



Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Erikson maintained that personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development. According to Erikson's theory, every person must pass through a series of eight interrelated stages over the entire life cycle

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

Approximate Age	Psychosocial Crisis/Task	Virtue Developed
Infant - 18 months	Trust vs Mistrust	Hope
18 months - 3 years	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Will
3 - 5 years	Initiative vs Guilt	Purpose
5 -13 years	Industry vs Inferiority	Competency
13 -21 years	Identity vs Confusion	Fidelity
21- 39 years	Intimacy vs Isolation	Love
40 - 65 years	Generativity vs Stagnation	Care
65 and older	Integrity vs Despair	Wisdom

1. Infancy: Birth-18 Months Old

Basic Trust vs. Mistrust – Hope

During the first or second year of life, the major emphasis is on the mother and father's nurturing ability and care for a child, especially in terms of visual contact and touch. The child will develop optimism, trust, confidence, and security if properly cared for and handled. If a child does not experience trust, he or she may develop insecurity, worthlessness, and general mistrust to the world.



2. Toddler / Early Childhood Years: 18 Months to 3 Years

Autonomy vs. Shame – Will

The second stage occurs between 18 months and 3 years. At this point, the child has an opportunity to build self-esteem and autonomy as he or she learns new skills and right from wrong. The well-cared for child is sure of himself, carrying himself or herself with pride rather than shame. During this time of the “terrible twos”, defiance, temper tantrums, and stubbornness can also appear. Children tend to be vulnerable during this stage, sometimes feeling shame and low self-esteem during an inability to learn certain skills.



3. Preschooler: 3 to 5 Years

Initiative vs. Guilt – Purpose

During this period we experience a desire to copy the adults around us and take initiative in creating play situations. We make up stories with Barbie's and Ken's, toy phones and miniature cars, playing out roles in a trial universe, experimenting with the blueprint for what we believe it means to be an adult. We also begin to use that wonderful word for exploring the world—"WHY?"



4. School Age Child: 6 to 12 Years

Industry vs. Inferiority – Competence

During this stage, often called the Latency, we are capable of learning, creating and accomplishing numerous new skills and knowledge, thus developing a sense of industry. This is also a very social stage of development and if we experience unresolved feelings of inadequacy and inferiority among our peers, we can have serious problems in terms of competence and self-esteem.



5. Adolescent: 12 to 18 Years

Identity vs. Role Confusion – Fidelity

Up until this fifth stage, development depends on what is done to a person. At this point, development now depends primarily upon what a person does. An adolescent must struggle to discover and find his or her own identity, while negotiating and struggling with social interactions and “fitting in”, and developing a sense of morality and right from wrong.



6. Young adult: 18 to 35

Intimacy and Solidarity vs. Isolation – Love

At the young adult stage, people tend to seek companionship and love. Some also begin to “settle down” and start families, although seems to have been pushed back farther in recent years.

Young adults seek deep intimacy and satisfying relationships, but if unsuccessful, isolation may occur.



7. Middle-aged Adult: 35 to 55 or 65

Generativity vs. Self absorption or Stagnation – Care

For this stage, working to establish stability and Erikson's idea of generativity – attempting to produce something that makes a difference to society. Inactivity and meaninglessness are common fears during this stage.



8. Late Adult: 55 or 65 to Death

Integrity vs. Despair – Wisdom

Erikson believed that much of life is preparing for the middle adulthood stage and the last stage involves much reflection. As older adults, some can look back with a feeling of integrity — that is, contentment and fulfillment, having led a meaningful life and valuable contribution to society. Others

may have a sense of despair during this stage, reflecting upon their experiences and failures. They may fear death as they struggle to find a purpose to their lives, wondering “What was the point of life? Was it worth it?”

