Preschool through Middle Childhood:  
The Development of the Child’s Mind

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Introduction
In this seminar we will explore developmental issues of early and middle childhood; the preschool and school age period. We will address aspects of development from the preschool/Oedipal period through the middle childhood/latency period, up to puberty. This material will include modern ideas about the significance of the Oedipus, development of the superego and typical defenses, the role of play, and expanding views of gender.

Ideas about development are evolving rapidly. We will discuss some traditional theories and also explore current views of non-linear development that inform the most contemporary views of childhood. Current views include the importance of earlier experiences, especially traumas, on subsequent phases of development, as well as the importance of the child’s developing relationships. Much of the clinical material will focus on treatment of adult patients, and the clinical iterations of childhood that can appear in the transference.

I. Thinking Developmentally in Psychoanalysis
We will begin this course by asking “What does it mean to think developmentally in psychoanalysis?” We will explore how a developmental perspective can inform work not only with children, but also with adult patients in psychoanalysis.


Chodorow, N. J. (2018). Love, respect, and being centered upon: Loewald’s image of development in childhood and the consulting room. Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 71(1), 224-233. [Available in the library: Download in the library, check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

Optional:  
Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to identify two aspects of thinking developmentally.

II. The Oedipal Phase and Oedipus Complex: An Overview
For this class we will read Freud’s case of Little Hans. The case material gives a rich description of how a five year old thinks. We will also pay attention to how Freud used this case to illustrate his ideas about the oedipal phase and the Oedipus complex. The optional reading by Young-Bruehl describes some of the evolution of ideas about the Oedipus complex, particularly Anna Freud’s views.

Freud, S. (1909). Analysis of a phobia in a five-year-old boy (‘Little Hans’). SE: Vol. X (pp. 3-100). [The full case includes an additional 50 pages of discussion, which is optional, though recommended.] PEP Web Link


Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this class, the participant will be able to list three developmental tasks the child faces in the transition from the Preschool/Oedipal age to middle childhood/latency.

III. The Contemporary Oedipus: Looking Backward and Forward in the Developing Mind
In this class, we include current ideas about the effects of trauma, complexity of development, relational views, and the changing focus on the maternal, on contemporary views of the Oedipus complex.


Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this session, the participants will be able to describe 2 changes in perspective about the Oedipus over the last century.

IV. The Superego
We will look at contemporary ideas about the superego, again looking at complexity and context, to think about the superego in relationship to mentalization, as part of affect regulation, perspective taking, and looking forward and backward in time. The Sedlak paper examines the
idea of a normal and pathological superego, and implications for continued development through life.


Sedlak, V. (2016). The psychoanalyst’s normal and pathological superegos. *IJP, 97*(6), 1499-1520. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

**Recommended:** Quinodoz, J.M. (2005). The superego (or ego ideal). In *Reading Freud: A chronological exploration of Freud’s writings* (pp. 206-207). NY: Routledge. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of the seminar, participants should be able to describe and name two facets of the superego.

**V. Gender and Sexuality**

The reading for this class expands prior notions of Oedipal development. Lichtenberg investigates the role of shame in sexual development, and Harris looks at social and gendered contexts in which development occurs.


**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this session the participant will be able to identify two contemporary changes in the understanding of gender development in childhood.

**VI. Middle Childhood/Latency Phase**

Rona Knight’s article looks at latency from a nonlinear dynamic systems approach to development. She obliges us to reconsider linear theories and how we think about and work with child patients. Proner has us look at these issues in adulthood.


(Chapter 5, pp. 101-120). NY: Oxford University Press. [Available in the library: Check reading folder or request from library@bpsi.org]

**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will be able to discuss 2 tasks of latency.

**VII. Symbolization and Fantasy in Middle Childhood**
We will discuss several versions of the common childhood fantasy of the family romance.


**Learning Objective:** At the conclusion of this class, participants will be able to describe a family romance fantasy in childhood.

**VIII. Topics in Latency: Humor and Secrets**
These papers investigate two common preoccupations of the latent child – jokes and secrets.


**Learning Objectives:** At the conclusion of this seminar, participants will be able to describe a function of jokes and secrets for the school aged child.