

Milestones of Emotional development - SED-S of each domain according to the phases 1-6

Domain 1: Relating to their own body

Development of sensory and motor functions (observed in daily life like personal hygiene, getting dressed)

Domain 2: Relating to Significant Others

Interactions of individuals, attachment forming with emotionally significant others on own initiative and in response to other's initiative. Significant others are parents and primary caregivers or other members of individual's family, neighbours, ...

Domain 3: Dealing with Change – Object Permanence

How individual deals with changes in environment; mental image of environment and object permanence are not present from birth, emerges gradually by maturing. Object permanence is prerequisite for forming secure attachments, dealing effectively with unfamiliar people and new environments.

Domain 4: Differentiating Emotions

Differentiation of emotions

Domain 5: Relating to Peers

How individuals relate to peers, to relatives, classmates, co-worker, residential group or a team. Interested in contact with peers? How individuals approach them and respond on their initiative. Enjoying shared activities?

Domain 6: Engaging with the Material World

Whether individuals show interest in materials and objects in environment; what kinds of materials/objects preferably (unstructured materials like sand, water, toys); how they engage with them (manipulating, examining, collecting, creatively using them, ...)

Domain 7: Communicating with Others

How individuals communicate with others, what their motives are (important to differentiate with level of emotional development, depending on underlying motive/emotional need, like a 2-year-old offering help with motive of wanting attention, contact, shared activity, while a 12-year-old is more interested in helping someone out or prefer to perform the task by themselves). Communication verbal and non-verbal.

Domain 8: Regulating Affect

How intense (especially negative) emotion(s), inner tension, aggression are regulated and modulated. In early stages of development largely dependent on significant others, increasingly influenced through self-regulation when maturing. Ability to regulate emotions and inner tension is prerequisite for successful adaptation to social norms and socially acceptable behaviour.

Phase 1: Adaption (0-6months)

Relating to their own body: Explores their body haphazardly and is primarily occupied with processing physical sensations and environmental stimuli via the proximal senses (i. e. touch, smell, taste).

Relating to significant others: Is largely self-absorbed, makes contact primarily via the proximal senses and is aroused/soothed (i.e. physical and emotional states are regulated) by contact with significant others.

Dealing with change - Object permanence: No mental image of the environment ("Out of sight, out of mind. What I can't see or feel doesn't exist.").

Differentiating Emotions: Certain stimuli are perceived as arousing, others as soothing; responds to unfamiliar and intense stimuli with fear.

Relating to peers: Peers are ignored or regarded as objects.

Engaging with material world: Shows no interest in their material environment; Any exploration is coincidental and primarily via the proximal senses (licking, smelling, touching).

Communicating with others: Communication is not directed at anyone in particular; communicates using the entire body, imitates facial expressions and sounds.

Regulating affect: Affect is regulated through self-stimulation/self-injury, or through physical contact with significant others (external regulation); no control over impulses (especially in the face of strong stimuli).

Phase 2: Socialisation (7-18months)

Regulating to their own body: gradually develops a vague mental image of their body and discovers that it can be used as an instrument (i.e. grasping, handling objects, etc.); largely gross motor activity.

Relating to significant others: He's extremely fixated and dependent on significant others; Makes contact via the proximal and distal senses.

Dealing with change object permanence: Starts to develop understanding of material object permanence. Briefly looks for objects that have disappeared; may seek comfort from transitional objects.

Differentiating emotions: Express this pleasure and displeasure; separation anxiety; enjoys contact with significant others.

Relating to peers: Begins to show interest in peers. Imitates their actions and engages in the same activities but plays alongside rather than *with* them (parallel play).

Engaging with the material world: Manipulates things that are within reach. Explores materials without a definite form.

Communicating with others: Directs communication/attention at others; points at things; uses a small number of words; imitates what they hear or see.

Regulating affect: Affect is regulated through contact with significant others (interpersonal regulation); anxiety/insecurity can lead to uncontrolled aggression towards the environment.

Phase 3: First Individuation (19-36 months)

Regulating to their own body: Experiences their body as the centre of the world and deliberately uses it as an instrument to communicate and get what they want; develops fine motor skills.

Relating to significant others: Asserts their will and independence. Recents longer separation from significant others. Makes contact through language, objects and the distal senses.

Dealing with change object permanence: Specifically looks for hidden objects as a mental image of the environment. Turns to transitional objects for comfort.

Differentiating emotions: Feels pride, jealousy, fear (i.e. of physical injury, loss of autonomy).

Relating to peers: Begins to interact with peers and participate in group play but remains largely self-centred and tries to impose their will on others.

Engaging with the material world: Focused, deliberate investigations of materials and structures. Is more interested in the process (i.e. painting) than the result.

Communicating with others: Begins to use language specifically to relate to others. Uses the first-person pronoun “I”. Communication is primarily centred on immediate needs, feelings, wants. Tries to provoke others, expresses opposition (“no”).

Regulating affect: Begins to regulate affect autonomously by satisfying physical or emotional needs. Begins to display ability to compromise. Shows uncontrolled physical and/or verbal aggression towards source of frustration (i.e. objects/people imposing limits on their will). Defiant phase.

Phase 4: Identification (4-7 years old)

Regulating to their own body: Forms a gender identity.

Relating to significant others: Increasingly obeys rules and identifies with authority figures. Begins to show empathy and develop an internal moral compass/sense of right and wrong; uses language and play to establish contact and interact with others.

Dealing with change object permanence: Can navigate familiar environments on their own and unfamiliar surroundings with guidance from a trusted person.

Differentiating emotions: Experiences joy, particularly during contact with peers. Shows empathy. Is afraid of failure and disappointing significant others. Develops feeling of shame and guilt.

Relating to peers: Interactions are based on shared interests and objectives. Maintains friendships and enjoys contact with peers.

Engaging with the material world: Uses objects creatively, obtaining a good result (i.e. a nice drawing) is primary.

Communicating with others: Holds simple conversations with others, including peers, drawing on personal experience and imagination, asks numerous “why” questions. Simple self-reflection.

Regulating affect: Increasingly attempts and manages to regulate affect autonomously. Beginning intra-individual regulation.

Phase 5: Reality Awareness (8-12 years old)

Regulating to their own body: Is able to assess their physical appearance and abilities realistically.

Relating to significant others: Internalises social rules and norms as conscious formation proceeds. Uses social and cognitive skills to establish contact.

Dealing with change object permanence: Can manage in unfamiliar surroundings and new situations without any help. Experiences emotional object permanence.

Differentiating emotions: Shows self-esteem, social anxiety (fear of being rejected by peers). Has developed a sense of right and wrong. Can be self-conscious and easily embarrassed in respect to their body and in social situations.

Relating to peers: Works constructively with others towards a common goal (playing and working as a team). Maintains close friendships and is loyal to friends. Is competitive.

Engaging with the material world: Uses materials and objects effectively to constructive, productive ends. The product is primary (i.e. drawing for Christmas cards).

Communicating with others: Uses reasoning and engages others in conversations on real-life topics (discussions, arguments, etc.) Displays understanding and ability to draw conclusions.

Regulating affect: Shows self-regulation in accordance with social values and norms. Secure intra-individual regulation. Is able to modulate and when necessary, suppresses aggressive impulses (i.e. when feeling threatened or slighted or after suffering defeat).

Phase 6: Social Individuation (13-17 years old)

Regulating to their own body: Discovers adolescent sexuality and the significance of physical appearance.

Relating to significant others: Seeks independence from important others. Searches for autonomy.

Dealing with change object permanence: Shows independent action and exploration in unfamiliar environments. Needs occasional support.

Differentiating emotions: Social anxiety and shame (peers, society), self-consciousness, anger or frustration with autonomy restrictions and intense emotions.

Relating to peers: Searches for identity in peer group. Starts discovering romantic relationships. Experiences mutual emotional support in intense friendships.

Engaging with the material world: Autonomous, flexible action and short-term planning of activities, focuses on own benefit of doing activities (i.e. earning money, social reward by peers).

Communicating with others: Political and philosophical discussion content; moralising controversially discussions; shows an increase of self-reflection. Reflection on position in social environment.

Regulating affect: Ability to regulate affect depends on intensity of emotions; either hiding or acting out affects (two extremes). Mood swings.

Source: (Sappok, Zepperitz & Hudson, 2022, S. 64–67)

Bibliographie: Sappok, T., Zepperitz, S. & Hudson, M. (2022). Meeting emotional needs in intellectual disability: the developmental approach. Ashland: Hogrefe.