

Here we have the opportunity to build self-esteem and **autonomy** as we gain more control over our bodies and acquire new skills, learning right from wrong.

It is also during this stage, however, that we can be very vulnerable. If we're shamed in the process of toilet training or in learning other important skills, we may feel great **shame and doubt** of our capabilities and suffer low self-esteem as a result.

The most significant relationships are with parents.

3. Play Age: 3 to 5 Years

EGO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME: Initiative vs. Guilt

Basic Strength: 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,

Initiative means a positive response to the world's challenges, taking on responsibilities, learning new skills, feeling purposeful. Parents can encourage initiative by encouraging children to try out their ideas. We should accept and encourage fantasy and curiosity and imagination. **This is a time for play, not for formal education.** The child is now capable, as never before, of imagining a future situation, one that isn't a reality right now. Initiative is the attempt to make that non-reality a reality.

The most significant relationship is with the basic family.

4. School Age: 6 to 12 Years

EGO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME: Industry vs. Inferiority

Basic Strengths: Method and 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.

As the world expands a bit, our most significant relationship is with the school and neighborhood. Parents are no longer the complete authorities they once were, although they are still important.

A happier thing is to develop the right balance of industry and inferiority - that is, mostly industry with just a touch of inferiority to keep us sensibly humble. Then we have the virtue called **competency**.

5. Adolescence: 12 to 18 Years

EGO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME: Identity vs. Role Confusion

Basic Strengths: Devotion and Fidelity

Up to this stage, according to Erikson, development mostly depends upon **what is done to us**. From here on out, development depends primarily upon **what we do**. And while adolescence is a stage at which we are neither a child nor an adult, life is definitely getting more complex as we attempt to find our own **identity**, struggle with social interactions, and grapple with moral issues.

Most significant relationships are with peer groups.