Chapter 3
Developmental Tasks

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing this period and the features in this period is regarded very important in terms of evaluating, following, and supporting child development. The concept of a developmental task should be approached in each period in order to understand the development. An individual should be biologically ready to carry out the developmental tasks belonging to the period he is in. However, in addition to biological readiness, the environmental conditions like the education environment should be appropriate in order to carry out the developmental tasks. Especially in the early years, schools have crucial roles in children’s fulfillment of the developmental tasks and developing. Development periods and development duties should be known in order to observe and understand the development process better. Based on this view, the development periods and the development duties are to be explained in this section.

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing this period and its features is regarded very important in terms of evaluating, following and supporting child development. The concept of developmental task should be approached in each period in order to understand the development (Bacanlı, 2002), because there are developmental tasks to be fulfilled in each period of development. An individual should be biologically ready to carry out the developmental tasks belonging to the period he is in. However, in addition to biological readiness, the environmental conditions such as the educational environment should be appropriate in order to carry out the developmental tasks. Especially in the early years, schools have crucial roles in children’s fulfillment of the developmental tasks and developing healthily (Erden and Akman, 1998). Development periods and developmental tasks should be known in order to observe and understand the development process better. Based on this view, the development periods and the development tasks are to be explained in this section.

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BACKGROUND

Development is the growth, maturation and the continuous progression of the organism with the interaction of learning. When the development is considered as a product of maturation and learning processes, the direction of the process is the development. Starting from the fertilization, the change of the organism which makes continuous progress from many aspects to the end is called development (Senemoğlu, 2007). According to another definition; the development can be defined as the characteristic changes happening in man’s structure from the fertilization until the death. Various changes occur within the framework of the concept of development. The development can be examined as consisting of three dimensions; these are biological, cognitive and social developments. Such dimensions of the development are too complex a process to be evaluated separately. From those dimensions; the biological process involves the changes which may occur in parallel with the genes an individual receives from his parents hereditarily. These include the weight, the increase in height, hormonal changes and so on. The cognitive process involves the changes in the individual’s thinking and intelligence capacity. The functions such as using imagination, problem solving and memorizing the lyrics are all evaluated within the cognitive development. The social process is the cluster of changes that involves the individual’s relations with the other people and his personality. All the conditions such as the reactions to parents, the general characteristics of friend relationships and the passion for sports are the features which involve the social processes of the teenager’s development. All the above-mentioned processes are closely related to each other. Any changes in one of them also affect the other. Rapid biological development and puberty influence an individual’s social process, namely his self-concept, and such a condition can affect his cognitive, that is to say, his intelligence performance. Considering the development as consisting of three dimensions and a resultant of complex processes is a valid phenomenon for all the life cycles. The biological, cognitive and social processes continuing in man’s life become effective within the framework of role and responsibilities attributed to the individual in every age period (Yazgan İnanç et. al., 2010).

Critical period of time is another important factor in the development of organism. There are times for each development to appear universally in a most intensive way. Those times are described as the critical period for that development. If the organism has the necessary hereditary potential in that period of time, when it is met with the sufficient stimulus, the emergence of the top-level development is possible in terms of some behaviors or some organs and their functions (Deniz, 2018). The environmental and hereditary factors, which provide the development, continue to show their influences starting from the fertilization until the end of the life. The biological characteristics of the baby to be born are determined by the genes in the 46 chromosomes which are in the first cell formed with the fertilization. However, the revelation of the genetic features with full potential on the organism is largely related to the experiences the organism has had, namely the environmental conditions (Erden and Akman, 1998).

The development consists of many changes that follow each other in some specific periods of life. The importance of the early years of time and the determinative influence of the interaction between the heredity and environment require the development, which starts in the prenatal period, to be examined by dividing it into some periods together with the birth (Erden and Akman, 1997). Time frame, period or stage concepts in the development are used to mention the progress that appear in specific ages and have their distinctive features. The stages in which some features are clearly seen are called periods (Deniz, 2018).

Babies, who make progress in the babyhood period from various aspects such as motor skills and coordination, language skills and emotional skills, develop a sense of attachment to family members and