








Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development Handout

Stages	Important event	Virtue	Maldevelopment	Outcome
Trust vs. mistrust <i>(Infancy)</i> 	Feeding and comfort	Hope	Withdrawal	Children who successfully develop trust through consistent, reliable caregiving become confident in their environment and form secure attachments. However, inconsistent or neglectful care can lead to mistrust in relationships and difficulty forming secure bonds with others.
Autonomy vs. shame and doubt <i>(Early childhood)</i> 	Toilet training	Will	Compulsion	When children are supported in their growing independence, they develop self-confidence and a sense of autonomy that carries into later life. If caregivers are too controlling or critical, children may develop self-doubt and struggle with decision-making throughout their development.
Initiative vs. guilt <i>(Play age)</i> 	Exploration and play	Purpose	Inhibition	Children who are encouraged to explore and initiate activities develop a strong sense of purpose and the confidence to lead and set goals. Otherwise, they may develop overwhelming feelings of guilt about their actions and hesitate to take the initiative in future endeavors.

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Industry vs. inferiority <i>(School age)</i> 	School and sports	Competence	Inertia	Success in academic, social, and physical activities leads to a sense of competence and pride in achievements. Children who struggle without adequate support may develop feelings of inferiority that affect their confidence in their abilities

Identity vs. role confusion <i>(Adolescence)</i> 	Social relationships	Fidelity	Repudiation	Adolescents who successfully navigate this stage develop a strong sense of personal identity and direction in life. Those who struggle may experience ongoing confusion about their beliefs, values, and place in society.
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Intimacy vs. isolation <i>(Early adulthood)</i> 	Romantic relationships	Love	Distantiation	Young adults who master this stage develop the ability to form intimate, lasting relationships and maintain strong emotional bonds. Those who don't may struggle with emotional intimacy, fear of commitment, and experience feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
Generativity vs. stagnation <i>(Middle adulthood)</i> 	Parenting or career	Care	Rejectivity	Adults who achieve generativity find fulfillment in guiding the next generation and contributing meaningfully to society through parenting, mentoring, or career achievements. Those who don't resolve this stage may feel unproductive, disconnected from their community, and struggle with finding purpose in their lives.

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<p>Ego integrity vs. despair <i>(Old age)</i></p> 	Reflection in life	Wisdom	Disdain	Individuals who achieve ego integrity can look back on their lives with satisfaction, accepting both successes and failures as part of their journey. Those who struggle with this stage may experience regret, bitterness, and despair over perceived failures and unfulfilled dreams, finding it difficult to accept their life course.

References

Orenstein, G. A. & Lewis, L. (2022). *Erikson's stages of psychosocial development*. StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556096/>

Palm, M. (2024). Lifespan human development: *A topical approach*. Pressbooks. <https://openbooks.library.baylor.edu/lifespanhumandevlopment/chapter/chapter-19-1-eriksons-theory-of-psychosocial-development/>