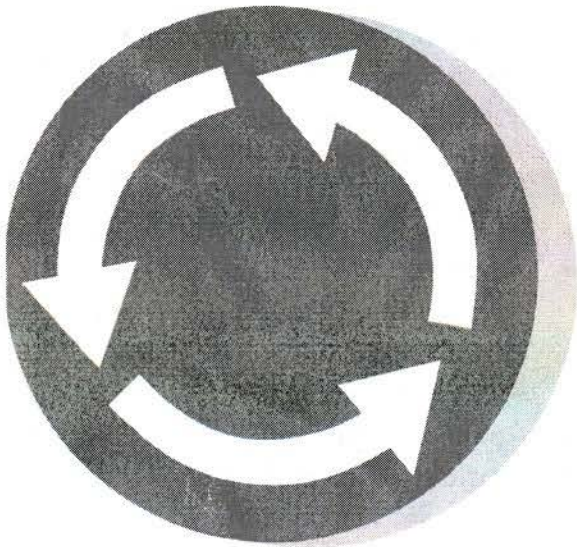


Recycling Theory of Development



In Recycling Theory, each age, from birth to adulthood, has a particular *task of development* to focus on. However, children [and adults] may also be *recycling*, or working on, previous tasks as well. This summary includes the stages up to 12 years old. To read about later stages, or for more in-depth information, see *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson.



"The idea of growth as a cycle is common to many cultures and religions including the Native American medicine wheel circle, ancient Egyptian and Persian doctrines, Taoism and Buddhism. What these perspectives have in common is a cycle based on nature - a rhythmic circle of seasonal growth and return. Berne recognized that developmental processes begun in childhood remain active and important throughout our lives. This challenges the modern, technological perspective that presents development as linear". (p. 2, *Cycles of Development* - reference below)

When you are looking at what is reasonable to expect of children, it is helpful to look at what developmental tasks they are working on. A four-year-old who is experimenting with power may refuse to cooperate simply to see how *you* use power. A ten-year-old may be more interested in how his neighbors make beds and set the table than how his family does.

As people pass through each stage of development, they often return and work on a previous level in a new way. This is why a six-year-old who is starting a new level of development may need extra loving, care, and support; or why an eight-year-old who is saying "no" (like a two-year-old) needs clear, firm limits and support. Parents often recycle the same issues their children are working on. This makes family life particularly challenging when both parents and children are recycling power issues or saying "no".

References:

Stages of Development - http://www.calgaryandareacfsa.gov.ab.ca/crv/pdf/Understanding_Child_Development.pdf

Cycles of Development - <http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/PDFpubs/4427.pdf>

Adapted from *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson


Age	Tasks	Child's Responsibility	Parents' Responsibility
0 to 6 months	Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide to live and grow Be Ask for what you need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the child Delight in the child Protect & nurture the child
6 to 18 months	Doing & Exploring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore environment Explore senses Do things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a safe environment with many things to explore Care for self to maintain health & patience
18 to 36 months	Independent Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to think Distinguish between thinking and feeling Separate from parents Say, "No" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage thinking Distinguish between feelings & behavior Accept children's feelings Recognize "No's" as beginning of separation rather than disobedience Be in charge of the rules Be the grownup - run the family
3 to 6 years	Power & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe how people (both men and women) get what they want Decide how to use power Test power Try on roles Start socially appropriate behaviour Separate fantasy from reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model appropriate use of power Establish consequences for misuse of power Accept children's need to test limits without feeling personally threatened Rules with reasons Reward imagination Be clear about reality Teach social manners Be the grownup - run the family
6 to 12 years	Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out how the world works and develop a structure for living in it Test rules Make up rules Practice values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer skills & support to children as they develop rules for living with their peers & family Help children make decisions & motivate themselves to follow through Examine rules Enforce or negotiate rules Allow consequences Teach moral behaviours Be the grownup - run the family

Adapted from *Growing Up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson

Stage One - "Being"

Birth to about 6 Months


The first stage is about deciding to be, to live, to thrive, to trust, to call out to have needs met, to expect to have needs met, to be joyful. These decisions are important to nourish and amplify throughout our whole lives.

	<p>Developmental tasks of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To call for care. • To cry or otherwise signal to get needs met. • To accept touch. • To accept nurture. • To bond emotionally, to learn to trust caring adults and self. • To decide to live, to be. 	<p>Typical behaviours of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cries or fusses to make needs known. • Cuddles. • Makes lots of sounds. • Looks at and responds to faces, especially eyes. • Imitates.
<p>Parent can affirm to child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm glad you are alive. • You belong here. • What you need is important to me. • I'm glad you are you. • You can grow at your own pace. • You can feel all of your feelings. • I love you and I care for you willingly. 	<p>Helpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm the child for doing developmental tasks. • Provide loving, consistent care. • Respond to infant's needs. • Think for the baby. • Hold and look at baby while feeding. • Nurture by touching, looking, talking, and singing. • Get help when unsure of how to care for baby. • Be reliable and trustworthy. • Get others to nurture you. 	<p>Unhelpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not responding to the baby's signals. • Not touching or holding enough. • Rigid, angry, agitated responses. • Feeding before baby signals. • Punishment. • Lack of healthy physical environment. • Lack of protection, including from older siblings. • Criticizing child for anything. • Discounting.
<p>Clues that an adult has needs from this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not trusting others. • Wanting others to know what you need without your asking. • Not knowing what you need. • Not needing anything. Feeling numb. • Believing others needs are more important than yours. • Not trusting others to come through for you. • Not wanting to be touched, or either compulsive touching or joyless sexual touching. • Unwillingness to disclose information about self, especially negative info. 	<p>Activities to support adults' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and adapt this stage's "Helpful parent behaviours" to care for your inner child. • Take a warm bath and get a therapeutic massage. • Sing lullabies to yourself. • Get more hugs. • Close your eyes. Visualize yourself as a child. If the all-perfect mother or father could see you right now, what would she/he do? What would she/he say? Do & say those things to yourself or ask someone who loves you to do or say those things. • Do something to make your house more comfortable. • Get therapy if you need it. 	<p>Growing up again affirmations for adults for "being":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm glad I am alive. • I belong here. • What I need is important. • I'm glad I am me. • I grow at my own pace. • I feel all of my feelings. • I love and care for myself and willingly accept love and care from others.

Stage Two - "Exploring & Doing"

From about 6 to about 18 months


The "doing" stage is a powerful time when child decides to trust others, that it is safe & wonderful to explore, to trust his senses, to know what he knows, to be creative & active, & to get support while doing all these things.

	<p>Developmental tasks of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore & experience environment. • Develop sensory awareness by using all senses. • Signal needs; trust others and self. • Continue forming secure attachments with parents. • Get help in times of stress. • Start to learn that there are options and not all problems are easily solved. • Develop initiative. • Continue tasks from Stage 1 	<p>Typical behaviours of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests all senses by exploring the environment. • Is curious. • Is easily distracted. • Wants to explore on own but be able to retrieve caregiver at will. • Starts patty-cake and peek-a-boo. • Starts using words during middle or latter part of stage.
<p>Parent can affirm to child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can explore & experiment & I will support & protect you. • You can use all of your senses when you explore. • You can do things as many times as you need to. • You can know what you know. • You can be interested in everything. • I like to watch you initiate and grow and learn. • I love you when you are active & when quiet. 	<p>Helpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm child for doing developmental tasks. • Offer love, safety & protection. • Provide a safe environment. • Protect child from harm. • Provide healthy food, nurturing touch & encouragement. • Say two yeses for every no. • Provide a variety of things for the child to experience. • Refrain from interrupting child when possible. • Respond as child initiates play. • Take care of own needs. 	<p>Unhelpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to provide protection. • Restricts mobility. • Criticizes or shames child for exploring or for anything. • Punishment. • Expects child not to touch "precious" objects. • Expects toilet training. • Discounting.
<p>Clues adult has needs at this stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boredom. • Reluctance to initiate. • Being overactive or over quiet. • Avoiding doing things unless you can do them perfectly. • Being compulsively neat. • Not knowing what you know. • Thinking it is okay not to be safe, supported, protected. 	<p>Activities to support adults' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the house on hands & knees. Notice how different things look. • Ask a friend to take you some place you've never been before. • Explore safe objects. Pay close attention as you shake, smell, taste, see, hear, & stack them. • How does it feel to learn about familiar things in a new way? • Explore new talents, foods, activities & cultures. • Drive to work a different way. • Get therapy if you need it. 	<p>Adult affirmations for "doing":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get support & protection while I explore & experiment. • I use all of my senses when I explore. • I do things as many times as I need to. • I know what I know. • I am interested in everything. • I like to initiate, grow & learn. • I love & accept myself when active & when quiet.

Stage Three - "Thinking"

From about 18 months to about 3 years

In order to separate from parents, children must learn to think and solve problems. Learning to express and handle feelings is also important. These lessons are the focus of Stage Three -the "thinking" stage.


	<p>Developmental tasks of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish ability to think for self. • Test reality, push against boundaries & other people. • Learn to think & solve problems with cause & effect thinking. • Start to follow simple commands. • Express anger & other feelings. • Separate from parents without losing their love. • Start to give up beliefs about being centre of the universe. • Continue tasks from earlier stages. 	<p>Typical behaviours of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins cause & effect thinking. • Starts parallel play. • Starts to be orderly, even compulsive. • Sometimes follows simple commands, sometimes resists. • Tests behaviours: "No, I won't & you can't make me." • Some try out the use of tantrums.
<p>Parent can affirm to child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm glad you are starting to think for yourself. • It's okay for you to be angry, and I won't let you hurt yourself or others. • You can say no and push and test limits as much as you need to. • You can learn to think for yourself and I will think for myself. • You can think and feel at the same time. • You can know what you need and ask for help. • You can become separate from me and I will continue to love you. 	<p>Helpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm the child for doing developmental tasks. • Offer cuddling, love, safety, & protection. • Celebrate child's new thinking ability. • Encourage cause & effect thinking. • Provide reasons, how to's, and other information. • Accept positive & negative expression of feelings. • Teach ways to express feelings instead of hitting or biting. • Set & enforce reasonable limits. • Remain constant in face of child's outbursts; neither give in nor overpower. • Provide time & space for child to organize thinking. • Give simple, clear directions child can follow; encourage and praise achievement. • Expect child to think about own feelings & start to think about other's feelings. • Think of & refer to child as a "Terrific Two." • Take care of own needs. 	<p>Unhelpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using too many don'ts and not enough do's. • Getting caught in power struggles. • Trying to appear to be a good parent by having a compliant child. • Referring to the child as a "terrible two." • Refusing to set limits or expectations. • Setting too high expectations. • Expecting child to play "with" other children before learning to play "near" others. • Refusing to use discipline for not thinking. • Shaming the child. • Discounting.

<p>Clues adult has needs at this stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate rebelliousness (chip on shoulder). • Rather be right than successful. • Think the world revolves around self. • Fear of anger in self or others. • Saying no or yes without thinking. • Scared to say no and allows others to dominate. • Passive-aggressive actions. 	<p>Activities to support adults' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a "No List" of things it is important for you to say no to and say no to them. • Get a new recipe or something to assemble. Follow directions exactly. Get three people to tell you how well you did. • Do something to improve your memory. Learn about memory, read a book, take a workshop. Pick 7 things important for you to remember & remember them. • Get therapy if you need it. 	<p>Affirmations for "thinking":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think for myself & let others think for themselves. • I can be angry & express it in a way that helps solve problems & does not hurt myself or others. • I say no whenever I need. • I can think & feel at the same time; I use my feelings to help me think. • I know what I need & ask for help when I need it.
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Stage Four - Identity and Power

From about 3 to about 6 Years

The tasks of this stage focus on learning and activities that help the person establish an individual identity, learn skills, and figure out role and power relationships with others.

	<p>Developmental tasks of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert identity separate from others. • Acquire information about world, self, body, gender role. • Learn that behaviours have consequences. • Discover his effect on others & his place in groups. • Learn to exert power to affect relationships. • Practice socially appropriate behaviour. • Separate fantasy from reality. • Learn what he does & does not have power over. • Continue earlier tasks. 	<p>Typical behaviours of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in fantasy play, possibly with imaginary companions. • Gathers information: how, why, when, how long, etc. • Tries on different identity roles by role-playing. • Learns about power relationships by watching & setting up power struggles. • Practices behaviours for gender role identification. • Starts cooperative play. • Practices socially appropriate behaviour. • Interest in games & rules.
<p>Parent can affirm to child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can explore who you are & find out who others are. • You can be powerful & ask for help at the same time. • You can try out different roles & ways of being powerful. • You can learn the results of your behaviour. • All of your feelings are okay with me. • You can learn what is pretend 	<p>Helpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer love, safety & protection. • Support child to explore things, people, ideas & feelings. • Encourage child to enjoy being a boy or girl; & both are good. • Expect child to express feelings & connect feelings & thinking. • Provide information about world & correct misinformation. • Give answers to questions. • Appropriate positive or negative consequences for actions. 	<p>Unhelpful parent behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teasing. • Inconsistency. • Not expecting child to think for self. • Unwilling to answer questions. • Ridiculing role-playing or fantasies. • Responding to child's fantasies as if real. • Use of fantasy to frighten or confuse child.


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<p>& what is real.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love who you are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use language that is clear about who is responsible for what. • Encourage child's fantasies & separation of fantasy & reality. • Notice appropriate behaviour. • Maintain contact with people who help parent nurture self. • Respond calmly & accurately to curiosity about human body & differences between boys/girls. • Resolve their own identity problems that surface. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discounting.
<p>Clues adult has needs at this stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to be in a position of power. • Afraid of or reluctant to use power. • Feeling driven to achieve. • Overuse of outlandish dress or behaviour. • Frequently comparing yourself to others and needing to come off better. • Wanting or expecting magical solutions or effects. 	<p>Activities to support adults' needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use & adapt "Helpful parent behaviours" to care for self. • List 10 things you'd like to do. • Give or go to a costume party. • Join a men's or women's group. Talk & think about your idea of gender roles. • Find out about a different job. • Write a story starting, "In my next life I will ..." • Learn appropriate manners to use in another culture. • Get therapy if you need it. 	<p>Adult affirmations for "doing":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I continue to explore who I am and I find out who other people are instead of making assumptions. • I am powerful and I do ask for help whenever I need it. • I try out new roles and I learn new ways of being effective and powerful. • I accept responsibility for the results of my behaviour. • I feel, accept & act appropriately on my feelings.

Stage Five - Structure

From about 6 to about 12 Years

It's important at this stage to learn more about Structure and install our own internal Structure. This includes understanding the need for rules, the freedom that comes from having appropriate rules & the relevancy of rules. Examining the values on which our rules are based is important. Another major task is acquiring many kinds of skills.

	<p>Developmental tasks of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn skills, make mistakes & decide to be adequate. • Learn to listen in order to collect information and think. • Practice thinking & doing. • Reason about wants and needs. • Check out family rules & learn about structures outside family. • Learn the relevancy of rules. • Experience the consequences of breaking rules. • Disagree with others & still be loved. • Test ideas and values and learn value options beyond the family. • Develop internal controls. 	<p>Typical behaviours of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks questions and gathers information. • Practices & learns skills. • Belongs to same gender groups or clubs. • Compares, tests, disagrees with, sets, breaks, and experiences consequences of rules. • Challenges parent values, argues, and hassles. • May be open & affectionate or seem cantankerous, self-contained, or may alternate among these.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what is one's own & what is other's responsibility. • Develop capacity to cooperate. • Test abilities against others. • Identify with same gender. • Continue to learn earlier tasks. 	
Parent can affirm to child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can think before you say yes or no and learn from your mistakes. • You can trust your intuition to help you decide what to do. • You can find a way of doing things that works for you. • You can learn the rules that help you live with others. • You can learn when and how to disagree. • You can think for yourself and get help instead of staying in distress. • I love you even when we differ; I love growing with you. 	Helpful parent behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer love, safety & protection. • Affirm child's efforts to learn to do things their own way. • Give lots of love & positive strokes for learning skills. • Give reliable information about people, the world, and gender. • Challenge behaviour & decisions; encourage cause & effect thinking. • Be clear about who is responsible for what. • Affirm children's ability to think logically and creatively. • Offer problem-solving tools. • Set and enforce needed non-negotiable and negotiable rules. • Allow safe natural consequences for child's way of doing things. • Continue to care for child even when child disagrees with you. • Encourage separation of reality from fantasy. • Be responsible & encourage child to be responsible for their decisions, thinking & feeling. 	Unhelpful parent behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven enforcement of rules. • Insisting on perfection. • Expecting child to learn needed skills without instructions, help, or standards. • Filling all of the child's time with lessons, teams & activities so child lacks unstructured time to explore interests & learn the relevancy of rules. • Unwillingness to allow child to feel miserable for brief times. • Rules and values too rigid or lacking. • Unwillingness or lack of ability to discuss beliefs and values, to re-evaluate rules, and to expect the child to develop skills for personal responsibility. • Discounting.
Clues adult has needs at this stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having to be part of a "gang." • Functioning well as a loner. • Not understanding the relevance of rules. • Not understanding the freedom that rules can give. • Needing to be king or queen of the hill. • Trusting group's thinking more than your own. • Expecting to have to do things without knowing how, find out, or being taught how. • Being reluctant to learn new things or be productive. 	Activities to support adults' needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use & adapt "Helpful parent behaviours" to care for self. • Join a club and figure out what the rules are. • Watch TV for an evening & list morals & values presented. Compare number of alcoholic drinks, cups of coffee or tea, soft drinks, water, incidents of violence, nurturing, etc. • Clean & organize something. • Learn new organization system. • Learn a new skill. • Get therapy if you need it. 	Adult affirmations for "doing": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think before I say yes or no & learn from my mistakes. • I trust my intuition. • I find a way of doing things that works for me. • I know rules that help me live with others & learn new situations. • I know when & how to disagree. • I think for myself & get help instead of distress. • I am lovable even when I differ with others; I love growing with others.