UNIT 15 SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: EXPANDING RELATIONSHIPS AND THE EMERGING SELF

Structure

15.1 Introduction
15.2 Developing Autonomy
15.3 Learning to Relate
   15.3.1 Relating with Peers
   15.3.2 Altruism and Empathy
   15.3.3 Fear, Anger and Aggression
15.4 The Self-Concept
15.5 Socialization: Learning the Norms
   15.5.1 Rewards and Punishment
   15.5.2 Observation
15.6 Summing Up
15.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The second and the third year of life are important as regards building relationships. The child is just beginning to view the others around her as people who have feelings and thoughts. Her interactions with them become more social. Her expanding relationships with people and her emerging personality are the aspects we shall focus upon in this Unit.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to

- understand what is meant by the term 'autonomy' and state why it is important for the toddler to develop autonomy
- describe the family setting that encourages the development of autonomy
• understand the meaning of the terms ‘altruism’ and ‘empathy’ and describe the emergence of these in the toddler
• explain how altruism and empathy can be fostered
• state the causes of aggression among children and explain how parents can mould the child’s aggressive behaviour
• explain the meaning of the term ‘self-concept’
• list the stages in the development of the self-concept and describe how the toddler understands that she is separate and different from others
• define the meaning of the term ‘socialization’ and elaborate the methods parents use to socialize the child

15.2 DEVELOPING AUTONOMY

What strikes one most about the toddler is that she has discovered the word ‘no’ and seems to be using it as often as she can! Many suggestions and requests are met by a determined shake of the head. In fact, the toddler’s refusal to always go by the parent’s instruction, and instead do the contrary, may lead to interesting situations as happened between Deepak and his aunt.

Deepak would not eat the porridge his aunt prepared. She tried persuasion, beckoned him with a smile and looked angry, but nothing worked. He continued his play with the bottle caps, answering his aunt with a series of crisp “no’s”. His aunt had almost given up when an idea occurred to her. She said very seriously: “Deepak, I am going to the kitchen. Now don’t eat this porridge, O.K.?” and started to go towards the kitchen. His attention arrested by this sudden change in his aunt’s tone, Deepak looked up at her. No sooner had she reached halfway that he left his play to eat the porridge, looking at his aunt mischievously!

Toddlers are developing a will of their own. They are becoming increasingly aware that they can do many things and want to test their new-found abilities. The infant begins to realize in the first year that she can have an effect on things. During toddlerhood she develops more trust in her abilities. She will take the spoon from your hand as you feed her, insisting on eating by herself. You move to help her as she tries to climb on to a high chair but the toddler, rather than letting you assist her, lets out a cry of rage pushing your hands away—she wants to climb onto it all by herself. You are sure to have seen her struggling to put on her pyjamas, often getting both her legs into a single opening! Many day-to-day activities reveal the toddler’s increasing trust in her abilities. Can you, from your observations, provide some more examples which reflect the toddler’s desire to do things on her own?
The toddler’s curiosity coupled with her ability to do things makes the world an enchanting place for her. There is always something new to discover and something new to try out. When the toddler is allowed to explore freely, she develops self-confidence. Such explorations give her a sense of self-worth and of being in control. She develops autonomy. Autonomy means being able to make one’s own choices—to do something or to refrain from doing it, to choose a particular activity, to go where one wants. Developing autonomy is important as it determines the extent to which one feels that the situation in life and the events that happen to one are under one’s influence or control. If one doubts one’s ability to handle situations, one will go through life in a way very different from another person who has belief in her capabilities. Just as developing a sense of trust in the first year is crucial for relationships in later life, in the same way it is necessary to develop a sense of autonomy in the years of toddlerhood as this influences one’s attitudes towards oneself and situations throughout life.

What do you think could be the effects of not allowing autonomy to the toddler? Note your comments in the margin and compare them with the discussion that follows.

If the freedom to explore is curtailed and controls are imposed on the toddler, i.e., when she is not allowed autonomy, it can lead the child to doubt her capabilities. For instance, repeated comments like: “No, don’t touch that, you will spoil it”, “Don’t play with water”, or negative appraisal of her efforts like: “Why do you always get your face dirty while eating?”, can be discouraging for the child. If she repeatedly experiences restrictions and negative evaluations of herself, it can lead to feelings of shame and doubt in her abilities. When the toddler appears before an adult with her frock worn the wrong way and the adult says angrily: “Now look! What have you done?”, it can dishearten the child. She has worn the frock by herself for the first time, she is thrilled about it and wants to be appreciated. Ridiculing her will discourage her.

One cannot stem the toddler’s explorations and neither is it desirable to do so. What one can do is to structure the environment in such a way that harm-causing objects and other things that you do not want the child to play with, are out of reach for her.

Being able to manage simple tasks allows the toddler a degree of independence from the parents. The child’s striving for independence changes the parent-child relationship to a certain extent. The family members must understand the toddler’s need to do things on her own, instead of being irked by it. The refusal of the toddler to always follow the parents’ instructions is not a revolt against them. She is simply trying to know what she can do and trying to perfect her skills.

15.3 LEARNING TO RELATE

How do you think the child’s relationships with others develop after the first year? You may like to note some points before you read about this aspect.

Being able to manage simple tasks allows the toddler a degree of independence from the parents. The child’s striving for independence changes the parent-child relationship to a certain extent. The family members must understand the toddler’s need to do things on her own, instead of being irked by it. The refusal of the toddler to always follow the parents’ instructions is not a revolt against them. She is simply trying to know what she can do and trying to perfect her skills.
she will find it difficult to understand situations from their perspective. The toddler has
to learn to relate to her agemates. She has also to learn to share and co-operate with
them. These positive social behaviours will help her to be accepted by others. In the text
that follows, we will read about the beginnings of peer relations and the emergence of
altruism and empathy. These terms will be explained in the ensuing paragraphs.

15.3.1 Relating with Peers

Research has shown that infants show an interest in other infants as early as six months
of age. If two babies are placed together they will look at each other, smile and touch.
However, for them other infants are just like play objects that can be explored. During
toddlerhood the child becomes aware that other infants are persons and begins to have
social interactions with them. A few research studies have shown that some toddlers in
the day care centres preferred to play with a particular child every day, showing that they
related to one specific child. But, by and large, most toddlers do not show a preference
for any one playmate. During toddlerhood the choice of playmates is based on who is
available at that time to play with. Toddlers play together occasionally, using the same
toys and interacting with each other. However, observations have shown that most of the
time, they play on their own. They may be playing side by side but they do not
necessarily play with each other. Sitting with each other, they play independently.

15.3.2 Altruism and Empathy

Children as young as two and three years of age also show another type of positive social
behaviour—altruism. Altruism may be defined as giving or sharing objects, time or
goods with others, with no obvious self-gain. Related to the development of altruism is
the development of empathy. To have empathy means to be able to respond to another
person’s emotion by feeling a similar emotion. This is possible only when the child is
able to view the situation from the other person’s perspective. Thus, being able to see
another person’s view and to respond to her emotion is related to the development of
cognition. Though usually toddlers find it difficult to do so, they are at times able to
understand how the other person is feeling and respond to her appropriately. On seeing
another child or adult sad, sometimes toddlers hug or kiss the person and try to placate
her by giving her their toy. While responding to the emotion of the distressed person,
they try to help the person by offering what they themselves would find most comforting
in such a situation, rather than doing what the person would want to be done. The
following examples will show this.

Pintoo, two years old, was playing with Ritu when the latter got hurt and started crying.
Pintoo tried to soothe her, but when Ritu would not be pacified Pintoo brought his own
mother to comfort her. Recalling that when he gets distressed he gets comfort from his
mother, he felt that Ritu would also get comforted upon seeing his mother.

Another child, Chinky also showed an insight into another person’s emotions. She
was playing in the room and her uncle was sitting there with a thoughtful and troubled
expression on his face. During her play, Chinky tried to talk to her uncle but he did not
reply. Finding his behaviour different, Chinky would glance at him at intervals. After
some time she picked up her favourite doll and offered it to him, expecting him to be as
happy as she would be on getting it. At this age toddlers do not seem to understand that
when helping another person, they have to do what that person would find comforting.
You too would have seen toddlers offering comfort to another child or being helpful to
others. You may like to write about one such anecdote in the space given below.

Encouraging Altruism and Empathy

There are differences among toddlers in the amount of concern they show for others. But,
by and large, toddlers show altruistic behaviour at least occasionally. The behaviour of
the family members influences how the toddler behaves. When the parents’ behaviour
towards others is not compassionate and thoughtful, Children will not have the
opportunity to learn to value such behaviour. Children will do what they observe. It is no
good telling them to be helpful when we ourselves do not show helpful behaviour.

It has been found that one way of encouraging empathy and helpfulness in the toddler is
to explain the consequences of actions. But toddlers do not understand elaborate
explanations and neither do they have the patience to listen to them. At this age a brief
reason, for example, “Hitting hurts Didi”, is enough. Most of us tell children what not to
do. But research has shown that explaining to them why they should not do certain things
by focusing on the feelings of people, as has been done in the above example, increases
the chances of the child behaving in a helpful manner. In the same way, stating the rules
like: “You must not hit other people”, also helps. Besides stating what the child must not
do, it is equally important to state positive rules—“It is good to share toys.” Since the
child is trying to find out how she must behave and what she must do, this is particularly
important.

The parent-child relationship has a great impact on the child’s altruistic behaviour.
Studies have shown that children whose parents are nurturing and supportive towards
them, usually show more empathy and altruism. During late toddlerhood, around three
years of age, children are better able to read the emotions of people and try to help the
distressed person by doing what the person would like. In Block 4 we shall read more
about the development of empathy and altruism.

15.3.3 Fear, Anger and Aggression

As yet we have spoken about positive social interactions among toddlers But children
also fight, scream and argue. Anger and aggression become evident during toddlerhood.
Helping the child learn appropriate ways of expressing emotion is an important goal of
parenting. In this section we will talk about emotions of fear, anger and aggression in the
toddler, which many parents find difficult to handle.

Fear: The newborn is startled by a loud noise or a sudden movement. Later, the infant
shows fear of strangers and fear of being separated from the mother. As the toddler
experiences the environment and understands events, she learns that there are more
things to fear. As someone pulls her away from the path of a cycle, she senses the adult’s
fear and becomes wary. Thunder, lightning and the dark are frightening for some
children, particularly if the adults around them convey this fear. A child may have had
an unpleasant encounter with a dog and is, therefore, fearful of all dogs.

All children experience fear as an emotion. A certain degree of fear is necessary since it
prevents the child from getting into dangerous situations. When children are afraid, they
exercise caution. Children overcome some of their fears in the course of growing up. The
child who is fearful of dogs learns through experience that all dogs are not unfriendly.
However, excessive and intense fear can make the child fearful of exploration.
Sometimes a specific fear can carry on for many years.

When children feel such intense fear, they need the parents to help them. The child’s fear
must not be laughed at or dismissed. Sometimes these fears have no obvious basis. With
reasoning and explanation, the child can be helped to overcome them. One must get the
child to talk about what is frightening her and then help her to understand the situation.
If, for example, she is afraid of thunder, encourage her to listen to it. Reassure her that it
is nothing to be scared of. Talk to her about it. Let her watch the rain come down after
the thunder. Avoiding the feared object reinforces the fear. But at the same time, one
must not force the child to face the fearful situation before she has been prepared and is
ready to do so. If she is not willing to look at the fear-causing object again, insisting
that she does so will only terrify her further. One has to be sensitive while dealing with
the child’s fear. Reassuring the child when she shows fear will help her to become calm.

Anger and Aggression: Anger is a response to a situation which the child cannot
handle. Sometimes in their anger, children injure themselves. Aggression may be defined
as behaviour with the apparent intent of injuring some person or object. Children show
aggression by hitting others, banging and throwing things, screaming and kicking.

Many research studies have focused on the reasons for anger and aggression during
toddlerhood. One of the reasons for anger and aggression in this age group is the inability
of toddlers to get what they want as the following example shows.
Thomas wants to eat a biscuit, but he has to open the jar first. He tries to unscrew the lid but is unable to do so. He goes to call his mother but she is busy and does not come. Thomas goes back to open the box but still cannot open it. Frustrated, he starts screaming and throws himself on the floor in a fit of rage.

Such temper tantrums may also result when the toddler is forced to do things beyond her capability. For example, forcing the child to learn to read and write, puts pressure on her. Overwhelmed by the demands on her, the child gets irritable. A temper tantrum is a cry for help. The child is stating that she is unable to manage the situation and the adult must step in.

When the child feels unsure of the parents' love, she may become aggressive. You may have seen that the birth of a sibling often arouses jealousy in the older child. With another baby in the house, the older child feels threat to the mother's affection towards her. She expresses this jealousy through aggressive behaviour.

Anger and aggression can also result when the routines are badly upset or when the child faces large and noisy crowds. The crowd and the noise at a railway station or a marriage gathering can confuse some children. Others may thrive on the high level of noise and excitement. In this aspect, as in every other, children vary widely.

When toddlers are left together, they may get into a fight. One child snatches a toy, there is some pushing and both children break into tears. The toddler is unable to see things from another's perspective. When angry, the best way she knows of expressing herself is to hit out. Such fights are a normal feature of growing up and even an essential part of learning.

Handling Aggressive Behaviour: Aggression is often a learnt behaviour and how the child shows it, depends upon the family's interactions with each other. Parents need to handle the child's anger and aggression sensitively. Temper tantrums and other forms of aggression and anger must not be dismissed by saying: "She is naughty" or "This is the way he behaves." One of the first things to remember is that child's aggressive behaviour has an underlying cause. This cause has to be removed if one wants to lessen the child's aggressive behaviour. If, for example, it is the birth of a sibling which is leading to the outbursts, then the parents need to reassure the toddler of their affection. Many research studies have shown that when the child feels secure, she is less likely to show aggression. Secondly, one must help the child to understand that she can cope with the situation. If her inability to do something is frustrating the child, then one should help her to understand how she can do the task. Reducing the child's frustration helps her to overcome her anger. Distracting the child is also likely to work.

The single most important factor that influences the child's aggressive behaviour is how the adults around her express their feelings and deal with aggression. Research has shown that the parents' own behaviour is to a large extent responsible for aggression in children. This becomes increasingly important during the preschool years. We shall read about the family setting and aggression in the child in Block 3.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1
1) Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.
   a) What do you understand by the term 'autonomy'? How can parents encourage the development of autonomy?

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   b) Observe a toddler playing with children or interacting with adults for sometime (about ten to fifteen minutes). What are the social skills and emotions displayed by the child?

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c) What can be the reasons for aggressive behaviour among toddlers?

2) The following are some statements which describe an emotion or a social skill. Write the answer in the blanks provided after each statement. To assist you, some letters of each word have been written.

   a) An emotion which most children experience as they encounter unfamiliar objects or situations which they do not understand and which scare them. - a -

   b) Responding to another person's emotion by feeling the same emotion oneself. Toddlers show this ability as early as one-and-a-half to two years of age. - m a -

   c) Giving or sharing objects, time or goods with others with no obvious self-gain. - l m -

   d) The emotional bond which the toddler forms with certain people. A m'

15.4 THE SELF-CONCEPT

Each one of us is conscious of our qualities and know what we are capable of doing. We can reflect upon our feelings and thoughts. We are aware of ourselves and have a concept of ourselves. In other words, we have a self-concept. Self-concept answers the question of "Who am I?" It is a description of oneself. One's self-concept has several dimensions. It includes one's description of one's physical attributes and the things one can do—"I am of average height", "I can play kabaddi", "I can knit", "I am able to go to school by myself." One's likes and dislikes, beliefs and one's personality characteristics—"I get angry often", "I am good at making friends," "I don't like sweets", "I believe that being honest is very important"—are also a part of the self-concept. Gender concept is also an integral part of one's self-concept. It includes the understanding of whether one is a boy or a girl and that one's gender is constant over time. It also includes one's conception about how males and females are supposed to behave.

Another important aspect of self-concept is self-esteem. This is that part of the self-concept in which we judge ourselves according to the standards we have set for ourselves. It is one's evaluation of oneself. Self-esteem is concerned with questions such as, "Am I as good as I can be?" and "Am I the sort of person I want to be?" People who have a high (positive) self-esteem see themselves as meeting their own standards and they are satisfied with themselves. Those with low self-esteem see a discrepancy between what they think they should be and what they are. They may not be satisfied with themselves. Self-esteem also includes an evaluation of oneself in comparison with others—"I can paint as well as him," "I am not as good at cooking as my sister." A positive self-esteem leads to a high self-concept. A person with a high self-concept has good feelings about herself; she has more positive feelings about herself and feels more sure of herself than one who has a low self-concept.

One's self-concept is a very significant aspect of one's personality. It has been seen that a person's self-concept influences her behaviour. This is so because the person sees her qualities as enduring and thus chooses experiences that are consistent with her beliefs about herself. For example, the child who believes that she just cannot learn to skip will behave differently from one who believes she can. She is likely to avoid skipping and may not play with other children who do so. If forced to skip, she may make remarks like: "You know I can't skip." She may play in a manner that strengthens her belief that she cannot skip, such as not watching the rope as she jumps it, so that she fails. The child does not want to even try to learn to skip because there is a risk of failure. She already has negative feelings about herself in this aspect. If she were to try and fail, it would lower her self-esteem further. So the best solution, she feels, is not to
The child: Development during Toddlerhood

try at all. The child expected failure, so she behaved in a way that would reinforce her belief. The adolescent who believes she cannot solve physics numericals will approach the problems in a manner different from one whose self-concept includes the belief: 'I am good at physics' or 'I am better at physics than others'. The former would not try hard enough or she may try and worry about failure.

Thus there is a cyclical relationship. A person behaves according to her concept about herself. The way she behaves then reinforces her belief about herself and so the next time she again behaves in the same way.

Research has shown that persons with a positive self-concept are generally able to deal effectively with situations and people. They are willing to take more risks when faced with challenges and unexpected situations because even if they do not succeed in some of these, their self-concept can afford this. But a person already with a low self-concept cannot afford failure as that would lower her self-concept further. So she avoids the situation. In your day-to-day interactions with people, you must have noticed this. If you were to look back upon your experiences, you would find that your manner of approaching various situations and tasks was influenced by what you thought of yourself.

The self-concept must be a realistic evaluation of oneself. It should be based on what one is actually capable of doing. There are dangers of an over-ambitious self-concept as well. If a person, for example, believes that she can become a good athlete but she does not have the capability of becoming one, then she is not likely to be successful in her endeavours. But since she firmly believes that she can achieve this, not being able to do what she thinks she can do easily, can lead to frustrations. An unrealistic self-concept, an over-estimation of one's capabilities, can be harmful for oneself.

We have been discussing self-concept in such detail because beliefs about oneself are pervasive and develop early. The foundations of self-concept are laid in the early years of childhood. It has been seen that children who have a high self-esteem, i.e., a positive self-concept, have more friends, get along better with their families, do better in school, see themselves as capable and are less often depressed. But how does one form a concept about oneself? Are there stages in the development of the self-concept? When does the child begin to be aware of her qualities and abilities? Let us read about these aspects in the following paragraphs.

Developing the Concept of Self

The first stage in developing a self-concept is to develop a sense that one is separate from other people. In the early months of life, the infant does not distinguish between herself and others. When exactly does she understand that she is physically separate from others? You know that towards the eighth or the ninth month, the infant seems to understand that she can make things happen. This means that by this time she sees herself as someone who can have an effect on things. But at this time she does not see herself as a person; she does not seem to have a sense of self. This happens around 15 to 18 months of age. One of the signs that the child has understood her own separateness is that she recognizes herself in the mirror. The following research study involving the use of the mirror will explain this.

A mirror is placed in front of the nine-month-old infant. The baby looks at her image in the mirror, makes faces and tries to interact with the image in the mirror in some way. Then the researcher, while pretending to wipe the baby's face, puts a spot of red colour on her nose. The test of self-recognition is that the infant reaches for the spot of colour on her own nose and not on her reflection in the mirror. None of the one-year-olds reach for their nose, but between 15 and 18 months one-fourth of the infants in the study did so.
and between 21 and 24 months three-fourths of the infants did so. Towards the end of the second year, most toddlers can distinguish their photograph from those of other children of their age. By this time they also refer to themselves by name when they see themselves in the mirror or when they see a photograph of themselves.

How does this understanding about the body develop in the baby? How does she gain this sense of a physical self—the first step towards her emerging self-concept? As someone touches, pats, bathes, rocks and holds the baby and as she touches herself, she gets a feel about her own body. She realizes that she is being touched. She becomes aware that she is the same person from day-to-day because the same things happen regularly to her. She sees her hand everyday and uses it to pick up objects. Parents also begin to name the various parts of the child’s body to her. By one year the infant can identify her ears, nose or eyes. She plays with objects and through this acquires an understanding of what she can do. Thus, interaction with others, her play with objects and exploration of her own body help her to develop an awareness of self.

One of the signs that the toddler is becoming aware of herself is that she begins to direct the behaviour of people. While playing with her doll, for example, the child hands it over to her mother and asks her to put it to sleep. She offers her sister a small plastic ball and asks her to ‘eat this sweet’. Children make these commands and expect others to obey them, which shows that they are aware of their ability to influence people.

The toddler’s language also gives indications of her developing awareness of herself. She begins to use pronouns like ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘mine’ which shows that they are distinguishing between themselves and other people. Sentences like “my toy”, “I do it”, “I play”, “No, no eat”, “My chair”, reflect that the child is realizing that she can have an effect on things around her. With increasing self-awareness comes an increasing possessiveness about her toys and her other belongings. A full blown fight may result between two toddlers as each tries to stake her claim to a toy. These toddlers have developed a concept of self.

The toddler’s ability to empathize also reflects the fact that she is conscious/aware of her experiences. That she seems to understand how another person is feeling means that she can recall her own earlier experiences and use these to judge that person’s feelings.
Understanding that one is distinct from others is just the beginning of developing a self-concept. The toddler has to now define herself in terms of her physical qualities and personality traits. This begins in the preschool years and continues throughout life. We will read more about this in Block 4.

You have read that one aspect of self-concept is the gender concept. There are three steps in the formation of gender concept. The first is gender identity—the child's ability to label his/her own sex correctly and to identify other people as men or women, boys or girls. Infants notice differences between males and females quite early—as early as 15 to 18 months. These earliest discriminations are based on external features such as length of the hair or clothing. By two years of age, they can correctly identify their sex. By two-and-a-half to three years of age, most toddlers can correctly identify the sex of others as well. But even so, the toddler has not yet grasped that one stays the same gender throughout life and that changes in clothing or hairstyle do not change one's gender. In other words, she has not understood gender constancy. This emerges during preschool years as does acquiring sex-role concept—the third step in the formation of gender concept—which refers to one's ideas about how males and females are supposed to behave. We shall discuss these aspects further in the next Block.

We have stated that the family setting has a lasting impact on the child's self-concept. The interactions with the parents crystallize during the preschool years and the behaviour patterns become more stable. We will read how the parent-child relationship influences the child's self-concept in the next Block. Peers greatly influence the child's thinking and behaviour patterns. However, peers do not have much influence during toddlerhood. Associations with peers increase during preschool years.

15.5 SOCIALIZATION: LEARNING THE NORMS

You have been reading that children acquire those behaviours, beliefs, standards and attitudes that are valued and considered appropriate by their cultural group. They learn how boys and girls, men and women are supposed to behave. Theoretically, a child can grow up to be either generous or selfish, achievement-oriented or lacking initiative, assertive or submissive, outspoken or shy, helpful or selfish. Yet, by and large, children adopt only those personality characteristics and behaviours that are considered acceptable by their family and their social group. As you know, this process by which the child acquires socially acceptable traits and values is called socialization.

What we have spoken about in the text so far are all aspects of socialization. As the parents control the toddler's activity, as they curb her aggressive responses and as they encourage her helpful behaviour and praise her efforts, they are teaching the child desirable social behaviour.

Parents are the primary agents of socialization. As the child grows, she comes in contact with more people who also influence her beliefs and values. Relatives, siblings, neighbours and friends are responsible for the development of the child's personality. What do parents and the others actually do in socializing children? How does the family train a child to adopt culturally approved behaviours? Let us read about this in the following subsection.

15.5.1 Rewards and Punishment

One of the ways parents and others socialize the child is by rewarding (reinforcing) desirable behaviour and punishing the actions which they consider inappropriate. Behaviours which are rewarded become stronger and are shown more frequently by the child. She generalizes these behaviours to many situations. Through words of praise and approval, a look of encouragement, a pat, a hug or a smile the parents reward a child's behaviour. Buying the child a toy she desires or cooking her favourite dish are also rewards. In short, a reward is something that encourages the child. Just as rewarded (reinforced) responses become stronger, punished actions become weaker, are exhibited less frequently and, depending upon how forceful the parents are in their disapproval, may disappear altogether.

Let us understand this point further through the following description. You know that toddlers spontaneously try out their skills, explore their surroundings and insist on doing
things on their own. If these efforts are encouraged (rewarded) by parents, the child will explore consistently: Such a child will show initiative and will develop confidence about handling situations on her own. Her positive feelings about herself will help her develop a positive self-concept. The child develops such an attitude because the family setting supports (rewards) these values.

As you know, if the parents restrict the toddler's explorations, she will explore less. If restrictions to act independently continue during childhood years, the child will grow up to be one who is inhibited in doing things on her own. Parents who do not encourage independence in the child may actually be rewarding the child’s responses of crying, clinging, staying close to them and asking for help constantly. These behaviours of the child will be strengthened, reducing her chances of trying out new things.

We have spoken of punishment in the text above. Most of us tend to believe that punishment has to be physical, such as hitting or slapping the child. But this is not true. Scolding the child, ignoring undesirable behaviour, saying that you do not approve of what she has done and withholding her favourite things from her until she stops the behaviour you disapprove of, are also punishment for the child. Withholding affection from the child for some time is also a form of punishment. However, this last form of punishment must not be used much as it can make the child feel insecure.

Parents differ in the ways they adopt to discipline the child and researchers have tried to examine the effects of different types of disciplining techniques on the child. Based on research of parents' disciplinary styles, experts have identified four types of disciplinary techniques. We will discuss these aspects in further detail in Block 4 when we discuss parent-child relationship.

Generally speaking, disciplining the child at this age is best done by consistent but gentle reprimands to prevent her from doing what you disapprove of. As the child approaches to lift a glass tumbler, you can stop her from doing so by putting out your hand, saying "no" and altogether removing the tumbler from the child's reach. The child will learn better from these reprimands rather than from severe yelling or slapping. Some undesirable behaviours of the child will decline if the parents ignore them. You have read that at times children throw temper tantrums when they are angry. They lie down on the floor and yell loudly. In most cases the child will stop this behaviour a few minutes later if the adults ignore it. If the parents use physical punishment to stop this behaviour, usually the opposite happens—this behaviour increases. Many times a temper tantrum is a way to get attention. When the child does not get it, she stops the behaviour. But the parents must ensure that the temper tantrum is not a consequence of their behaviour. If it is the lack of affection from parents which is causing the child to behave this way, then the parents must think of other ways of overcoming it.

15.5.2 Observation

Over and above the direct teaching by adults through rewards and punishment, socialization goes on through each word the adults say and through their actions and behaviours. The child learns as she observes them dealing with situations every day. The four-year old who tries to speak like his father has not been taught to do so. He has observed this and is imitating it. Imitation of activities of adults is a major way through which children learn.

Caregivers thus serve as models. If, apart from being rewarded for her helpful behaviour, the child also sees the parents helping others, she is likely to behave more altruistically, i.e., when the parents model helpful behaviour, her altruistic responses will be strengthened. The people around the child display both positive and negative behaviours. The child identifies with the person who gives her affection and care and imitates that person's behaviour. A young child most often identifies with the mother or the father. She wants to be like them. Once the child forms an emotional bond with the parent, she is happy when the parents approve of her and unhappy if they disapprove. The child learns the parents' rules and standards because she wants their love and acceptance. The love and attachment between the parents and the child thus becomes a strong force for the child to behave in socially approved ways.
Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided below.

1) What do you understand by the term 'self-concept'?

2) Match the words in column I to the sentences in column II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN I</th>
<th>COLUMN II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Self-esteem</td>
<td>1) the fact that one stays the same gender throughout life despite changes in external appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Gender identity</td>
<td>2) understanding what behaviours are expected of males and females in one's society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Gender constancy</td>
<td>3) one's evaluation of oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Sex-role concept</td>
<td>4) the child's ability to label his or her own sex correctly and to identify others as men or women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.6 SUMMING UP

In this Unit you have read that the toddler wants to explore her surroundings and does not like restrictions to her activity. Whether or not the toddler develops a sense of autonomy and a confidence in herself, is determined to a great extent by the family setting. When the parents encourage the child's explorations and support her efforts, the toddler ventures out. If they restrict her explorations and do not value her efforts at doing things on her own, it can lead to feelings of shame and doubt.

During toddlerhood, the child begins to relate to her agemates. Toddlers also show empathy and some of them show a tremendous understanding of other people's needs. The behaviour of the family members influences the altruistic behaviour of the toddler. Families where compassion and generosity are rewarded are likely to have children who are more helpful.

Anger and aggression, as responses to frustrating and unwelcome situations, emerge during toddlerhood. Toddlers vary in the amount of aggression they show. How aggressively a child behaves depends to a large extent upon the family setting and the type of experiences she has. Socializing the child away from aggressive responses is important.

Fears are an inevitable part of growing up. Intense and irrational fears can inhibit the child's activities. In such a case, the parents need to help the child.

Self-concept refers to one's description of oneself. It includes one's description of one's physical attributes, one's beliefs and personality characteristics. Gender concept and self-esteem are an integral part of self-concept. The first step in the development of self-concept is that the infant understands herself as physically separate from others. A sense of separate self is established by the end of the second year of life.

The self-concept emerges as a consequence of the infant's interactions with others and the feedback she gets from them.

Parents and others in the social group socialize the child through rewards and punishment. Children learn many behaviours through observation.
Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) a) Autonomy means being able to act independently, to be able to make one's choices. The toddler develops autonomy when the parents encourage her efforts to do things on her own.

b) During your observation you may find that the toddler displays happiness, delight, anger, aggression, fear, helpful behaviour or empathy. Notice how she plays or interacts with the person.

c) The toddler may show aggressive behaviour when she is unable to cope with a situation, when she is expected to do things beyond her abilities or when she feels insecure of parents' love. She also behaves more aggressively if she sees the adults around her using aggression as a means to deal with situations.

2) a) Fear
b) Empathy
c) Altruism
d) Attachment

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Self-concept refers to one's definition of oneself. It includes a description of one's personality characteristics, physical attributes, beliefs and values. Self-esteem and gender concept are also aspects of self-concept.

2) a) -3
b) -4
c) -1
d) -2