

**Outline of Information: Gender Development and Adolescence**  
Information found [on Wikinotes for Developmental Psychology](#)

1. Gender development
  1. In most ways, men and women are the same. 45 of 46 chromosomes are identical. Yet, as always, we focus on the differences. And in case you haven't noticed, there are differences between men and women.
  2. Self-esteem scores differ slightly. Men are slightly higher in self-esteem scores than women. As to why this is the case, who knows?
    1. It likely has something to do with the perceived expectations – the “general view” is that a woman is slender, young and attractive. If a woman feels she doesn't meet this view, she'll sadly score herself lower in self-esteem. Don't fall into this trap girls! You're beautiful because of who you are!
  3. Women can smell better, express emotions better, are helped more.
  4. Women are also more often depressed, anxious, and have a 10 times greater chance of developing an eating disorder (this goes back to expectations).
  5. Men are 4 times more likely to commit suicide or become alcoholics, and are more often autistic, color-blind, have ADHD, or are anti-social.
    1. Men are more aggressive than women.
    2. Men, in most cultures, are the “more dominant” gender socially.
  6. More differences...
    1. Men tend to be more accomplishment-oriented, women more relationship-oriented.
    2. Males spend more time alone; women more time with others.
    3. Males are more thing-oriented; women more people-oriented.
    4. Males are more me-reliant than women (and therefore less religious).
    5. These traits peak at late-adolescence/early adulthood and reach a low-point at around age 50.
  7. The nature of gender is a mix of nature and nurture, like most things in psychology.
    1. Biologically, males have an extra Y chromosome, females an X.
    2. The Y chromosome tells males to grow the testes and testosterone.
      1. If a girl has a glandular irregularity and has more testosterone, her genitals may appear boyish. As a girl, she may be tomboyish. Still, she is usually not homosexual and not trans-sexual; she's a girl.
      2. Animals, like monkeys, reflect the notion above that girls behave like girls and boys like boys. There is a less clear behavior amongst people. The belief is that the way others interact with a tomboyish girl affects the way she acts – she may act more boyish because she's treated more boyish (not because she actually is).
    3. The nurture of gender matters as well (as just stated).
      1. **Gender-role** expectations play a huge role in shaping who we are.
      2. Our gender identity is our sense of being male or female (isn't that clear already?!).
        1. Our **gender type** is how others see us in terms of male/female. Some boys show more “girlish” traits and vice-versa.
        2. **Social learning theory** suggests that we learn boyish or girlish traits through observation and imitation. I.e., a girl watches a mother with a baby and mimics her with a baby doll.
        3. To children around age 5 or 6, gender differences are huge differences.- 2. Parents and early experiences
  1. Unquestionably, our parents and upbringing shape who we are and our future.
  2. We humans begin at conception – both our lives and our upbringing begin then.
    1. Genetics forms our physical makeup, but the environment (nutrition, love, interaction) fills in the spaces.
    2. A study of rats had one group alone and in a blank environment. A second group had playmates and a stimulating environment. The second group's brain cells were considerably more developed.
    3. The brain is like a muscle – when it's used, it grows, when it's not used, it's stunted.
  3. The question arises, “How much credit or blame should parents get for a child's successes or failures?”
    1. It's popular to blame a person's failures on the parents' failures.

2. In essence, this is the easy way out. People are responsible for their own actions and to blame a parent decades earlier is to shirk self-responsibility.
3. It's not fair or healthy to grow stuck on problems of the past – we can overcome and move on from bad things that happened in our past.
3. Peer influence
  1. During childhood and especially in adolescence, we're concerned about fitting in with peers.
  2. Parents and peers tend to split "responsibilities"...
    1. Parents are turned to for the long-term – discipline, order, education, stability and the future.
    2. Peers are turned to for the now – popularity, style and interaction.
4. Physical development
  1. Adolescence begins at puberty with the beginning of physical maturity. It's often a conflicting time of being half-child, half-adult.
    1. Girls begin puberty earlier than boys and have an earlier growth spurt than boys. At around age 11 to 13/14, girls are actually taller on average than boys.
5. Cognitive development
  1. In early adolescence, pre-teens develop increased reasoning ability. But, they often view their reasoning as being unique (it's not).
  2. In later adolescence, teens develop the ability to reason abstractly.
    1. They can reason things like fairness, right-and-wrong, good-vs.-evil, etc.
    2. They can think hypothetically and make deductions based on situations in their minds. Thus, they can point out hypocrisies or problems with parents and get into serious debates.
  3. **Lawrence Kohlberg** is the heavyweight of moral development, just as Jean Piaget is the heavyweight of cognitive development. Kohlberg gave people moral dilemmas, tough questions, and studied how people figure right and wrong. Like Piaget, Kohlberg came up with stages...
    1. **Preconventional morality** – This takes place before age 9 and focuses on a child's self-interest. Something is good if it helps the child (no matter that it might hurt someone else). Rules are obeyed simply because doing so avoids punishment.
    2. **Conventional morality** – This takes place around age 9 to the mid-teen years. Things are done because there are rules and they are to be obeyed. It's as if they're being "good citizens" and are following the laws because they are laws, unquestioningly. A person here would say stealing is wrong because there are laws against it.
    3. **Postconventional morality** – This begins at later adolescence and sees people doing things out of respect for others rights or human dignity or basic ethical beliefs. A person here would explain that stealing is wrong because it violates another's right to property.
    4. Kohlberg asked tough, "What would you do?" questions like, "Is it okay to steal medicine to give to someone who needs them?" He was interested in why the person said it's okay or not.
      1. Character education today focuses on doing "the right thing." This can be a very ambiguous interpretation though, what's "right" can be answered many ways. Traditionally, religion answers this question with moral absolutes.
      2. People who delay gratification are more socially responsible and successful. These folks work for the future rather than live for the now.
6. Social development
  1. **Erik Erickson** studied "psychosocial" development. Like Piaget and Kohlberg, he came up with stages of development, 8 in all.
  2. Erikson believed that at each stage a person faced some type of a crisis. He or she needed to resolve that crisis before moving on to the next stage. Erikson's stages were...
    1. Trust vs. mistrust – Infancy – If an infants basic needs are met, they develop trust.
    2. Autonomy vs. shame/doubt – Toddlers – They wish to do things on their own, or they're ashamed.
    3. Initiative vs. guilt – Preschool – They make and carry out plans, or they're guilty for failing to do so.
    4. Industry vs. inferiority – Grade school – Kids feel good about being productive, or they feel inferior for failing to do so.
    5. Identity vs. role confusion – Adolescence – Teens test different roles, or they're confused about who they are.
    6. Intimacy vs. isolation – Young adults – They try to gain a close loved one, or they feel alone.

7. Generativity vs. stagnation – Middle aged – They gain a sense of adding to the world through family and/or work, or they feel they've no purpose.
8. Integrity vs. despair – Late adulthood – They look back on their lives and either see a sense of worth or failure.
3. A person's **identity** a person's stable sense of who they are.
4. A person's social identity is how people view themselves in comparison to others; it often involves what makes them unique.
5. **Intimacy** often comes after a person has a good sense of his/her identity.
6. Adolescents simultaneously grow in their sense of identity and drift away from parents. In return for parents losing influence, a teen's peers gain influence.
  1. Teens infamously become very concerned with what "everybody else is doing" and the influence of peer pressure.
  2. Teens who withdraw from others often see negative effects – loneliness, low self-esteem, and depression.
  3. Parents still have influence in terms "big decisions" like religion and career choices.