down.

Susan: Oh, wait a minute. I can't see him. There he is sitting up. Isn't he a cute bear?

Julie: I can see you.

Susan: You can see me--and I can see you too. Now, can you show him to me standing up? Can you show *me* the teddy bear?

Now I can see him standing up. Oh what a beautiful bear! And I can see you behind him too. Yeh. Now he's all tired out.

I think that bear would like to see us play another game.

*With a little help, Julie learned to show me the bear. But with gifts, her own interests determined her choices.*

You're going to buy the truck for your mommy?

Julie: Yeh.

Susan: Okay. What would you pick for your daddy from all these things?

Julie: I want to buy a candy.

Susan: Why is that?

Julie: Because...I want to buy this truck.

Susan: You want to buy the truck for your daddy?

Julie: Yeh. (Picks up doll.) This is for my daddy.

Susan: That's for your daddy.

Julie: No. That's for my mummy.

Susan: That's for your mummy. What would you like to buy for me? Because it's going to be my birthday very soon. Would you get me a present from this store?

Julie: Yeh. I'm going to get you candy.

Susan: Some candy.

Julie: Yeh.

Susan: That's a nice present.

Julie: Who cut this?

Susan: Well, the person who made the doll cut that.

Okay, how about a present if it was your birthday? What would your mommy get for you, if it

was your birthday?

Julie: She will get me candy.

Susan: *After the game was over, we kept our promise.*

*Egocentrism changes with age, though it never leaves us completely. But with development, people become more able to consider several points of view at once.*

## Birthday Present Game

A second purpose of the film is to enable students to observe the way a researcher conducts these games, to help them in setting up inquiries of their own.

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students are *not* being asked to conduct research on children nor to corroborate the data found in other research. Rather, "Birthday Present Store" is suggested because children and students can enjoy playing it, it can be appropriate to other regular fieldsite activities, and it can help students further understand how children view what others want.

### ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

While conducting the game does not prove anything definitive, it can acquaint students with some of the tools a researcher must use in gathering data. Ask students to consider the role of the researcher, Susan, in the film and to think about how another researcher might go about getting more reliable data. Possible alternatives might be: sample more children; develop other similar tasks; separate the boys from the girls; use consistent behavior and the same words for every child; have mothers absent or silent.

Since Susan was less concerned with getting scientifically accurate data than she was with involving and responding to each child, her role was different from that of a regular researcher. Students will have similar concerns in playing "Birthday Present Store" at the fieldsite and can discuss Susan's role in the film, using

the strategies they thought successful and changing those they felt unsuccessful.

One way to add to the flow of the process and the rapport between students and children in this game is to be aware of the background material pertinent to the student's questions. Susan knew all the children except Julie, and she talked with both Julie and her mother before the filming began. Her questions showed that she was familiar with the children's families, and knew whether the child had a brother, sister, etc.

### PREPARING FOR THE ACTIVITY

To prepare for conducting this activity at the fieldsite, have students discuss the following points in light of the film and with the fieldsite teachers. They also might role play the activity in class.

*Select an appropriate area of the room.*

Students need a minimum amount of distraction if they hope to get the children's natural responses to the task. What might have distracted the children in the film (lights, cameramen, presence of mothers)? Distractions at the fieldsite such as nearby noisy activities or imminent lunchtime could make it inappropriate to play the game.

*Plan ahead for the number of children.*

Students observing one or two children over time to follow their development should include these children in the game.

*Use appropriate items for gift giving.*

Students should be sure to have available a range of items appropriate to their questions, which a child could choose when considering a gift for various adults. Students may have to provide these items, or the fieldsite may have props that enable them to create a very realistic store. Children may join in in establishing such a store. Or the game could be conducted using the entire fieldsite classroom as a store.

*Create an atmosphere for playing the game.*

Conversation is one method for promoting a relaxed atmosphere and may help children to feel free to make a choice according to their own feelings. For example, in the film, Susan says to Darren, "We've been talking about your birthday. When is your daddy's birthday?" Nondirective cues in conversation can also help to relax the children. When Susan wants a child to lay the bear down, she says, "Let's give him a rest."

*Follow the child's viewpoint and interests.*

If the children seem to want to do something else, as was the case with Julie and Benjamin, try to consider their point of view. Is there a way to encourage them to play? For example, when Julie begins to play her own game of hiding behind the teddy bear, Susan joins in. If a conflict arises between the demands of the activity and the child's needs and desires, students should put the child's needs first.

*Use fantasy play.*

Susan treats the paper teddy bear as though it can actually do things or be hurt or tired. Julie does this too when she says, "I can make him sit," and proceeds to do so. Students might capitalize on the children's enjoyment of fantasy by saying, "I am the storekeeper," and by taking notes as though recording a bill of sale. Ask students to recall the sequence "Traffic Ticket" and "Playing on the High School Field" from the film "Helping Is..." and the story "Water Restaurant" from *Getting Involved* for examples of teenagers fantasizing with children.

*Consider egocentrism other than that tested by the game.*

Besides their responses to the tasks Susan gave them, the children showed variation in their ability to go along with what someone else wanted. Whereas Darren played the games easily, Benjamin and Julie had a hard time remembering that Susan wanted them to do something when they had something else they wanted to do. Young children have a kind of one-track mind.

*Consider your own egocentrism.*

Ask students if they think Susan behaved egocentrically at any point. Did she always keep in mind the children's point of view, even as she tried to accomplish her own goals? What other points of view might she have also had on her mind? That of the parents present? The filmmakers? The curriculum developers? The students who would watch the film? What egocentric concerns might students have when they play the game at the fieldsite? When might it be valuable for students trying this game to put their own point of view above the children's?

*Take notes.*

By "writing up sales" as "storekeeper," the student can take notes. Discuss in class the format and use of the chart (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 15) before students conduct the game at the fieldsite. In order to minimize the amount of writing required during the activity, students should copy a similar chart with appropriate headings in their journals or on 4 x 6 cards ahead of time. Responses need to be recorded while paying attention to the children and the activity, since it is important to keep the flow of the idea. The game can be played in pairs so that one student can play the game with children while the other observes and takes notes.

*Interpret the children's choices later.*

Being aware of why a child chose a particular item for a particular person may give students insight into the child's perception of others. Sometimes when the student asks the young child why he or she made a particular choice, the only response is "because." There may be several reasons for this: the child may truly not know why he or she made the choice; the child may lack the vocabulary to express the reasons for the choice; the child may not be aware of what you need to know, or may assume that you have whatever information you need to complete his or her thought. These are signs that the child is not yet able to take your point of view--to read your mind.

Discussion

After students have tried the game at their fieldsites, ask them to compare the children's reactions at the different sites and in the film. Be sure students realize that their findings needn't agree with those in the film and may not, for a variety of reasons discussed earlier (children's mood, distractions, etc.). Students' own observations and conclusions about children's egocentrism are the object of conducting this game.

## A Child's Eye View of What Others Think

In looking at this section consider how children become better at communicating as they become less egocentric.

Ask students if they have ever attempted to explain or relate some information to someone they thought would understand but who did not. Wanting to communicate, they continued to try. What are they assuming? If they abandon the struggle after the first attempt, what are they assuming?

### OTHER PEOPLE'S KNOWLEDGE FOOLING OTHERS

These two headings are related since it is difficult to fool someone if you are unaware of the knowledge the person possesses. To convey this concept you might introduce a diagram (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 29) to demonstrate to students how necessary it is to be aware of what someone can think about before "fooling someone" can take place.

What one individual is aware of:



What another individual is aware of:



The first individual becomes aware of what the second individual is aware of:



The first individual becomes aware that the second individual is aware of what the first individual is aware of:





# Charles

Teachers may assign this story (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 17) to be read at home and ask students to write one sentence or paragraph about Laurie and one about his parents. To be sure that students understand both the story and what it says about egocentrism, these sentences should concern how Laurie and his parents each view Charles, and what each knows about Charles.

## Discussion

Discussing the story in class, be sure students are clear about *what happens* in the story. Why did Laurie talk constantly about a naughty Charles if there was no Charles at the school? Be sure students understand that Laurie invents Charles--perhaps to test his parents' reaction to Charles's behavior, or because he feels guilty and doesn't want to admit even to himself what he is doing or wants to do--or perhaps to avoid his parents' anger.

Students may then share their responses to the homework assignment orally or by posting some sentences on the board or oaktag. These sentences are the students' perceptions of the various points of view in the story.

Consider to what extent each participant in the story is aware of the others' points of view.

How does Laurie demonstrate his growing ability to see his parents' point of view?

How are Laurie's actions building his understanding of his parents' point of view?

Find examples in the story that indicate that Laurie is indirectly letting his parents know about his behavior, thus testing their reactions and finding out their point of view. For example:

"He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting." (No response from parents.)

"He spoke insolently to his father."  
(Parents act casual.)

"The teacher spanked a boy." (Parents' response is anxious and questioning... What...Who...)

Laurie whispers "word" in his father's ear. (Laurie has not yet dared to say the word out loud, but he is filtering his parent's reaction.)

## FIELDSITE GAMES

Games can show instances where young children are testing and growing in their ability to understand the thoughts of others.

Having read the example of a student playing the game "Guess Which Hand Has the Penny" with a child, allow a few moments in class for students to play the game again themselves or to recall their thought process when they played it before. On their next visit to the fieldsite, students might play this game with one or more of the children and compare their observations of the children with the student's observations of Jack. They should record their conclusions in their journals. Do they agree with this student's explanation of why Jack played that way?

## Considering Mutual Problems

To see how growing out of egocentrism affects how one acts with others, this section asks students to compare the probable responses of teenagers and young children to a similar situation. If students have a similar firsthand experience, they might share it with the class without telling the outcome and let the class consider that situation.

Students may think that teenagers are rarely egocentric and are usually able to share the concerns of their friends. However, while teenagers and adults are aware of other people's concerns, no one is able to act on this awareness at all times. Students have considered this briefly when discussing the film, "From My Point of View," and will do so again in "Egocentrism in Adults," page 30.



## SMALL GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

To use the situation provided (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 23), one student might read the incident to the entire class. The class can then divide into groups of four or five to answer the question "Which playground?" Some groups should make Larry's decision and some George's. Each group should appoint a recorder. Students could invent personality factors for Larry and George and information about their past experiences together to aid them in making their decisions. In their report to the class, they should keep track of how these factors affected their decision.

### Discussion

Using the notes taken, each recorder should first tell the group decision, then the relevant character traits and past experiences that students invented. Other group members can then answer the question, "Why did you make the decision you did?" Help students to see how past behavior (character traits) coupled with language were used to read the thoughts of others.

The second question limits the moves the boys might make by assigning the age of five to Larry and George. At this age, children are unlikely to be able to think through someone's thoughts, much less what someone else would think *they* were thinking. Although their friendship would be

a consideration, each boy would probably not even ask himself "Which playground?" but would simply go where he wanted to go and be surprised not to find his friend there.

### JOURNAL WRITING

Ask students to use thought bubbles like those below to develop a diagram concerning the decision-making process in which they were just involved.

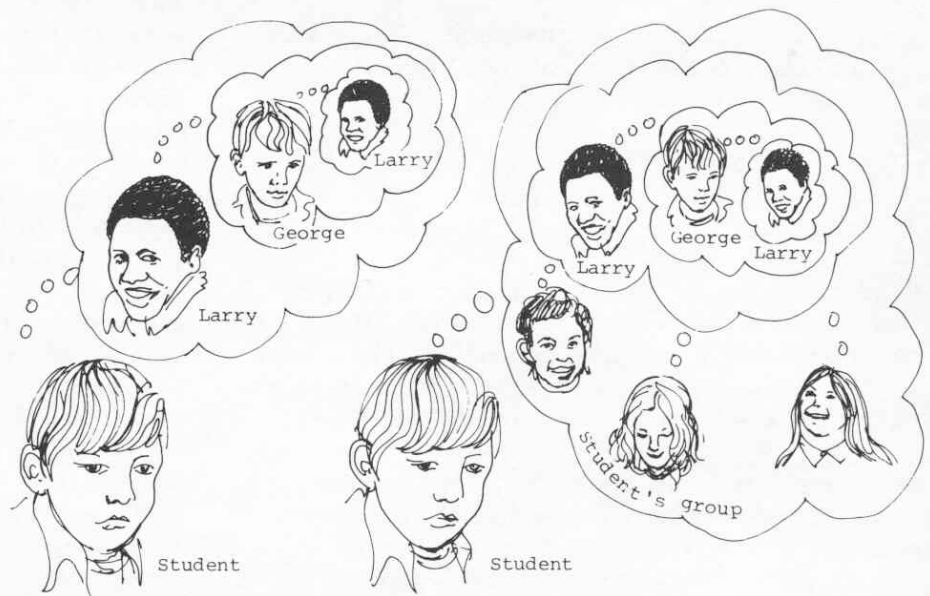
Students can compare and explain their diagrams to others in their group.

- How would the diagrams be different if each member of the students' group had a different solution to the problem?
- If one of the members of the group was another member's boyfriend or girlfriend?

In the third question, since the teenager should be able to reason that the child will probably follow the child's own wishes, they should meet easily.

Students might enjoy drawing bubble diagrams for such cases, or for you during the small group activity. (Supply a very large sheet of paper for that!)

For those making Larry's decision, diagrams might be like these:



# A Child's Eye View of What Others Feel

At a point in children's development, they realize that their own emotions and desires are separate from the emotions and desires of others, and with this realization comes the ability to feel sympathy toward others.

Students may have experienced incidents at the fieldsite similar to the one described (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 24) between Jill and Billy. As students discuss such incidents they should keep in mind that they are growing in their awareness of the individual personalities of the children at the fieldsite, and they can base their decisions about Billy and Jill on that awareness.

Then ask students to write answers to each of the three questions about Johnny and Gina's reactions to Steve's fall (p. 24). Students who wrote that Johnny and Gina would have the same response could read their responses for each and tell why. Students who had different responses for each of the children could tell their responses and why they think each would act differently from the other.

The students' assumptions about age-related developmental differences should be highlighted in this discussion. Differences might also be explained in terms of assumptions about personality or mood, and some students may have assumptions about sex differences. What some students may consider sex differences are likely to be differences in individual personalities that have been reinforced by adults according to *their* sex expectations. Students might discuss how they react to fieldsite situations in which they assume different reactions occur because of age, sex, personality, or mood differences.

## THE READINGS

The excerpts on pages 25 and 26 might be read aloud, stopping occasionally to be sure of comprehension. For example, do

students understand the meaning of empathic participation? "Empathy" is the full identification with another person's feelings; "sympathy" means awareness that one's own feelings are separate from another's, but understanding what the other person feels and caring about it.

In the Selma Fraiberg reading (p. 25), evidence is given that a child, Marcia, became more sympathetic in her actions as she developed. Students may discuss observations they have made that point to instances of the children growing in sympathetic awareness, and make a list of reasons why they think Marcia changed between ages four and six.

At age four, Marcia was probably interested only in her own experience--what she could do and what would happen as a result of her actions. Note that her further inspection of the squashed caterpillar shows her still attempting to verify the outcome of her act. At age six, Marcia no longer needs to test her curiosity and is much more aware of the caterpillar as another living being, perhaps with feelings just like hers. She has developed in her ability to see things from different points of view and thus to feel empathy for other forms of life.

People show sympathy for others for various reasons: close association with the person, their needs, the particular situation; a desire to show concern; etc. Students should realize that this expression of sympathy does not come about automatically for children, but comes with the help of adults and peers.

Part of children's developmental process is realizing their own identity. The growing realization of one's self as different from others results in the realization that one's actions precipitate reactions in others. The difficulty of acting on this realization is dealt with in the next section.

You might show "Rachel at School" and ask students to discuss individual differences among the three girls' abilities to consider another's point of view. (*Beyond the Front Door* teacher's guide discusses this film.)

## It Isn't Easy

When students discuss the questions for this section (*A Child's Eye View*, p. 27), they might think of incidents at the fieldsite or among their friends in which real feelings were hidden by actions. What kinds of feelings are hidden? By what kinds of actions? For example, hunger being hidden by irritability; insecurity hidden by seeming arrogance or aggressiveness; loneliness hidden by independence?

For practice in recognizing children's or friends' real feelings and responding to them, try some of the exercises in "Helping Skills" (*Getting Involved*), especially the section on "I" and "You" messages in "Analyzing Problems and Dealing with Them."

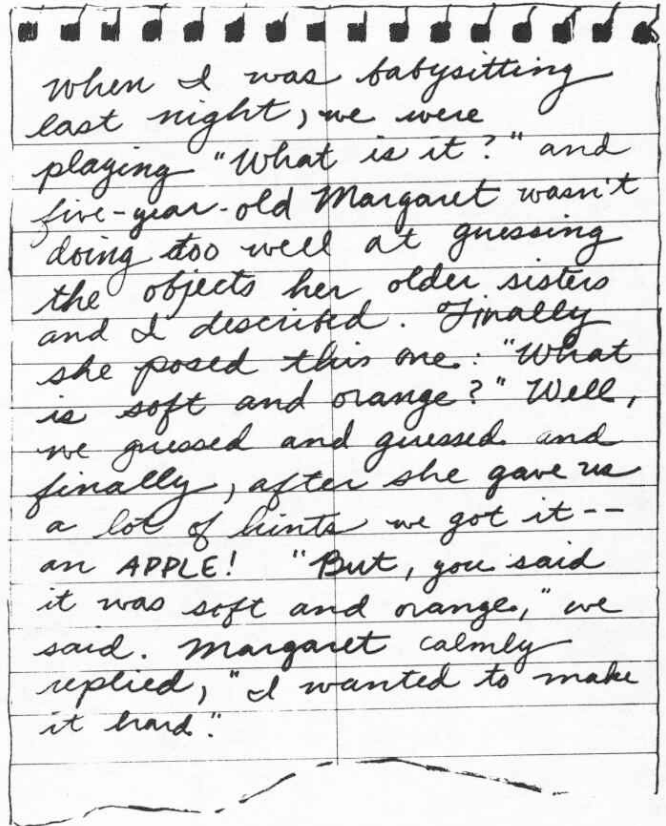
### JOURNAL IDEAS

Have students respond to the questions by first writing in their journals in response to these instructions: Think of the last few times you were mad. Did the occasion warrant anger alone? Could sadness or disappointment have been buried underneath? If so, what might have happened if you had acted in tune with your sadness rather than in anger? Choose one such incident and write about it, keeping those questions in mind. Allow five minutes for writing and remind students of the privacy guarantee for their writing. Then discuss the questions as a class.

### Discussion

Students write in their journals their responses to the questions (p. 27) before sharing their ideas in small groups or as a class.

Ask your students for their ideas about Margaret's stage of egocentrism.



# Your View and the Child's

**Purpose:** To examine how students deal with other people's points of view, including other views of themselves.

**Materials:** *A Child's Eye View*, pp. 28-31; film, "Little Blocks" (8 minutes); *Making Connections*, pp. 9, 12-15.

Although students want the children they work with to like them, they probably have not thought about how development affects the way a child views them. What do the children expect of me? Understand about what I know, feel, or can do?

## JOURNAL WRITING

There are four possible journal writing assignments in this section: one on student's feelings about how the children view them; one agreeing or disagreeing with Erik Erikson's view of teenagers; one (related to the diagram in *A Child's Eye View*) about an instance in which someone else's view of students may or may not have shaped their actions; and one in response to the film. These assignments should be spread out between activities, including some of the optional activities suggested at the end of this guide. As usual, journal assignments should be private and shared only at the students' discretion.

## First Assignment

As much as possible, students should try to base their descriptions of how a specific child sees them on incidents they remember from their field work. Another way to get clues is for the student to allow the child to be an interviewer. The student might say to a child:

## Your View and the Child's

Do you sometimes wonder what a child at your fieldsite thinks of you? Using your journal, consider in the following way what some of those thoughts might be.

Think of a specific child and write a brief description of how you think that child sees you.

- What does he or she think of you? feel about you? expect from you?
- How does he or she treat you or respond to you? What do you think that behavior means about the child's opinion about you?

A great deal of what you do in situations involving other people, like at the fieldsite, is probably guided by your guesses about other people's point of view, and particularly their view of you.

Erik Erikson describes adolescence as a period when young people are "primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others compared with what they feel they are." He feels that teenagers during these years are trying to fit their own view of themselves with how they think others view them.

It has been said that the "special egocentrism" of teenagers is that they constantly assume that others are thinking about them and judging them.

- Do you agree?
- Do teenagers pay too much attention to their ideas of the views of other people?



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Would you like to be a reporter like... (give an example of a newscaster known to the child) so you can ask me about myself?

The child's questions may reveal some things about his or her understanding (or lack of it) about the student--what the child expects of the student, or what the child assumes the student is interested in.

### Second Assignment

When considering Erikson's view of teenagers, students might think in terms of conformity versus nonconformity:

Do teenagers conform to the way they think friends view them? To adults' view?

Do teenagers purposely nonconform to friends' view? To adults' view?

This issue could be the subject of a class discussion or even a more formal debate if there is disagreement. To help students learn more about Erikson's theories, use *Making Connections* (pp. 9 and 12-15).

### Third Assignment

The third assignment is to describe the awareness of someone's thoughts of oneself and how that awareness shaped one's thoughts and actions. Students might think in terms of children again, of friends, of boy- or girlfriends, parents, teachers. They might like to design their own visual representation of the process as well as write about it.

## Egocentrism in Adults

People experience egocentrism differently during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Some students may identify more with children and others more with adults, but everyone will identify with both over time. Whatever the case, students should examine how egocentrism can be manifested in each stage of development.

The three examples in *A Child's Eye View* (p. 30) point to times when students or adults display egocentrism. Discuss how egocentrism is different in adults than in children (affected by mood, situation, etc., rather than by inability to shift point of view).

## "Little Blocks"

The fieldsite in this film is a high school in a mixed community where the teenager and the child, both Mexican-Americans, live. Bobby, a teenager, has been working at the fieldsite three mornings a week for the past three months and is playing for the first time with four-year-old Rodney at the teacher's request. The film begins in a class meeting, then flashes back to the fieldsite incident, then returns to the discussion afterward in class.

Teachers may find it helpful to refer to "Analyzing Problems and Dealing with Them," pages 48-53 of *Getting Involved*.

FILM TRANSCRIPT: LITTLE BLOCKS

### In Class

Bobby: I've had about three or four children that haven't taken a liking to me yet, maybe because they're not accustomed or used to me. But I've had one--I played with him for a while. We seemed to be doing pretty good until after he just changed his mind. I think he must have been thinking about something that he remembers. But we just were playing with blocks, and all of a sudden he quit playing with me. We played trains for a while. And all of a sudden as if there was a curtain.

### At the Site

Bobby: You do all the little blocks. Here's some more blocks. What are you going to build?



Child: A house.

Bobby: Okay. Let's build a house. Let me show you how to build a house. You put this one right here. Put that one right here. Put that other one right here. Now put that other one over here on this side. Right there. And this one over here. Oh, oh, get that one.

Little girl: Toys up.

Bobby: You're not going to let me finish my house?

Little girl: Make it over there.

Bobby: Okay.

Little girl: Go over there.

Bobby: Go over there! Where over there?

Little girl: To the next room.

Bobby: Come here.

Child: I don't want to play nothing.

Bobby: You don't want to play nothing. Why not?

Child: I want to go with the teacher.

Bobby: You don't want to play with me?

Teacher: Do you want to play with me?

Bobby: Come on, we can play with the castle. Why not?

Teacher: Talk louder, I really can't hear you.

Child: I don't want to.

Teacher: You don't want to.

Wouldn't you like to make a big house and then knock it down? Wouldn't that be fun? I bet you'd have fun.

Bobby: You haven't tried it yet. Try it, you'll like it.

Teacher: Is there anything you want to do?

You're going to step on your lip. You're going to step on it.

Bobby: Oh, don't cry.

Come on, let's go play with the train. You don't want to play with the train? You don't want to play with me?

Teacher: He doesn't want to play.

Do you want to sit down and rest awhile? Maybe you're tired.

Back in Class

Bobby: I played with him for a little while but, like I say, he just turned me away. And as I say, he must have been thinking of something.

Student: Do you feel upset when he does that?

Bobby: It makes me feel, like, neglected. He don't want to play with me.

Another student: Do you feel like you've failed at being a teacher when somebody tells you something like that?

Bobby: No. I say the only way you learn something is by your mistakes. I've had three people I've worked with. And out of the three people, I haven't had any success in it. I've had two little girls and Rodney.

Student: Are you thinking about giving it all up?

Bobby: No. Like they say, practice makes perfect.

#### DISCUSSION

In small groups students might discuss their ideas about these questions:

What did the child want to do?

What was the student attempting to do? What might have been some of the reasons for Bobby's egocentrism in this case?

How could the teacher help each boy by considering the point of view and stage of development of each?

Students may first consider the points of view of the people in the film and answer the questions that have to deal with these individuals. Next students can give their points of view, and record in their journals their advice to Bobby. Being able to examine the incident objectively can help students understand the appropriateness of stepping back versus total involvement. Students might pretend they are in the same situation and ask themselves: What would I do? They should realize that they will not be able to plan for all situations. Making mistakes can cause students to feel bad, but with support from their fieldsite and class teachers, they can learn for future situations.

This film provides opportunities to discuss some of the considerations for helping students to assess both their needs and the needs of the children. In this incident, for instance:

The student monopolized the activity.

Communication between student and child was one-sided.

Rodney's needs or fears were not clearly expressed or dealt with.

The student was unsure of his role.

The student did not consider the child's point of view.

The student was honest about his difficulty with children.

The student perceived what happened, but did not know why (he may not have perceived clearly how Rodney perceived him).

The student reaffirmed his desire to fulfill his role at the fieldsite.

Students need your help in being able to speak directly about difficult situations and make suggestions without hurting feelings. They need your support to strengthen their ability to see another's point of view and not be afraid of trying to help.

Do students feel Bobby's classmates were helpful? What else might they have said or done (e.g., offer to work together)?

## How Important Are Other People's Points of View?

If you know of a dilemma students face at their fieldsites, substitute it for the one printed in the student booklet. Students may first discuss how rules govern the individual's action and answer the dilemma by examining the needs of each individual in the situation. What are the priorities? The rules? The teacher's feelings? The student's feelings? How will the children's point of view be interpreted and represented?

## FURTHER ACTIVITIES

Several classroom activities might be used to complement "Your View and the Child's" and to summarize *A Child's Eye View*.

You might give extra credit for individual work with resources like the following, which represent different points of view:

*The Bridge of San Luis Rey* by Thornton Wilder

*Black Like Me* by John Griffin

*Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

*Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess

Agatha Christie mysteries

*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

*The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay*

*Dying* by William Faulkner

"Rashomon," a film by Akira Kurosawa

You might have students write or report on the effect of taking on a new point of view in one of these sources, or on seeing the same situation from several points of view.

You might stage a surprise event in class (for example, one student runs, grabs teacher, expresses fear that someone is after her; another student follows, grabs her wallet; third student enters, is given wallet by second, both leave; three more come in, one of these claiming first student took *his* wallet). Any crazy, complicated idea will do. Ask other teachers or administrators to help. Ask class to write down what happened *without talking about it*. Then discuss. How do they explain differences in their accounts?

If students enjoyed solving the dilemmas suggested in *A Child's Eye View*, ask small groups to make up other situations that have to be solved by considering another person's point of view. Pass the dilemmas on to other groups to resolve.

Ask students to retell the story "Charles" from Laurie's point of view instead of the mother's.

Choose a controversial issue about which there is much disagreement in class (a political issue, busing, marijuana legalization, gang fights, some school issue). Ask students to articulate their own opinions and perhaps those of familiar political figures. Then do an exercise which requires students to take on several other points of view, including perhaps some they disagree with. This might be done by role playing arguments and asking students to switch positions halfway through the discussion. It might also be done by asking students to write interior monologues (pretending to be inside someone's head) for people (themselves and classmates or prominent figures) on several sides of an issue. Students might also act out a courtroom scene in which they are forced to defend a position they do not normally hold, or to make a judgment--for example about who should keep baby Lenore: her mother, who gave her up for adoption when she was born, but now wants her back; or Lenore's adoptive parents, who have raised her for three years. Care should be taken throughout these exercises that students do not mock the positions they are taking, but make a serious effort to honestly take someone else's point of view.

Some of these optional activities can only be done as class activities. Others could be adapted as individual or small group projects. Can students think of other projects that involve practice in shifting points of view?

# Selected Reading

## Introduction

For both the course teacher and the fieldsite teacher, an understanding of the dynamic concept of egocentrism can be helpful in clarifying the relationships between students' cognitive level of growth and their social attitudes and personality. The following reading, taken from *Children and Adolescents: Interpretive Essays on Jean Piaget* by David Elkind, describes the nature of egocentrism at different age levels as a function of cognitive growth.

The essay is based on the work of Jean Piaget, a developmental psychologist whose ideas have influenced the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials. Other aspects of his ideas about childhood egocentrism are included in the essay for students in *Making Connections* (pp. 15-18), which provides information about his life and theories.

You may find it helpful to refer to this reading at various points in the Seeing Development module. It may serve you in the following ways:

- as a supplementary reading for those students who have become interested in knowing more about the concept of egocentrism
- as teacher resource material to help students understand the connections between cognitive growth and social behavior
- as a useful tool in dealing with questions such as, "How do children at different stages of development deal with questions of fairness?"
- as a stimulus to further extend the ideas and issues raised by fieldwork experience and classroom materials

## Questions to Think About

As you read the essay, you may want to keep in mind the questions that appear below. You might also incorporate them in a discussion with other teachers of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD, or with some of your students.

Does your own experience as a teacher, parent, child, or adolescent seem to support or deny the ideas presented in this essay on stages of cognitive growth and related egocentric behavior? Cite an example or two to illustrate your position.

How might the ideas and concepts presented in this essay be useful to you in helping adolescents work more effectively with young children? in helping them gain a better understanding of themselves? Explain.

# Egocentrism<sup>1</sup> in Children and Adolescents

Within Piaget's theory of intellectual growth, the concept of egocentrism generally refers to a lack of differentiation in some area of subject-object interaction. At each stage of mental development, this lack of differentiation takes a new form and is manifested in a new set of behaviors. The transition from one form of egocentrism to another takes place in a dialectic fashion such that the mental structures which free the child from a lower form of egocentrism are the same structures which ensnare him in a higher form of egocentrism. From the developmental point of view, therefore, egocentrism can be regarded as a negative by-product of any emergent mental system in the sense that it corresponds to the fresh cognitive problems engendered by that system.

Although in recent years Piaget has focused his attention more on the positive than on the negative products of mental structures, egocentrism continues to be of interest because of its relation to the affective aspects of child thought and behavior. Indeed, it is possible that the study of egocentrism may provide a bridge between the study of cognitive structure on the one hand and the exploration of personality dynamics on the other. This chapter describes personality phenomena attributable to egocentrism in childhood and adolescence, after a brief review of the earlier forms egocentrism takes in the course of cognitive growth.

## Forms of Egocentrism in Infancy and Early Childhood

In presenting the childhood forms of egocentrism, it is useful to treat each of Piaget's major stages as if it were primarily concerned with resolving one major cognitive task, and to describe the egocentrism of a particular stage with reference to this task. It must be stressed, however, that while the cognitive task characteristic of a particular stage seems to attract the major share of the child's mental energies, it is not the only cognitive problem with which he is attempting to cope. In mental development there are major battles and minor skirmishes, and if the latter are ignored here it is for purposes of economy of presentation rather than because they are considered insignificant.

*Sensory-motor egocentrism (0-2 years).* The major cognitive task of infancy might be regarded as *the conquest of the object*. In the early months of life, the infant deals with objects as if their existence were dependent upon their being present in immediate perception. The egocentrism of this stage corresponds therefore, to a lack of differentiation between the object and the sense impressions occasioned by it. Towards the end of the first year, however, the infant begins to seek the object even when it is hidden, thus showing that he can now differentiate between the object and the "experience of the object." This breakdown of egocentrism is brought about by mental representation of the absent object, the earliest manifestation of the symbolic function which develops gradually during the second year of life and whose activities dominate

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<sup>1</sup>From David Elkind, *Children and Adolescents: Interpretive Essays on Jean Piaget* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1970), pp. 50-71. Reprinted by permission.



the next stage of mental growth. It is characteristic of the dialectic of mental growth that the capacity to represent the object internally also enables the infant to cognize the object as externally existent.

*Pre-operational egocentrism (2-6 years).* During the pre-school period, the child's major cognitive task can be regarded as *the conquest of the symbol*. During the pre-school period the symbolic function becomes fully active, as evidenced by the rapid growth in the acquisition and utilization of language, by the appearance of symbolic play, and by the first reports of dreams. Yet this new capacity for representation, which loosed the infant from his egocentrism with respect to objects, now ensnares the pre-school child in a new egocentrism with respect to symbols. At the beginning of this period the child fails to differentiate between words and their referents and between his self-created play and dream symbols and reality. Children at this stage believe that the name inheres in the thing and that an object cannot have more than one name.

The egocentrism of this period is particularly evident in children's linguistic behavior. When explaining a piece of apparatus to another child, for example, the youngster at this stage uses many indefinite terms and leaves out important information. This is sometimes explained by saying that the child fails to take the other person's point of view; it can also be explained by saying that the child assumes words carry much more information than they actually do, because he believes that even the indefinite "thing" somehow conveys the properties of the object it is used to represent. In short, the egocentrism of this period consists in a lack of clear differentiation between symbols and their referents.

Towards the end of the pre-operational period, the differentiation between symbols and their referents is gradually brought about by the emergence of concrete operations (internalized actions which are roughly comparable in their activity to the elementary operations of arithmetic). One consequence of concrete operational thought is that it enables the child to deal with two elements, properties, or relations at the same time. A child who has attained concrete operations can, for example, take account of both the height and width of a glass of colored liquid and recognize that, when the liquid is poured into a differently shaped container, the changes in height and width of the liquid compensate one another so that the total quantity of liquid is conserved. This ability, to hold two dimensions in mind at the same time, also enables the child to hold both symbol and referent in mind simultaneously and thus distinguish between them. Concrete operations are, therefore, instrumental in overcoming the egocentrism of the pre-operational stage.

#### Egocentrism in Childhood

With the emergence of concrete operations, the major cognitive task of the school-age child becomes that of *mastering classes, relations, and quantities*. While the pre-school child forms global notions of classes, relations, and quantities, such notions are imprecise and cannot be combined. The child with concrete operations, on the other hand, can nest classes, seriate relations, and conserve quantities. In addition, concrete operations enable the school-age child to perform elementary syllogistic reasoning and to formulate hypotheses and explanations about concrete matters. This system of concrete operations, however, which lifts the school-age child to new heights of thought, nonetheless lowers him to new depths of egocentrism.

Operations are essentially mental tools whose products, series, class hierarchies, conservations, etc. are not directly derived from experience. At this stage, however, the child regards these mental products as being on a par with perceptual phenomena. His egocentrism now derives from his inability to differentiate clearly between what he thinks and what he perceives. Some examples may help to clarify the form which egocentrism takes during the concrete operational stage.

In a study reported by Peel, children and adolescents were read a passage about Stonehenge and then asked questions about it. One of the questions had to do with whether Stonehenge was a place for religious worship or a fort. The children (ages 7-10) answered the question with flat statements, as if they were stating a fact. When they were given evidence that contradicted their statement, they rationalized the evidence to make it conform with their initial position. Adolescents, on the other hand, phrased their replies in probabilistic terms and supported their judgments with material gleaned from the passage.

Similar differences between children and adolescents have been found by Weir.

In his studies Weir used a simple probability learning task. Subjects, ranging in age from 4 to 17, were confronted with a box containing three knobs and a pay-off chute. The knobs were programmed so that one of them would pay off (in candy or tokens) 66 per cent of the time, another was programmed to pay off 33 per cent of the time and a third knob paid off zero per cent of the time. The task was to find the maximal pay-off strategy in the system and the maximizing solution was simply to keep pushing the knob that paid off 66 per cent of the time.

Results showed that pre-operational children maximized early (when it comes to candy young children learn quickly!). Adolescents had somewhat more trouble. They invented a wide range of hypotheses regarding the patterns and sequences of knob pressing to attain maximization. After trying and rejecting these hypotheses they eventually discovered that one knob was more likely to pay off than others and finally reverted to pressing the 66 per cent knob all of the time. Elementary school children, however, had considerable difficulty with the problem. They often adopted a "win-stick" and "lose-shift" strategy in which they persisted despite all the evidence that this was not a maximizing procedure. These children were likely to blame the machine rather than their strategy for their difficulty. Other investigators report related findings.

This period of concrete operational egocentrism (ages 7-11) described by Piaget coincides with the *latency* period described by psychoanalysis during which the "family romance" between children and their parents is at minimal intensity. The remainder of this section will attempt to show how a consideration of some of the cognitive formations that derive from the child's egocentrism can complement and amplify the interpretations of latency behavior that have been provided by dynamic psychology and psychiatry.

Egocentrism, we have argued, refers to a lack of differentiation in some sphere of subject-object interaction. In the case of the latency-age child this lack of differentiation derives directly from his new found ability--thanks to concrete operations--to reason from assumptions and hypotheses. In the course of such reasoning the child often fails to distinguish between his hypotheses and assumptions on the one hand and empirical evidence on the other. *It is this lack of differentiation between assumption and fact that constitutes the egocentrism of the concrete operational period.*

The failure to distinguish between hypotheses and reality means, in effect, that the child often treats hypotheses as if they were facts and facts as if they were hypotheses. That is to say, ordinarily we test hypotheses against evidence and if the evidence contradicts the hypothesis we reject it and try another. Children, in contrast, often reject or reinterpret facts to fit the hypotheses. As a consequence such youngsters often operate according to what might be called *assumptive realities*, assumptions about reality that children make on the basis of limited information and which they will not alter in the face of new and contradictory evidence. Although assumptive realities resemble delusions, in the sense that both involve a failure to distinguish between thought and reality, assumptive realities derive, at least originally, from new cognitive abilities and lack the systematization and narcissism of true delusions. Moreover the assumptive behavior engaged in by children is often entered into in the spirit of "fun" or "play" which suggests that at some level of consciousness, the child is aware that he is operating according to a convenient fiction.

Perhaps the most pervasive assumptive realities of latency have their origin in the child's ability to detect flaws in reasoning and errors in supposed statements of fact. Concrete operations insure that the child will discover that his parents are not after all omniscient. This discovery was sensitively described by Edmund Gosse in a passage quoted on page 28. Growing out of this discovery, inevitably made by all children, are two complementary assumptive realities that pervade the latency period. One of these is that adults are, to put it gently, not very bright. Again Gosse insightfully records the formation of this cognition.

The theory that my father was omniscient or infallible was now dead and buried. He probably knew very little; in this case he had not known a fact of such importance that if you did not know that, it could hardly matter what you knew.

The complementary assumptive reality, also suggested by this passage derives from the child's discovery that he, in some instances at least, knows more than the parents. In effect, the child assumes, as Gosse suggests, that if the adult is wrong in one thing then he must be wrong in nearly everything. Moreover, he also assumes that he himself, since he is right in one thing, must be correct in most things. This assumption is abetted by the fact that the child is often unaware of the origin of his knowledge and believes that he comes by it himself. We might call this complex of assumptive realities, involving the conception of the adult as none too bright and the child as clever, *cognitive conceit*.

Although cognitive conceit is not a very overt psychic formation in children, it is an underlying orientation which is easily brought to the fore and helps to account, in part at least, for many different facets of latency behavior. Let us look now at some latency phenomena from the standpoint of cognitive conceit.\*

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\* In some children circumstances turn cognitive conceit into its opposite "cognitive ineptitude" and such children persist in the belief that others know everything and that they know nothing.

Consider first the Peter Pan fantasy, the wish to remain a child that derives from the antipathy many latency-age children feel towards the prospect of growing up. To be sure children are ambivalent and still want many of the prerogatives of older children and grownups. Yet, since adults are not very bright, and are easily outwitted, as Peter Pan showed in his use of the alarm clock to best Captain Hook, the latency-age child has real qualms about growing up. That is to say, the latency-age child may suspect that he will become stupid as he matures and be reluctant to give up his cognitive conceit. His perception of adults as hairy and smelly does not increase his enthusiasm in this regard. The dynamic reasons for the child's wish to remain a child cannot be denied, but cognitive conceit may well be an equally potent factor in the Peter Pan fantasy.

In addition to the Peter Pan fantasy, children's literature abounds in evidence of the cognitive conceit of children. Whether it is "Emile and the Detectives" or "Tom Sawyer" or "A High Wind in Jamaica" or "Alice in Wonderland" in each story adults are outwitted and made to look like fools by children. Indeed I would not be surprised if young people regard Winnie the Pooh (that bear of little brain) as the essence of adult bumbling while they themselves identify with the superbly cool and clever Christopher Robin. Children enjoy such fiction at least in part because it reinforces their cognitive conceit with respect to adults.

The well-known foundling fantasy could be interpreted as still another manifestation of cognitive conceit. In its most usual form, the foundling fantasy involves the belief that the child has been adopted and that his real parents are in fact wealthy and of royal descent. Clearly this fantasy derives from a sensed discrepancy on the part of the child in the comparison between his parents and himself. The area in which this sensed discrepancy is most likely to occur (as the quotation from Gosse suggests) is in the realm of mental ability and knowledge. Again I do not want to deny the dynamic significance of the foundling fantasy but only wish to insist upon taking into account its probable cognitive origin.

A similar case could be made for children's jokes which have been so ably described by Wolfenstein. A typical joke of this age period is of the following variety:

A mother loses her child named "Heine." She asks a policeman, "Have you seen my Heine?" to which the policeman replies, "No but I sure would like to!"

or another variant:

A woman owns a dog named "Free Show." While the woman is taking a bath, the dog gets out of the house. The woman discovers this and runs out of the house naked shouting "Free Show, Free Show."

One would, I think, be hard put to deny the hostile and sexual aspects of these stories. Note, however, that the joke also depends upon the gullibility and stupidity of the adult, namely, that the mother in the first story would not know the meaning of "Heine" or that the woman in the second story would be stupid enough to run out into the street naked shouting "Free Show." Such jokes recapture the situation in which the parent is discovered not to be omniscient and in which the child knows more than the parent. Accordingly, such jokes also derive some of their impact from the reinforcement they provide for the child's cognitive conceit.



Still other evidence for the pervasiveness of cognitive conceit in children comes from the parodies of adult manners and morals which are an integral component of child language and lore. Children make fun of much that adults regard as serious and even sacred. For example

Jesus lover of my soul  
Lead me to the sugar bowl  
If the sugar bowl is empty  
Lead me to my mother's pantry

Even before the formal abdication of the Duke of Windsor, English children were singing

Hark the Herald angels sing  
Mrs. Simpson's swiped our King

Last fall, a six year old came home chanting

Jingle bells, Wallace smells  
and Humphrey ran away  
Oh what fun it is to run  
In a Nixon Chevrolet

Such parodies reflect, among other things, the child's amused attitude at the sorts of things grown up people regard as serious and important.

Likewise, a good deal of juvenile sophistry also reflects cognitive conceit. The strategy is to hoist the adult on his own petard. For example, an eight year old boy came to the dinner table with his hands dripping wet. When his mother asked why he had not wiped his hands he replied, "But you told me not to wipe my hands on the clean towels." His mother threw up her hands and replied, "I said not to wipe your *dirty* hands on the towels." Children delight in such sophistries because they reaffirm cognitive conceit and because they provide good practice material for their new reasoning abilities. While juvenile sophistry is clearly a passive aggressive maneuver, its dependence upon cognitive structure and the satisfaction it provides for cognitive needs should not be ignored.

A more far-reaching consequence of cognitive conceit can be observed in children's moral behavior. While it is true that by the age of six or seven children have internalized rules and know what is right and wrong, they nonetheless continue throughout most of latency to take what does not belong to them and to deviate from the truth. A possible reason for this discrepancy between what the child knows and what he does is that he perceives the rules as coming from adults. While the child has respect for adult authority (the power to punish) he has little respect for adult intelligence. He thus sees no reason, other than fear of punishment, to obey rules adults have laid down. Accordingly, convinced as he is of his own intellectual superiority, the child takes the rules as a challenge to his own cleverness and attempts to break them without getting caught. For the child, breaking rules is not primarily a moral matter but much more a matter of proving his cleverness by outwitting adults.

With regard to moral behavior, then, we might speak of an *external conscience* operative during the elementary school years. It is external in the sense that the child views the rules and the reasons for obeying them as residing outside rather than within himself. Jiminey Cricket, for example, is Pinocchio's external conscience and Pinocchio's cavalier relationship to Jiminey



nicely reflects the child's attitudes towards a conscience imposed by adults. It is only towards the end of childhood and the onset of adolescence, when young people formulate their own rules, that these rules begin to internally regulate behavior. The asceticism, the physical regimes of adolescents as well as their rigidly maintained group mores, demonstrate how binding are those rules which the young person formulates himself or accepts on the basis of personal commitment. At adolescence, then, a true conscience begins to be formed whereas during childhood conscience is still external to the child's personal values and beliefs.

As a final example, I would like to show how cognitive conceit operates in one major form of latency behavior, namely, children's games. Concrete operations make it possible for children to play games with rules, a type of play not known in pre-school children. When latency-age children play games with rules they play with one aim in mind, namely to win! This is particularly true when they are playing a child's game with an adult, but it is also true, to a lesser extent, when children play amongst themselves.

Now the desire to win could be said to derive, in part at any rate, from cognitive conceit, the child's belief in his own cleverness and his need to prove it. Obviously competitiveness has other dynamics as well but the need to win can also reflect a desire to reassert the child's conception of himself as superior in knowledge and in ability. This is obvious in the way the children often boast when they win. The assumptive reality nature of cognitive conceit becomes manifest when the child loses. In this event, the child will often overtly or covertly find reasons why he lost and why he will win in the future. Often the reasons are at best gratuitous and *ad hoc* but serve nonetheless to maintain the assumption of intellectual superiority.

An assumptive reality related to cognitive conceit is the belief that adults are benevolent and well-intentioned. The child usually has some evidence to support this assumption but he also tends to deny or distort evidence to the contrary. The assumptive reality of the "good parent" may also help to account for the difficulty one finds in getting disturbed (as well as normal) children to say anything negative about their parents in a therapeutic situation. This is true even when it is clear, from other information, that the child has plenty to be unhappy about.

Here is a clinical example provided by Woltman in which the attempts to maintain the assumptive reality of parental "goodness" are exaggerated.

One eight year old boy showed a great deal of preoccupation with the figure of what he called "a good man." First he referred to a piece of clay as a house and said that a good man lived in the house selling vegetables; then he changed the story and said that the house was full of candy and that all the candy belonged to a man inside the house. Finally, he made a clay face of a man which he covered completely with bits of clay. He said, "The man is good because his whole face is covered with candy." The boy came from a broken home which the father had deserted. His preoccupation with the good man obviously was an attempt to create an ideal image of the father figure and the wish to have the father come back. It also turned out that this boy, who could not accept the harsh reality of the irresponsible father, had to convince himself over and over again that there was such a thing as a "good father."

Clearly there is, among other things, denial operating here but denial might be defined as the tendency to cling to a hypothesis or assumption which is contradicted by the facts and to reinterpret the data to fit the hypothesis.

The child's conviction of the benevolence of parents and adults provides a healthy balance to cognitive conceit. A conviction regarding adult good intentions tempers and mellows the child's eagerness to outwit the adult and to make him appear foolish. If it were not for this assumptive reality with regard to grownups, the latency-age child would be much more difficult to live with than is usually the case.

Assumptive realities can also be more temporary and arise in particular situations. This frequently occurs when the child does something he knows to be wrong. Although the child may be aware that he has committed a wrong he may also make some assumption about his behavior that excuses or exonerates his act so that he feels genuinely innocent. When he denies the action on the basis of this assumptive reality he is more than likely to infuriate the adult. Many toe-to-toe shouting matches between parent and child follow upon the child's denial of guilt and the parent's adamant demand that the child confess his misdeed. At such times the parent fails to appreciate that for the child an assumptive reality is the *truth*.

It might be noted in passing that some rigidities that workers like Wertheimer have noted in the thinking of school children may result from assumptive realities. In math, for example, children often learn a rule and assume that this applies to all figures or problems. At least some intellectual difficulties encountered by latency-age children may, in part at least, be explained by this tendency to take a rule or conviction as a self-evident reality which must be applied to all and sundry situations. It might be, for example, that some so-called "learning blocks" are exaggerations of a "normal" cognitive formation which has become exaggerated and exacerbated due to emotional problems.

The assumptive realities which derive from the egocentrism of the latency-age child also help to account for the unique character of plan, fantasy, and imagination during this period. Although children have given up the fairy tale fantasy and are geared to finding out about the real world, they often approach this reality in an assumptive way. Davidson and Fay nicely illustrate how assumptive realities emerge in the play of latency-age children and the tenacity with which these children cling to assumptions about reality despite the arguments and evidence offered by adults to dissuade them:

Many of the interests of seven to eleven year old children, although strongly tied to reality, can be seen to be deeply rooted in fantasy. For instance, Paul, eight, would periodically spend days digging in the yard to find buried treasure--"jewels" and "olden day things." He dug up several pieces of china which he carefully washed and tried to fit together, convinced that they were fragments of ancient pottery and probably of great value.

Whether young people are digging for treasure, or building a fort, or planning a money-making project, they often persist despite the cautions and evidences to the contrary given by adults. An assumptive reality seems operative in such situations.

It should be said, too, that the egocentrism of this period probably also plays a part in the latency-age child's love of mystery, adventure, and magic. Assumptive realities presuppose a particular view of the world in which facts can be made to do your bidding and hence have something flexible and uncertain but controllable about them. Children like stories of mystery, adventure, and magic because these stories also presuppose a world in which new and unexpected events repeatedly occur but are always susceptible to mastery. The success of the Nancy Drew as well as the Hardy Boys series is ample testimony that girls as well as boys perceive the world in this way.

Before closing it is perhaps well to make clear that while assumptive realities are believed in and acted upon by the child he also operates at a more concrete practical level of reality. Just as primitive man prayed for rain but also irrigated his fields, so do children believe in their intellectual superiority while they frequently behave as if adults were wiser and more knowledgeable. Put differently, at the practical level, the child often accepts the adult's greater knowledge and ability while he continues to deny it in the plane of cognition. The same holds true for other assumptive realities. At the practical level, for example, a child may know that his father is mean and that he had better keep out of his way, while on the cognitive plane he maintains the assumption of parental benevolence.

It is only in adolescence, with the advent of formal operations, that these two planes of action and thought are brought into coordination. With formal operations, the young person can conceptualize his own thought and discover the arbitrariness of his hypothesis. He discovers, too, the rules for testing hypotheses against facts and hence is now able to deal with facts and hypotheses in an experimental fashion. This leads to the recognition that many of his hypotheses are wrong and gives him a new respect for data and a diminished confidence in his own ability. He then begins to be self-critical so that cognitive conceit is gradually given up. The passing of cognitive conceit is hastened as the adolescent attempts adult tasks (work) and begins to measure himself by adult standards.

In concluding this general discussion of egocentrism and latency behavior, two general points should be reiterated. The first has to do with the permanence of those mental formations attributable to concrete operations.

As in the case of most developmental phenomena, formations that appear at one level of development do not disappear at the following stages and may manifest themselves at each succeeding stage in the life cycle. This appears to hold true for the assumptive realities in general, and for the cognitive conceit and external conscience in particular, that emerge during the concrete operational period.

Evidence of adult behavior governed by assumptive realities in general is easy to come by. Indeed, the old saying, "love is blind," captures very well the fact that under some circumstances an individual may adopt an hypothesis and cling to it regardless of factual evidence to the contrary. Likewise, the romantic image of love and marriage held by so many young women in our society, despite all of the everyday evidence which gainsays this image, is a good example of how even young adults can believe in and behave according to assumptive realities.

With regard to cognitive conceit, we are all familiar with the young scholar who attacks a major figure, such as Freud or Piaget, on some minor point and then proceeds to dismiss the whole body of the master's work. At the same time, having found the real or imagined error, the young scholar is convinced of his own intellectual superiority. This is cognitive conceit at the adult level repeated with a parentlike figure. Behavior regulated by external conscience is also easy to discern among adults. Men away from home at a convention will sometimes do things which they would never do at home. In a different or a foreign setting, the instrumentalities of the external conscience (neighbors, employers, friends, marital partners) are absent and, as is true for children, one of the satisfactions of misbehavior in this context is the thought of having outwitted the inhibiting external forces. This is often expressed as "If the folks back home could only see me now."

The second point has to do with the status of the mental formations and the interpretations offered above. In order not to be misunderstood, I have tried throughout the discussion to indicate that I believe the egocentrism interpretation of latency behavior is a necessary complement to and *not* a substitute for dynamic interpretations. In their use of multiple models both Freud and Piaget have made it very clear that at this stage in our understanding we need many different models to give a comprehensive account of human thought and action. Hopefully, and this is the spirit in which the above discussion has been offered, interpretations of the same phenomena from the standpoint of many different models will prepare the way for a truly comprehensive psychological theory that is at once cognitive *and* dynamic.

#### Adolescent Egocentrism

From the strictly cognitive point of view, as opposed to the psychoanalytic point of view or the ego psychological point of view, the major task of early adolescence can be regarded as having to do with *the conquest of thought*. Formal operations not only permit the young person to construct all the possibilities in a system and construct contrary-to-fact propositions; they also enable him to conceptualize his own thought, to take his mental constructions as objects and reason about them. Only at about the ages of 11-12, for example, do children spontaneously introduce concepts of belief, intelligence, and faith into their definitions of their religious denomination. Once more, however, this new mental system which frees the young person from the egocentrism of childhood entangles him in a new form of egocentrism characteristic of adolescence.

Formal operational thought not only enables the adolescent to conceptualize his thought, it also permits him to conceptualize the thought of other people; this capacity, however, is the crux of adolescent egocentrism. This egocentrism emerges because, while the adolescent can now cognize the thought of others, he fails to differentiate between the objects towards which the thought of others are directed and those which are the focus of his own concern. The young adolescent, because of the physiological metamorphosis he is undergoing, is primarily concerned with himself. Accordingly, since he fails to differentiate between what others are thinking about and his own mental pre-occupations, he assumes that other people are as obsessed with his behavior and appearance as



But this memory was too much for the old lady, and she broke entirely down. Tom was snuffling, now, himself--and more in pity of himself than anybody else. He could hear Mary crying and putting in a kindly word for him from time to time. He began to have a nobler opinion of himself than ever before. Still, he was sufficiently touched by his aunt's grief to long to rush out from under the bed and overwhelm her with joy--and the theatrical gorgeousness of the thing appealed strongly to his nature too--but he resisted and lay still.

Corresponding to the imaginary audience is another mental construction which is its compliment. While the adolescent fails to differentiate the concerns of his own thought from those of others, he at the same time overdifferentiates his feelings. Perhaps because he believes he is of importance to so many people, the imaginary audience, he comes to regard himself, and particularly his feelings, as something special and unique. Only he can suffer with such agonized intensity or experience such exquisite rapture. How many parents have been confronted with the typically adolescent phrase, "But you don't know how it feels...." The emotional torments undergone by Salinger's Holden Caulfield exemplify the adolescent's belief in the uniqueness of his own emotional experience. At a somewhat different level, this belief in personal uniqueness becomes a conviction that he will not die, that death will happen to others but not to him. This complex of beliefs in the uniqueness of his feelings and of his immortality might be called a *personal fable*, a story which he tells himself and which is not true.

Evidences of the personal fable are particularly prominent in adolescent diaries. Such diaries are often written for posterity in the conviction that the young person's experiences, crushes, frustrations are of universal significance. Another kind of evidence for the personal fable during this period is the tendency to confide in a personal God. The search for privacy and the belief in personal uniqueness lead to the establishment of an I-Thou relationship with God as a personal confidant to whom one no longer looks for gifts but rather for guidance and support.

The concepts of an imaginary audience and a personal fable have proved useful, at least to the writer, in the understanding and treatment of troubled adolescents. The imaginary audience, for example, seems often to play a role in middle-class delinquency. As a case in point, one young man took \$1,000 from a golf tournament purse, hid the money and then promptly revealed himself. It turned out that much of the motivation for this act was derived from the anticipated response of "the audience" to the bravado of his action. In a similar vein, many young girls become pregnant partly because their personal fable convinces them that pregnancy will happen to others but never to them and so they need not take precautions. Such examples could be multiplied but suffice to illustrate how adolescent egocentrism, as manifested in the imaginary audience and in the personal fable, can help provide a rationale for some adolescent behavior. These concepts can, moreover, be utilized in the treatment of adolescent offenders. It is often helpful to these young people if they can learn to differentiate between the real and the imaginary audience which often boils down to a discrimination between the real and the imaginary parents.



he is himself. *This belief that others are preoccupied with his appearance and behavior constitutes the egocentrism of the adolescent.*

One consequence of adolescent egocentrism is that, in actual or impending social situations, the young person anticipates the reactions of other people to himself. These anticipations, however, are based on the premise that others are as admiring or as critical of him as he is of himself. In a sense, then, the adolescent is continually constructing, or reacting to, *an imaginary audience*. It is an audience because the adolescent believes that he will be the focus of attention, and it is imaginary because, in actual social situations, this is not usually the case (unless he contrives to make it so). The construction of imaginary audiences would seem to account, in part at least, for a wide variety of typical adolescent behaviors and experiences.

The imaginary audience, for example, probably plays a role in the self-consciousness which is so characteristic of early adolescence. When the young person is feeling critical of himself, he anticipates that the audience--of which he is necessarily a part--will be critical too. And, since the audience is his own construction and privy to his own knowledge of himself, it knows just what to look for in the way of cosmetic and behavioral sensitivities. The adolescent's wish for privacy and his reluctance to reveal himself may, to some extent, be a reaction to the feeling of being under the constant critical scrutiny of other people. The notion of an imaginary audience also helps to explain the observation that the affect which most concerns adolescents is not guilt but, rather, shame, i.e., the reaction to an audience.

While the adolescent is often self-critical, he is frequently self-admiring too. At such times, the audience takes on the same affective coloration. A good deal of adolescent boorishness, loudness, and faddish dress is probably provoked, partially in any case, by a failure to differentiate between what the young person believes to be attractive and what others admire. It is for this reason that the young person frequently fails to understand why adults disapprove of the way he dresses and behaves. The same sort of egocentrism is often seen in behavior directed towards the opposite sex. The boy who stands in front of the mirror for two hours combing his hair is probably imagining the reactions he will produce in the girls, and the girl applying her makeup is probably imagining the admiring glances that will come her way. When these young people actually meet, each is more concerned with being the observed than with being the observer. Gatherings of young adolescents are unique in the sense that each young person is simultaneously an actor to himself and an audience to others.

One of the most common admiring audience constructions, in the adolescent, is the anticipation of how others will react to his own death. A certain bitter-sweet pleasure is derived from anticipating the belated recognition of his good qualities. As often happens with such universal fantasies, this one has been realized in fiction in the passage from *Tom Sawyer* where Tom sneaks back to his home, after having run away with Joe and Huck, to discover that he and his friends are thought to have been drowned:

After the appearance of formal operational thought, no new mental systems develop and the mental structures of adolescence must serve for the rest of the life-span. The egocentrism of early adolescence nonetheless tends to diminish by the age of 15 or 16, the age at which formal operations become firmly established. What appears to happen is that the imaginary audience, which is primarily an anticipatory audience, is progressively modified in the direction of the reactions of the real audience. In a way, the imaginary audience can be regarded as an hypothesis, or better as a series of hypotheses, which the young person tests against reality. As a consequence of this testing, he gradually comes to recognize the difference between his own preoccupations and the interests and concerns of others.

The personal fable, on the other hand, is probably overcome (although probably never in its entirety) by the gradual establishment of what Erikson has called intimacy. Once the young person sees himself in a more realistic light as a function of having adjusted his imaginary audience to the real one, he can establish true rather than self-interested interpersonal relations. Once relations of mutuality are established and confidences are shared, the young person discovers that others have feelings similar to his own and have suffered and been enraptured in the same way.

Adolescent egocentrism is thus overcome by a two fold transformation. On the cognitive plane it is overcome by the gradual differentiation between his own preoccupations and the thoughts of others, while on the plane of affectivity it is overcome by a gradual integration of the feelings of others with his own emotions.

In sum, the cognitive structures peculiar to a particular level of development can be related to the affective experience and behavior characteristic of that stage. A consideration of egocentrism, then, would seem to be a useful starting point for any attempt to reconcile cognitive structure and the dynamics of personality.

# Evaluation Approaches

These approaches are provided to give teachers the opportunity to build evaluation into the day-to-day activities in the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials. Teachers can adapt these suggested approaches to the goals and needs of their individual classes. Students and teachers should share and discuss the purposes, expected outcomes, and actual results of the evaluation approach chosen.

| Approach   | Description of Activity and Page References  | Purpose  | Evidence of Student Learning   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Anecdote Analysis (For individual written exercise)                              | Use the exercise on page 9 of the student materials. Substitute a new anecdote if you wish to have students practice with the anecdote given. To the given questions add, "What would you say?" and "How do you explain the difference between your response and those of the children?"   | To evaluate students' understanding of the concept of egocentrism as seen in a child's judgments about punishment and fairness, including the realizations that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children's reasoning varies with age;</li> <li>• children are unable to consider some factors an adolescent would consider in judging fairness.</li> </ul> | Students recognize such age differences as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A three-year-old usually focuses on his or her own wants.</li> <li>• Usually a five-year-old holds an eye-for-an-eye view.</li> <li>• An older child usually considers intentions.</li> </ul> Students mention factors adolescent would consider, such as the other's motives, values, needs. |
| Observation and Writing  | Select one of the suggested games, e.g., "Birthday Present Store" or "Teddy on His Head." One student conducts the game, another observes and records the child's responses. Student partners write a joint summary, using evidence from their notes to support their conclusions about that child's ability to take another's view. | To evaluate students' ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observe and record concrete details of a child's behavior;</li> <li>• see a child's responses to a play situation as evidence of that child's level of egocentrism.</li> </ul>  | Students note what a child did, e.g., notes "Child picked up paper, laughed as she threw it in the air," rather than, "Child acted silly."<br>Students indicate an understanding of what the game required.<br>Students note specific evidence of a child's ability or inability to see another's viewpoint, e.g., "Chose a toy rather than a tie for daddy," or "Did not turn Teddy around."    |
| Questions for Writing or Discussion (To be done individually or in small groups) | The following can be done as a written or oral exercise: "Sometimes we can explain children's actions by their difficulty in putting themselves in someone else's shoes." Drawing on your field work, family childhood, (cont'd.)  | To evaluate students' understanding of the concept of egocentrism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding it as the child's tendency to consider another's point of view in terms of what the child knows and feels him- or herself;</li> </ul> (cont'd.)  | Students' examples portray children's lack of awareness of another's view.<br>Students' examples draw on more than one context, e.g., field work, own childhood, family, babysitting.<br>(cont'd.)   |

| Approach   | Description of Activity and Page References   | Purpose   | Evidence of Student Learning   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Film Observation and Analysis (Individual or small group work. Analysis done in writing or discussion.)</p> | <p>and other experiences with children, give several examples to illustrate this idea."</p> <p>View "Little Blocks." Shorten questions on page 30 of the student materials to "How do you think each of these people viewed and felt about this situation?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Rodney (child)</li> <li>. Bobby (teenager)</li> <li>. Teacher</li> </ul> <p>Why do you think so?"</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. applying the concept to everyday observations of children;</li> <li>. realizing the variety of forms egocentrism can take.</li> </ul>  | <p>Students' examples note specific cues in child's talk and action to indicate a limited viewpoint, e.g., "Child gestured into telephone."</p> <p>Students' examples provide a variety of examples of things the child is unable to realize, e.g., another's wants, physical orientation, needs, feelings, knowledge.</p> |
| <p>Film Observation and Analysis (Individual or small group work. Analysis done in writing or discussion.)</p> | <p>To evaluate students':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. ability to take the point of view of the <i>child</i> as well as the teenager in observing interactions between the two;</li> <li>. awareness of ways an adolescent's own egocentrism may affect his or her work with children;</li> <li>. understanding that observation does not always provide sufficient information for drawing conclusions;</li> <li>. ability to consider the field teacher's point of view.</li> </ul> | <p>Students suggest several responses appropriate to preschool-age child, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. uneasiness with unfamiliar older person;</li> <li>. desire to use the blocks his or her own way.</li> </ul> <p>Students recognize specific needs or interests of the teenager that may obscure the child's needs, e.g., interest in applying his or her ideas to materials, concern for acceptance by the child.</p> <p>Student offers a variety of possible explanations, or suggests need for more information, citing the kind of information needed and why.</p> <p>Students recognize the teacher's role of trying to consider the needs and feelings of each child in finding a way out of the situation.</p> |  |

*Teacher's Guide for  
A Child's Eye View*

Developers:  
Marjorie Jones  
Emma Wood Rous, Coordinator  
Susan Christie Thomas

Introduction to Selected Reading  
by Michael J. Cohen

Editor:  
Marjorie Waters

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Director:  
Marilyn Clayton Felt

Curriculum Coordinator:  
Ruth N. MacDonald

Module Head:  
Susan Christie Thomas

Project Manager:  
Kathleen Maurer Horani

Senior Scholars:  
Jerome Kagan, Professor of Human  
Development, Harvard University  
James Jones, Assistant Professor of  
Social Psychology, Harvard University  
Freda Rebelsky, Professor of  
Psychology, Boston University

Consultants:  
Elaine A. Blechman, Assistant Professor  
of Psychology, Yale School of Medicine,  
Yale University

T. Berry Brazelton, Pediatrician and  
Clinical Assistant Professor, Harvard  
University

Urie Bronfenbrenner, Professor of Human  
Development and Family Studies, Cornell  
University

Jerome S. Bruner, Watts Professor of  
Psychology, Department of Experimental  
Psychology, Oxford University

Betty H. Bryant, Nursery School Director,  
Center for Child Care Research, Educa-  
tional Testing Service, Princeton, New  
Jersey

Courtney Cazden, Professor of Education,  
Harvard University

Joan Goldsmith, Co-Director, The  
Institute of Open Education/Antioch  
Graduate Center

Patricia Marks Greenfield, Associate  
Professor of Psychology, University of  
California at Los Angeles

John Herzog, Associate Professor of  
Education, Northeastern University

David Kantor, Director of Research and  
Development, Boston Family Institute

Eli H. Newberger, Director, Family  
Development Study, The Children's  
Hospital Medical Center

Ed Tronick, Associate in Pediatrics,  
Harvard Medical School, Harvard  
University

Robert Selman, Clinical Psychologist,  
Judge Baker Child Guidance Center,  
Boston, Massachusetts

Beatrice Blyth Whiting, Professor of  
Education and Anthropology, Harvard  
University

Developers:  
Norma Arnow  
Wendy Johnson Barnes  
Ellen Grant  
Rogier Gregoire  
Toby Grover  
Patricia Hourihan  
Margaret Janey  
Peggy Lippitt  
Ronald Lippitt  
Karlen Lyons  
Lucy Lyons  
Pamela Matz  
Jim McMahan  
John Nove  
Judith Salzman  
Jeanette Stone  
Ianthe Thomas  
Juliet Vogel  
Sandra Warren  
Dennie Wolf

Filmmakers:  
Henry Felt  
John Friedman  
Mark Harris  
Lynn Smith  
David Vogt

Film Staff:  
David Barnett  
David Berenson  
Frank Cantor  
Elvin Carini  
Edward Joyce  
Allegra May  
David Nelson  
Charles Scott  
Dan Seeger  
Charles White, Jr.

Editors:  
Anne Cleaves  
Anne Glickman  
Marcia Mitchell  
Marjorie Waters  
Nancy Witting

Design:  
Myra Lee Conway  
Roz Gerstein  
Diana Ritter  
Michael Sand  
Karen Shipley  
Judy Spock  
Alison Wampler

Production:  
Patricia A. Jones  
Scott Paris

Parent Education:  
Louis Grant Bond  
Naarah Thornell

Teacher Education:  
Michael J. Cohen  
Rita Dixon  
Marjorie Jones  
Edward Martin  
Barbara S. Powell  
Emma Wood Rous

Evaluation:  
Geraldine Brookins  
Martin Chong  
Catherine Cobb  
Karen C. Cohen  
Joan Costley  
Sherryl Graves  
Aisha Jones  
Eileen Peters  
Toby Schneider  
Caren von Hippel

Regional Evaluators:  
John R. Brown  
Karen M. Cohen  
Judith McMurray  
Mark Walker  
Kaffie Weaver

Regional Field  
Coordinators:  
Florence J. Cherry  
Thomas A. Fitzgerald  
Andrea J. Love  
Annie Madison  
T. David Wallsteadt  
Dianne H. Willis

Support Staff:  
Marylene Altieri  
Florence Bruno  
Genevra Caldon  
Bushra Karaman  
Judith Knapp  
Ruth Kolodney  
Pamela Ponce de Leon  
Maria Rainho  
Barbara Connolly Sweeney  
Denise Weaver

Distribution Coordinator:  
Steve Westlund

EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT  
CENTER/EDC SCHOOL AND  
SOCIETY PROGRAMS

Director:  
Janet Whitla

Central Staff:  
Marilyn Clayton Felt  
Vivian Guilfooy  
Cheryl Healer  
Earle Lomon  
Ruth N. MacDonald  
Dennen Reilley  
Susan Christie Thomas

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