

1. **Based on the evidence from ages 6 and 8 years old, how well is your child adapting to the school social environment and to the peer group?** To what extent does this adaptation seem to depend on personality characteristics that are fairly stable in your child, and to what extent does your child seem to be developing novel behavior to cope with these new situations?
 - Tobias is adapting well. His teachers regularly praise him for his consistent, cooperative work with groups, respecting the rights and possessions of others, and appropriate peer group interaction. He is demonstrating strength in the areas of spatial understanding and visual arts, and developmentally appropriate levels in speaking and listening, content knowledge in social studies and science, and in data and number concepts. This tells me that he is continuing to develop both *cognitively* and *socially* as well as in his ability to adapt to new situations.
 - Tobias would be classified as a “popular-prosocial child.” This is evident in that he is well liked, gets along with others at home and at school, and demonstrates both “*academic and social competence*.” (Berk, p. 341) Tobias has been consistently “slow to warm up” but he has learned to adapt through consistent exposure to social settings such as a children’s choir, and team sports where he eventually latches onto a group of boys and thrives socially. He is more interested in the social aspect of sport. He is actively pursuing connection with others, which is a great example of his social adaptation. He has however, had to deal with some arguing at home between my partner and I, and has had a significant fight with his friend, which has not been resolved. He has been uncharacteristically moody lately, problematic in the classroom, and hanging out with a new group of friends. Furthermore, he is nervous, unsure of himself and more dependent lately. His fifth grade teacher however, noticed that he is still getting along with others well and highly involved in school. It is noteworthy, however, that Tobias is using *humor* to adapt to these stressors. This is a very engaging and social way to deal with stress in relationships and is consistent with his “*pro-social*” approach.
 - According to the *Wechsler Intelligence Scale* test applied to Tobias, he was friendly and calm and did not have unusual problems with impulsivity and inattentiveness or hyperactivity.
2. **How smart is your child, and in what areas? Refer to the summary of multiple intelligences that appeared at age 6 and to sections of your text. Find specific evidence regarding your child's verbal, logical- mathematical, spatial, musical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence from your observations of your own child as well as the psychologist's report at age 8 years, 11 months, and explain how it ties in to the material in your text and course reader.**

- According to *Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, at age 6, Tobias is demonstrating strength in *linguistic intelligence*. He is communicating grammatically in correct sentences and has an expanding vocabulary. These skills are developmentally appropriate. However, he is showing exceptional strength in reading and writing. He scored (11) on Information, a (12) on vocabulary, an (11) on similarities and a (13) on comprehension according to the *Wechsler Scales Intelligence* test results.
- He is also demonstrating strength in *spatial intelligence*. He performs well in copying designs and spatial rotation. He also demonstrates this strength in that he does not wander outside of established boundaries when on his bike. This exhibits a good memory and a keen awareness of his surroundings, having developed a "*cognitive map*" of our neighborhood. (Berk, p. 300).
- He is demonstrating a developmentally appropriate level of *bodily-kinesthetic intelligence*. Tobias is not particularly skilled at sports, but enjoys the social part of any sport most. He shows interest in participation, and is open to trying new sports at the recreation center.
- Tobias has shown gains in *musical intelligence*. Early in Tobias's life, he joined a children's choir but had trouble singing in key. He has in spite of his slow start demonstrated a consistent interest in music, and has begun learning the keyboard, and taking violin lessons. His interest is strong but his abilities are unremarkable. (Berk, p. 312).

3. Describe some examples of your child's behavior or thinking that you think are due to typical American gender role socialization and explain why you think so, referring to the text and class discussions regarding gender roles and sex differences in behavior. Several examples can be found in the Virtual Child program at ages 6 and 8. How closely does your attitude toward gender roles correspond to typical American attitudes, and if there is a discrepancy, to what do you attribute this (e.g., cultural background, attitudes of your own parents, etc.)?

- Tobias has been affected by gender role socialization. I believe his interest in sports is a primary example of this. He is not drawn to any sport because of its own merits, but rather for the social aspect. His peer group seems to play a significant role in his decision making process, and we have actively reinforced appropriate gender roles. He also has decided that girls are "yucky." This is not true of course, but most likely a very natural result of gender socialization among boys and a great example of *gender typicality* (Berk, p. 344).
- As I mentioned before, we have actively reinforced appropriate gender roles in our home. We have done so by encouraging play with gender appropriate toys like blocks, and encouraging him to pursue his interest in sports. We attempt to give him an appropriate level of autonomy in decision making within reasonable boundaries, which is a typical parental response to male children in contrast to female children (Berk, p. 343). We have also encouraged him in his relationships and play with other boys, but not to the exclusion of girls. Tobias has begun to imitate me with gestures and phrases. When I do interesting things he wants to spend time with me, which will likely prove to be a powerful influence in his understanding of his gender and his role. All of these are constant with the reality that "Children derive these distinctions (i.e.. deciding what traits are "masculine" and "feminine") from observing differences in behavior as well as from adult treatment." (Berk p. 343).

- My attitude toward gender roles corresponds closely to the typical American view. I attribute this to both *heredity and environment*. Genetically, I am a male, and am predisposed to typical male traits, such as increased muscle mass (Berk, p. 296) which has affected my own development. I also have learned by *observing* and *learning* from my father about what it means to be male. (Berk, p. 344). My understanding of my gender has been further reinforced by my religious upbringing and relationships with other boys in my childhood, as well as adult male friendships.

4. Has your child's personality type changed since age 4? Are there any personality traits and abilities on which your child closely resembles you? Describe two of them. Do you think this comes about because of a "genetic" resemblance (i.e., your questionnaire responses) or some consistent practices you've followed in your parenting? For example, if you and your child are both highly open to experience, and you took every available opportunity to explore new things with your child, is it possible you've taught your child to be open to experience?

- Tobias's personality has changed slightly. He began as a "slow to warm up" child, but has adapted to become a "popular, pro-social child." He actively pursues connection with others, and is generally happy, easily calms down when distressed and exhibits consistently increasing ability to self regulate his emotions. His cognitive, social, emotional and physical development is progressing in a very normal and healthy way.
- First, Tobias demonstrates sociability with a slight reluctance in new social situations consistently. This is a character trait that we share in common. I feel social anxiety regularly but have learned to overcome that anxiety and engage in a very actively social manner. He and I both love to work in groups and are actively drawn to activities because of the social component.
- Second, He also is very attentive and listens well demonstrating self control and a strong attention span. This is another trait we share in common. We both have the ability to focus, comprehend information and to understand why it is meaningful. I think this is a result of an extremely social, relational, warm and engaging atmosphere in the home which we both have had the privilege of enjoying.
- Nature and nurture both affect the developmental process. I would attribute trait similarities with Tobias both to *heredity* and to *environment*. First, heredity predisposes us to certain physical traits, obesity for example, that will affect the developmental process (Berk, p. 292). However, with the support of parents, children can learn to choose to regulate their calorie intake effectively through family based interventions focused on changing behavior. (Berk p. 293). This demonstrates that outcomes are not deterministic, but also that certain innate qualities at the very least influence outcomes. Second, similarity in parenting style is also very likely. My parents were very warm, non-judgmental, patient, encouraging appropriate gender roles and positive relational environments. They also allowed me a great deal of autonomy in my decision making processes, and were authoritarian in their parenting style. These values, beliefs and ways of thinking were conveyed to me as a result of what I learned from my parents. They were a great influence in the parenting decisions I made in this exercise.

5. In what ways have factors from Microsystems outside the family, from the mesosystem, and the exosystem possibly influenced your child's development at ages 6, 8 and 10? Find four examples of such influences and make clear why you believe they should be categorized at the particular level you chose within Bronfenbrenner's model. For example, you could choose two microsystems (e.g., classroom and peer group), one mesosystem (parent-peer relations or parent-teacher relations) and one exosystem (something affecting the parent directly but the child only indirectly, through the parent).

- The first factor that has influenced Tobias's development is the *meso-system* which consists of the relationship between our home and his school. These two *micro-systems* affect one another profoundly and therefore the "connection" between them should be considered a *meso-system*. (Berk, p. 25). The recent conflict in our home and separation of my partner and I has affected Tobias negatively in that he has been uncharacteristically moody and problematic in the classroom. There had been consistent financial stress which eventually led to both my partner and I working full time, thereby giving less time and affection to Tobias and his sister Maybe.
- The second factor that has influenced Tobias's development is the *meso-system* which consists of the connection between his various sports teams and our home. Specifically, Tobias's development has been affected in regard to *gender typicality*. Tobias is drawn to the various sports he has participated in not because of any particular interest in the sport, but rather due to the social aspects of the game. Clearly his peer relationships have affected the activities that he chooses. Recently he has been saying that girls are "yucky," which is a good example of this.
- The third factor that has affected Tobias's development is the *exo-system* that consists of the workplaces of my partner and I. An *exo-system* is a "social setting that does not contain the developing person, but nevertheless affect experiences in immediate settings." (Berk, p. 25). The affect they have had is clear in that both my partner and I are working full time, which was not the case early in Tobias's life. We apparently made this decision due to financial stress stemming from unemployment issues. Over time, both of us eventually found jobs, and are spending less time at home with Tobias and Maybe, which affects our ability to express affection. Much of our emotional energy has been spent in conflict with each other as a result as well.
- The final factor that I am going to mention here, that has affected Tobias's development is the *meso-system* that now exists between my home and my partner's home. This of course stems from the fact that my partner and I no longer see eye to eye on important issues and have decided to separate. The stress of "living between two worlds" has clearly had an affect on Tobias. He has been understandably and uncharacteristically nervous, unsure of himself and more dependent lately.