

## Socio-Moral Development of Preschool Children

Amir Sam Kianimoghadam<sup>ID</sup>, Maryam Bakhtiari\*<sup>ID</sup>

Department of Clinical Psychology, School of Medicine, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.  
 \*Correspondence should be addressed to Ms. Maryam Bakhtiari; Email: [maryam\\_bakhtiari@sbmu.ac.ir](mailto:maryam_bakhtiari@sbmu.ac.ir)

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From the perspective of Islam, moral development has a subtle and vast meaning and a lofty and valuable position. As viewed by Islam, “Upbringing and growth” are to end in “moral growth and education” and the goal of Islam is to get the mankind to an ethical and valuable position (1). Imam Sadeq (PBUH) enumerates ten things amongst the ethical virtues, namely real and honest disappointment in God’s creatures, truthfulness, trusteeship, visiting the close relatives, feeding the hungry, rewarding others for their good deeds and so forth (2).

Ethical practices need to meet certain conditions, including the following: 1) it is not extraordinary; 2) it is done willfully and of one’s own free will; and, 3) it is based on the human nature and is the practice of wise human beings. The features of ethical practices including “intention”, “self-control”, “God’s control”, “veneration and adoring of one’s self” and “natural environment” play essential roles in the ethical deeds from the perspective of Islam (1).

Ethical growth has been amongst the social issues in the course of centuries focused upon. The great theoreticians from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have considered ethics as a means of social growth (1). Therefore, ethical growth is amongst the substantial issues of the social psychology. The issue of ethical growth has been intertwined in most of the psychological works with two topics of social growth and cognitive growth. According to the existing perspectives, the two topics of ethical growth and social growth are closely related and are usually investigated by psychologists within a single unit. From this perspective, the individual finds an image of him/herself amidst others and in relation to others along with his or her cognitive and identity growth and this image is one of the pillars of the social and ethical relations between the children and others (3).

Instruction for the purpose of moral development in younger ages is amongst the important subjects. Children can be instructed via role-models, education, and religious ceremonies and upbringing. In this regard, many examples can be mentioned (4). Amongst the most prominent figures in this regard, Her Highness Fatemeh Zahra (peace be upon her) can be mentioned; her highness left five children by the age of 18 and all of them became excellent examples of ethical-social growth; this was because of the ethical-social growth during childhood.

For positive ethical-social growth of the preschool children, the instructor/teacher has to fulfill the following duties: s/he should treat the children sincerely, kindly and respectfully; self-confidence stems from the trust in God hence s/he should provoke self-esteem in the children and show them how to exercise kindness towards their

siblings; sense of responsibility should be established in children; attention should be paid to the children's playing and recreation; by becoming their partners in their games, s/he should teach them anger control, kindness, cooperation and collaboration, skillfulness and observance of the others' rights (e.g., playmates); s/he should avoid any discrimination between the children and should be careful about anything that may cause the children to develop misbehaviors; the children should be familiarized with the principles of religiosity and religious verdicts; and, eventually and more importantly, s/he instructor should treat the children generously (5, 6, 7). Moreover, it is necessary to assist the preschool children in the exploration of the socio-ethical riddles. Exploration helps children to stay away from self-orientation and take their

perspectives beyond their personal interests and learn to think about how to react to the social-ethical problems. In order to advance the abovementioned cases, the social stories or theatrical finger-hand puppets can be of great use. It is by demonstration of a real-life or hypothetical role-model that the children can be encouraged to copy them for resolving their problems (8, 9).

Finally, it can be stated that the ethics grow with the social relationships. The goal of the ethical growth for the children is to regulate their social behaviors based on a sense of dutifulness, piety, humbleness, otherworldly-orientation, observance of the others' rights and so forth so that they can do the right thing. Therefore, the role of the parents, instructors and teachers is very outstanding for self-regulation of the social and ethical behaviors displayed by children.

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