

... alone. It is often accompanied by the feeling of guilt.

5.3(e) COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN LATE CHILDHOOD

Cognitive development refers to the development of ability to think and reason. The capacity to learn, remember and symbolize information and to solve problems, exists at a simple level in young children, who can perform cognitive tasks such as discriminating animate and inanimate

beings or recognizing small numbers of objects. During late childhood, learning and information-processing increase in speed, memory becomes increasingly longer and symbol use and the capacity for abstraction develop.

During the late childhood stage, children are on a different plane, belonging to a generation and feelings of their own. This is the time when children are ready to learn. They develop a sense of wanting to make things and not just to make them but to make them well and even perfectly. Their thirst is to know and to understand. They are able to apply this new understanding to concrete objects that they have actually experienced. In other words, imagined objects or things those have not seen, heard or touched, continue to remain somewhat strange to these children and abstract thinking has yet to develop.

According to Jean Piaget, late childhood is a period of Concrete Operations. This time span is characterized by the developing capacity of organizing thought processes and use of deductive reasoning to successfully anticipate consequences. In addition, the ability to sort items by recognizing the abstract and more complex similarities develops. For example, car, boat, airplane are all modes of transport. Mathematical reciprocal relationships also become comprehensible. For example, $5+3=8$, therefore $8-5=3$. The ability of seriation or the ability to order objects to some quantitative dimension also develops. For example bringing things in order from the smallest to the biggest or from shortest to longest. Academically, the child starts to develop the ability to form an opinion based upon presented evidence. He is also able to present his own beliefs to his peers and parents. The ability to analyze a written story and categorize it as fiction, non-fiction etc. is noted. By the end of childhood, a child is generally able to write several paragraphs supporting his agreement.

As children advance in this stage, their intellectual thinking changes in many ways. Logic is developed and the child can handle simple concepts within a limited framework. They can think about their own behavior and see the consequences for their actions.

The best way for them to learn is to be active while learning. For example, children will learn more effectively about traffic safety by mov-

ing cars, blocks and toy figures rather than sitting and listening to an adult lecture about it. The memory capacity is also increased at this stage. The attention span also gets longer. In the early childhood stage, a child could hardly sit for longer than 15 to 20 minutes. But during the late childhood, a longer attention span of about 30 to 45 minutes sets in and the child enjoys mental and physical challenges.