



- Have you wondered how you grew up ?
- How did you and those around you learn to use words to communicate?
- How did you learn to walk?
- At what age did you learn to climb the stairs?
- Well!! the answer to these type of questions will be evident when you study the subject of Child Development.

Can you identify and list some changes and differences between yourself, a school going child and an infant?

1) ..... 2) ..... 3) ..... 4) ..... 5) .....

We will focus on the changes that take place in humans as we mature from birth to about age 19.

A child progresses from dependency on their parents/guardians to increasing independence. A child's development is strongly influenced by genetic factors (genes passed on from the parents) and events during prenatal life. It is also influenced by environmental factors and the child's capacity to grasp and learn.

### **What does Child Development include?**

**Child Development covers a wide range of skills that a child masters over his/her life span. These relate to different areas :**

- Physical growth and development – Development of various parts of the body.
- Motor skills – Fine motor skills and gross motor skills.
- Sensory – Awareness of information through various senses.
- Cognition – The ability to learn remember and solve problems.
- Speech and Language – Understanding and using language, reading and communication.
- Social interaction and emotions – Interacting with others and self management.

## **1.1 Meaning, Definition, Objectives and Scope of Child Development**

### **1) Meaning and Definition of Child Development**

Human growth and development is a continuous and lifelong process. There are constant changes in the individual from conception to old age. Development begins at the time of conception and continues till death. The field of Human Development is a scientific study of these changes.

According to Laura Berk, “Child Development is a field of study devoted to understanding human constancy and change from conception through adolescence. Child Development is a part of a larger discipline known as Developmental Psychology, or in its interdisciplinary sense, Human Development, which includes all changes throughout the life span.”

Child Development is a specialized area of study which is an integral part of Human Development. It concerns itself with **growth** and **development** of the child right from the moment of **conception** to **adolescence**.

## **2) Objectives of Child Development**

The first eight years of life are known as the foundation age. It lays the foundation for behaviour patterns, attitudes and personality. As the need to study children arose, this evolved as a separate subject of Child Development. The objectives of studying child development are as follows :

### **a) To study overall development of children :**

To know and understand how children develop. The students will learn the developmental patterns, developmental norms, aspects of development, needs of children and children's rights.

### **b) To become acquainted with developmental stages from birth to adolescent years :**

The students will know the different developmental stages such as prenatal, infancy, early childhood and others. They will also study the characteristics of each of these stages.

### **c) To understand the various factors affecting a child's development :**

Factors such as heredity, environment, stimulation, family, learning, maturation, nutrition, rest, exercise and many others have a long lasting effect on the child's development. This information will equip adults to enhance the development of the child.

### **d) To understand the contribution and the role of adults in Child Development :**

To understand, stimulate and promote age appropriate development of children. Parents, teachers, caregivers and society play an important role in development of children. Parents and teachers, play a very significant role in order to ensure that the physical, motor, cognitive, emotional and social needs are met.

## **3) Scope of Child Development :**

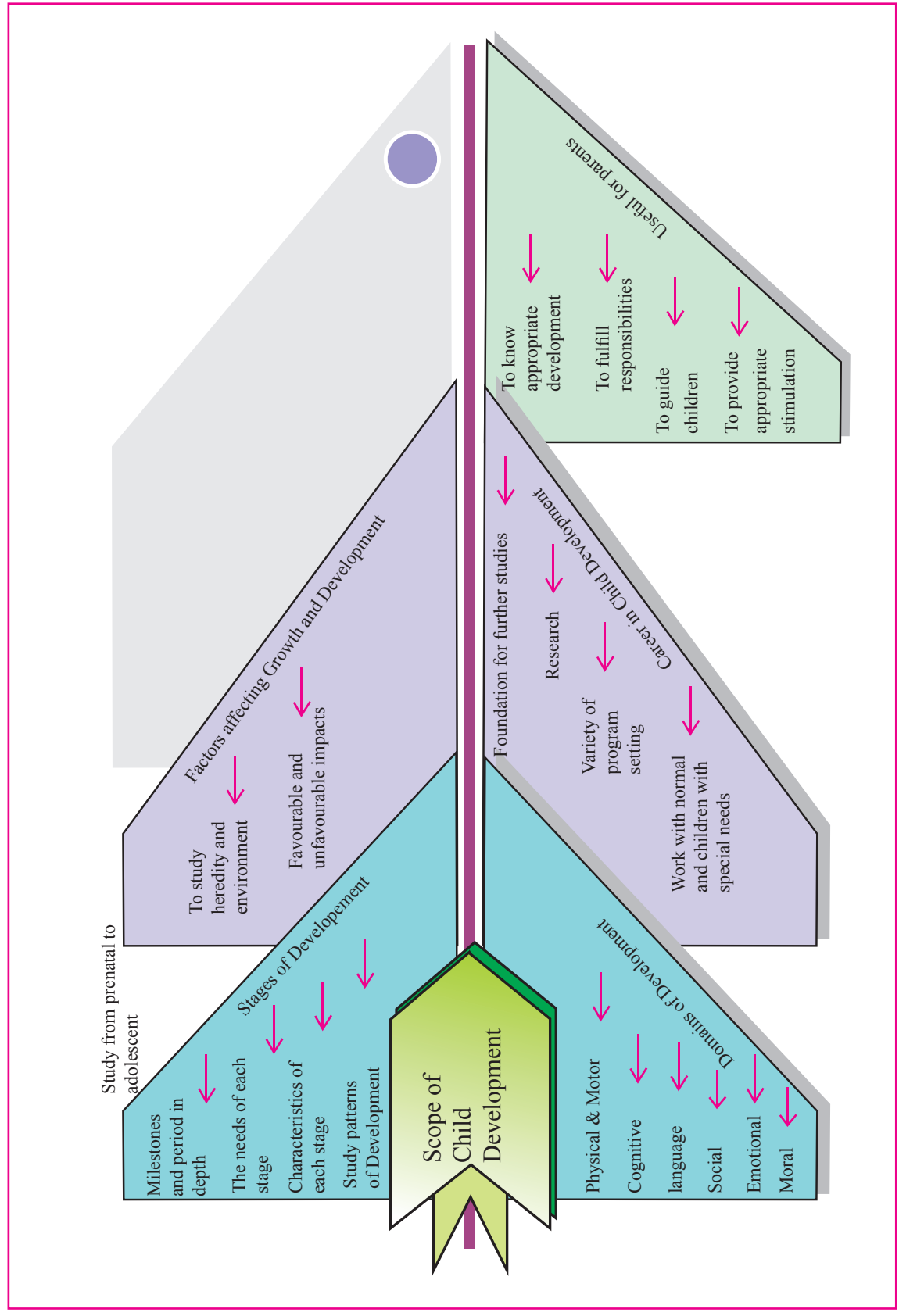
The scope of any discipline depends on depth of the studies, its development and how well it has been related to the environment. Considering such issues, Child Development though a part of Human Development has a wide scope as a separate discipline, since it is directly dealing with human beings. Given below is the scope of Child Development:

### **a) Studying different stages of development :**

The knowledge of this subject helps to study development from the prenatal period to adolescent years in depth. It tells us how the entire life span has been divided into smaller periods highlighting the pattern of development, characteristics of each stage, the milestones and the needs etc. This would lead to promoting further interest in studying this subject.

### **b) Studying various domains of development :**

The different domains would include physical and motor, cognitive, language, social, moral and emotional. These are also known as aspects of development. The interrelation between these aspects will highlight the importance of normal development and related behaviour.



**Fig. 1.1 Scope of Child Development**

**c) Studying the factors affecting growth and development :**

Heredity and environment are the two main factors affecting a child's growth and development. This subject helps to study the favourable and unfavourable impact of heredity and environment on the development of the child. This will help us understand the contribution of these factors that makes every child unique.

**d) To make a career in the field of Child Development / Human Development :**

The basic knowledge of Child Development will be a foundation for further studies and research at a higher level. After studying various theories, experiments and new researches by various educationists, one gets an opportunity to pursue a career in this field with children as well as those with special needs. One can work as a professional in a wide range of settings and programmes for children, youth, and their families.

**e) Useful for parents and would be parents :**

The knowledge of Child Development is very essential for parents and would be parents. Studying the aspects of development will help in fulfilling their responsibilities as parents. They will also be able to guide their children better. The subject covers development from prenatal period to adolescence. With the awareness regarding the milestones at every stage, parents would know whether the child is developing in an appropriate manner.

**f) Useful for various professionals :**

The knowledge of Child Development is useful for various professionals like teachers, counselors, social workers, special educators, health care workers, early childhood educators, toy designers, Anganwadi workers, App makers, Curriculum planners, Policy makers etc.

**Unscramble the underlined word to get the answer from the clue given:**

- Life span divided into small units ----- g acts
- Aspects of development ----- imaodn
- One factor that makes the child unique ----- redyhiet
- To be aware of appropriate development ----- smtioelne

**1.2 Meaning and Definition of Growth and Development**

Very often the terms growth and development are used as synonyms. However both the terms have very specific and characteristically different meanings.

Let us now try to understand both these terms by doing a simple activity. Let us look at your time line and understand the same.

- What was your length when you were a baby and thereafter?
- What was your weight at each stage?
- What are the other changes that you have observed?



### Definition :

**Growth** refers to quantitative changes such as growth in height, weight, etc. The term growth is used for changes that can be measured in numbers or amount, e.g. changes in size, body proportions, number of teeth.

The term **Development** means a progressive series of changes that occur as a result of maturation and learning. Development implies both quantitative and qualitative changes. This means that development does not consist merely of adding inches to one's height or improving one's ability. Instead, it is a complex process of integrating many structures and functions.

The term 'development' covers a much larger spectrum of changes which are both qualitative and quantitative. This includes changes in abilities like learning to speak, changes in behaviour, interests, comprehension and other similar changes.

### Reflection / Darpan

- On a blank sheet of paper place your palm and outline the same. Also do the same with a younger sibling at home / in your neighborhood . (School going boy/ girl and an infant)
- What differences do you see?
- Observe and write down the differences in the abilities.

### Activity :



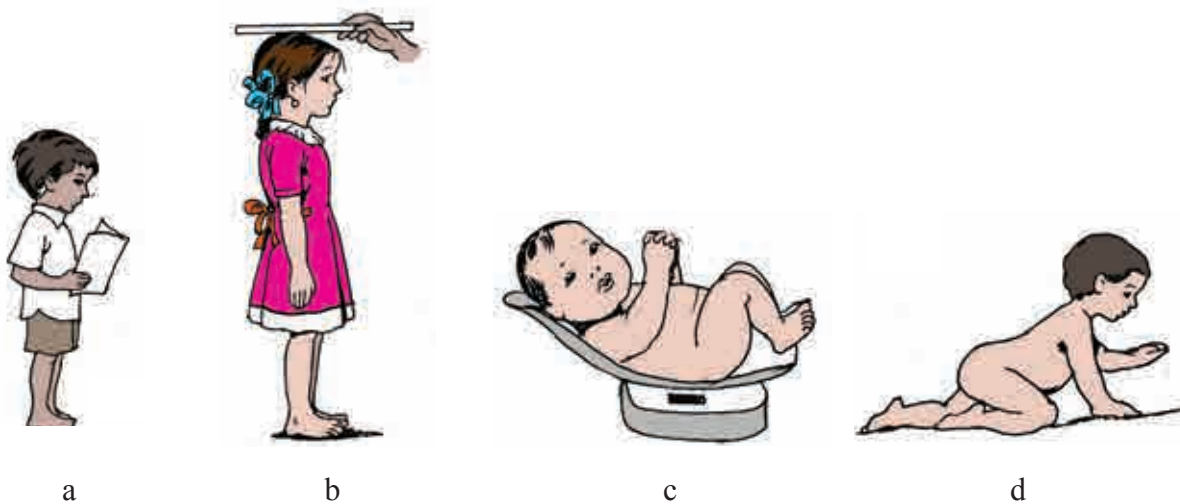
Look at the pictures given above. Write your observation in your own words.

**Table 1.1 Difference between Growth and Development**

Growth	Development
1. Growth refers to changes in particular aspects of the body.	1. Development involves organism as a whole.
2. Growth refers to change in size resulting from multiplication of cells or increase in intracellular substances.	2. Development refers to the maturation of structure and function.
3. Growth refers to quantitative changes e.g. increase in height and weight.	3. Development refers to both quantitative and qualitative changes. e.g. improvement in skills and strategies in memorizing, vocabulary.
4. Growth may not always be progressive.	4. Development is a progressive series of orderly and coherent changes.

5. Growth does not continue throughout life.	5. Development is a continuous process. It starts at conception and continues till death.
6. The changes caused by growth are measurable in units. e.g. growth in height or weight can be measured.	6. Development includes qualitative and quantitative changes which are not directly measurable, but can be observed from behaviour and performance.
7. Growth may or may not bring about development. e.g. a child growing in terms of weight may not show any functional improvement.	7. Development is also possible without growth. e.g. a child may not show any increase in height and weight but may show behavioural improvement or improved cognitive skills.

### Activity :



Observe each picture and write which is growth and development.

a -----

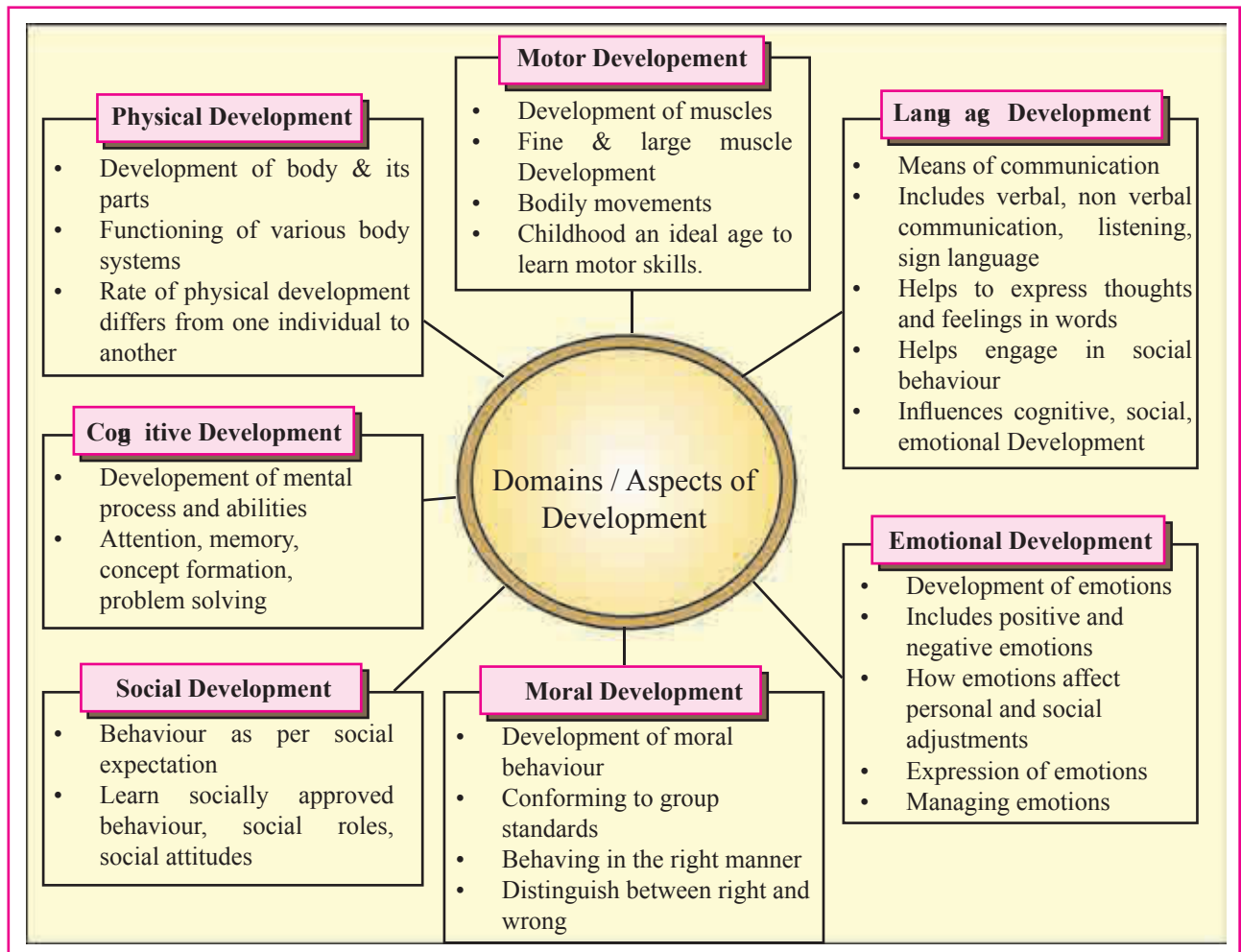
b -----

c -----

d -----

### B Domains / Aspects of Development

Growth and development occurs in different aspects of a human being. The interdisciplinary study of child development is vast. For the purpose of study and to make it more orderly and convenient it is divided into various domains / aspects. These aspects are mainly physical, motor, cognitive, language, social, emotional and moral development. We need to study all these aspects as they all are interrelated and they affect each other. The aspects of development are as follows :



**Fig re 12 Domains / Aspects of Development**

### **i) Physical development :**

Physical growth and development relates to the development of the body and its parts. Changes in the body size, brain development, body proportions, development of sensory capacities, functioning of various body systems are all part of physical development. It is essential to know how children develop physically as physical development influences children's behaviour both directly and indirectly. Although physical growth follow a similar pattern in children, the rate of development differs from one individual to another. It also differs from one stage to the other stage.

### **ii) Motor Development :**

Motor development is development of muscles in the body. Children learn and acquire various skills with the help of fine and large

muscles and hence they are known as motor skills. It is the development of control over bodily movements through the co-ordinated activity of the nerve centres, the nerves and the muscles. Studies of motor development have revealed that there is a normal pattern and sequence of achieving muscle control at specific age. Childhood is referred to as the ideal age for learning skills because children's bodies are more flexible and therefore they can acquire skills easily.

### **iii) Cognitive development :**

Cognitive development is the development of a wide variety of mental processes and abilities including development of sensory capacities, attention, memory, perception, concept formation, problem solving, imagination, creativity and the unique human capacity to represent the world through language.



#### iv) **Language Development :**

Language is a means of communication. It helps us to express our thoughts and feelings in words. It includes different forms of communication such as verbal, nonverbal, listening, speaking, writing, sign language, expressions and gestures. Children learn to engage in social behaviour with the help of language. Language development influences cognitive, social and emotional development.

#### v) **Emotional development :**

Emotional development refers to development of emotions and how they affect personal and social adjustments. It is essential to study this aspect of development because emotions play a very important role in our life. The various aspects include positive and negative emotions, emotional expressions, managing of emotions and emotional maturity.

#### vi) **Social development :**

Social development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social

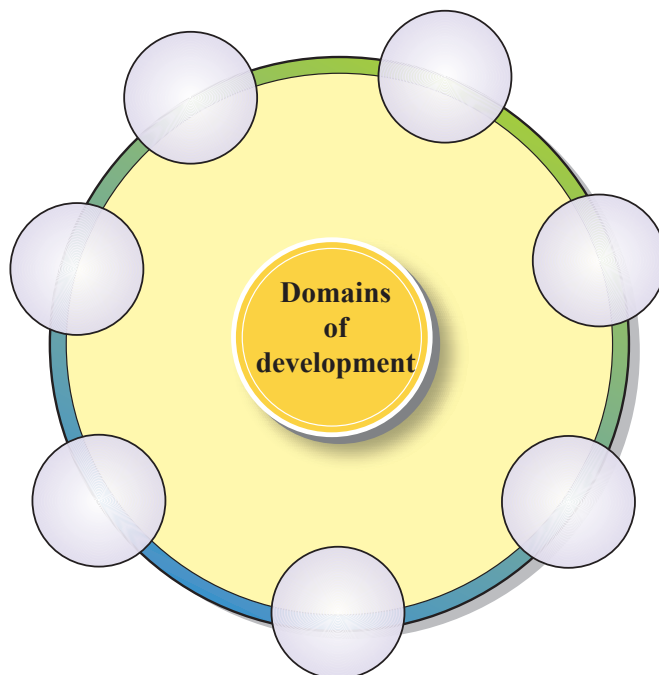
expectations. This is known as socialization. Becoming socialized involves processes such as learning to behave in socially approved ways, playing approved social roles and development of social attitude. Every social group has its standards of approved behaviour for its members. Children must learn these standards and behave accordingly. Children learn how to make social contacts and how to get along with people outside the home, especially children of their own age. They learn these social skills which is a part of social development.

#### vii) **Moral development :**

Moral development occurs in two distinct but interrelated phases i.e. the development of moral behaviour and development of moral concepts. It is the development of behaviour that conforms to the standards of the group with which the individual is identified. Learning to behave in the right way, distinguishing between right and wrong and development of conscience is gradually learnt.

#### **Activity :**

Fill up the domains of development and write two examples of each domain.





## 1.4 Stages of Development and its Characteristics

Human life span is subdivided into eight stages or periods, each of which is characterized by certain developmental and behavioural characteristics. Chronological age is the criterion used for this subdivision. This division helps us to study all phases of growth and development. Given below are the stages of human life span :

### a) Prenatal period (from conception to birth) :

This is the first developmental period in the life span. This period is characterized by rapid development, during which a single cell transforms into a human baby.

### b) Infancy and toddlerhood (birth to 2 years) :

Infancy is subdivided into neonatal stage (birth to 15 days), infancy (15 days to 18 months) and toddlerhood (18 to 24 months). The neonatal stage is characterized by adjustments and helplessness. As infants grow, they move towards independence acquiring various skills. eg. walking, talking.

### c) Childhood (2 to 12 years) :

#### (i) Early Childhood (2 to 6 years) :

This stage of childhood extends from 2 to 6 years. Children though egocentric in nature, are now more independent, active, energetic, curious and ready to explore and experiment. This period is also known as 'Preschool' period. After this stage, children are ready to go to formal school.

#### (ii) Late Childhood (6 to 12 years) :

This stage of childhood extends from 6 to 12 years. During this stage physical growth is slow but steady. Being the school going stage, children continue mastering language, reading, arithmetic, writing, play, rules of socialization and other school skills.

### d) Adolescence (12 to 19 years) :

This period is the bridge between childhood and adulthood. The beginning of this period is puberty leading to sexual maturity. Quest for identity begins, thoughts become more logical and abstract. Peer group has a greater impact. The adolescent chooses career and prepares for the world of work.

### e) Young Adulthood (20 to 40 years) :

This period brings about major changes in the life span of an individual. Long term goals are set up in fields such as career, family and society. Important goals at this stage include acquiring an occupation and entering into intimate relationship. Life at this stage can be full of stress but also rewarding.

### f) Middle Adulthood (40 to 60 years) :

It is a period of stability. It is a time of achievement, evaluation and also known as the "empty nest". Children move away from home due to job or leave home after marriage. Retirement takes place at the end of this stage. It is also a period where the individual gives back to the society by becoming involved in community work.

### g) Late Adulthood / Old age (60 years onwards) :

This period is characterised by a decline in physical functions. It is also characterised by adjustment to deteriorating health, reduced income and loss of spouse/ partner and peers.

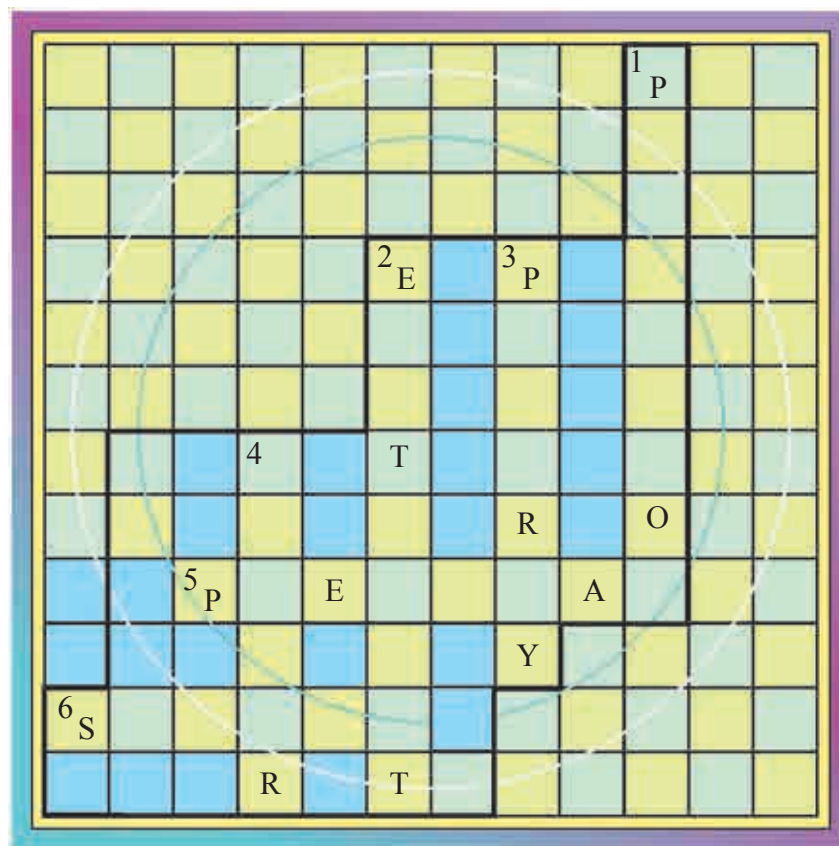
### Activity :

Place the stages of development in the correct sequence

- a. Adolescence    b. Early childhood    c. Middle adulthood    d. Neonatal    e. Prenatal stage  
f. Late adulthood.

1. ....    2. ....    3. ....  
4. ....    5. ....    6. ....

### Activity :



CROSSWORD on Stages of development

#### Across

5. Period of rapid development.  
6. Young adults can view life some times as rewarding or full of .....

#### Down

1. Early childhood is also called as this period.  
4. Adolescent has to choose / decide on.  
2. Middle adulthood is also called this.  
3. Stage of sexual maturity.

## Revise the points

### Introduction to Child Development

Meaning and Definition  
of Child Development

Scope and objectives of  
Child Development

Domains or Aspects of  
Child Development

Stages of Development and  
its characteristics



## Exercises

### Q. 1. Select and write the most appropriate word from the given alternatives.

- Growth refers to ..... changes.  
a) *quantitative*      b) *qualitative*  
c) *differentiative*
- The domains of development are also known as ..... of development.  
a) *aspects*      b) *principles*  
c) *scope*
- Motor development refers to development of -----.  
a) *language*      b) *muscle*  
c) *emotion*
- Behaviour in accordance with society is ..... development.  
a) *motor*      b) *social*  
c) *moral*

- Neonatal stage is from birth to ..... days.

- a) 0      b) 3  
c) 10

### Q. 2 Write whether the following statements are True or False with reasons.

- Development refers to quantitative changes.
- Learning to speak is an example of development.
- Emotional expression is social development.
- Childhood is subdivided into neonatal stage and infancy.
- Neonatal period is characterized by rapid development.

**Q. 3 Match the pairs :**

A	B
1) Early Childhood	a) Learning right and wrong
2) Late Adulthood	b) Stimulation and encouragement
3) Moral Development	c) 2 to 6 years
4) Parents role	d) 6 to 12 years
	e) Post retirement adjustment

**Q. 4 List the following**

- Domains of development
- Stages of development

**Q. 5. Fill in the box with the help of the given clue**

- Progressive series of changes that occur as a result of maturation and learning.

		V					M			T
--	--	---	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	---

- It is the bridge between childhood and adulthood.

A					S				C	
---	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--

**Q. 6. Find the odd one out from the given clue.**

Physical development :

Height, Weight, Memory, Skeleton, Teeth.

**Q. 8. Write the characteristics of following stages.**

- Prenatal period
- Infancy
- Early childhood

**Q. 7. Give examples of the following**

- Language development
- Motor development
- Emotional development

**Q. 9. Write short notes**

- Scope of Child Development
- Objectives of Child Development
- Domains of Child Development
- Stages of Child Development

**Project / Self Study**

- Observe your family or any other family and identify the stages of development the family members belong to and list down their characteristics.

