

TABLE 3.3

Characteristics of Social Competence During Childhood and Adolescence

DEVELOPMENTAL PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS
<i>Early childhood</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beginning of strong reciprocity in social exchanges (matching, fitting, and coordinating social acts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid development in synchronizing interactions with peers• Movement from nonverbal signals to strong verbal communication patterns• Onset of self-classification of gender, age, and race
<i>Early elementary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High levels of mutuality in social responding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding simultaneously to more than one peer• Learning how to recruit others into ongoing activity• Increased reliance on verbal, rather than physical, strategies in interpersonal control
<i>Late elementary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer group formation and identification of role in the group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued reliance on authority figures to guide behavior, but with increasing reliance on peers as a mechanism of norm establishment• Continued reciprocity and increased integration of patterns of social exchange
<i>Early adolescence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment of peer group affiliation to achieve particular ends
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peers now taking primary role as a mechanism of norm establishment
<i>Middle adolescence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharp delineation between strategies for same-sex and opposite-sex relations, along with norms, behaviors, goals, and outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of more rigid social structures and evolution of subgroup norms for behavior• Formation of transient cross-sex liaisons for mutual support or gratification
<i>Late adolescence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divergence of interaction styles as a function of the social groups in which individuals engage (code switching)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharpening of sexual stereotypes• Employment of cognitive capabilities to enhance social relations (better social cognition)• More sophisticated use of skills to inhibit, remove, or control the behavior of others

SOURCE: Adapted from Cairns, 1986.