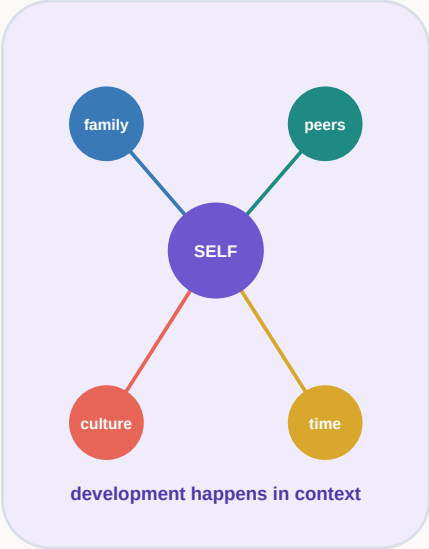
AP PSYCHOLOGY | UNIT 3

TOPIC 3.6

Social-Emotional Development Across the Lifespan

Relationships, culture, life events, and personal choices interact as people build attachment and identity.



A LIFESPAN SYSTEM

CONTEXT — nested systems → **BONDS** — attachment → **IDENTITY** — explore + commit → **ADAPT** — risk + protection

BY THE END, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

1. Apply ecological systems and compare major parenting styles.
2. Distinguish attachment patterns and trace relationships across life.
3. Use Erikson, identity statuses, and ACEs without making deterministic claims.

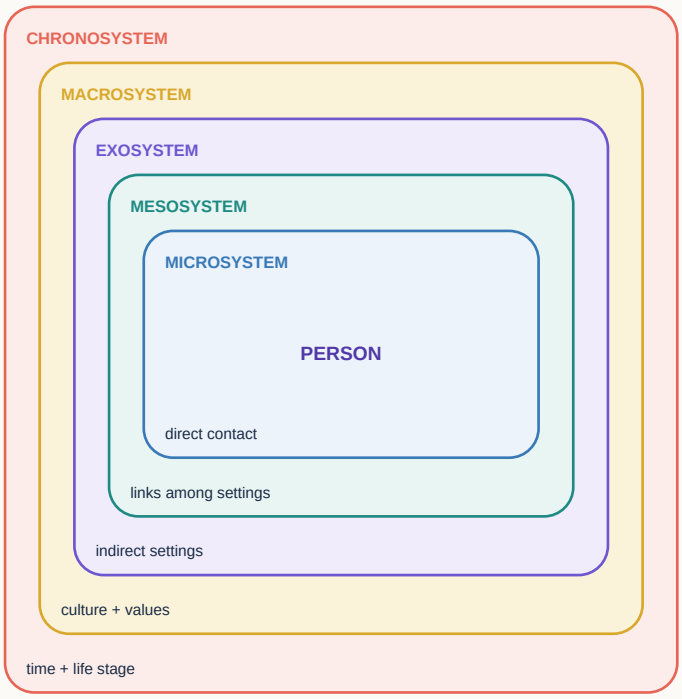
BIG IDEA

Development is probabilistic, not predetermined: people influence and are influenced by relationships and environments over time.

1 Context, parenting, and attachment

Bronfenbrenner maps nested environments; caregivers help shape early social and emotional bonds.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS: WORK FROM NEAR TO FAR



MICRO	family, school, peers
MESO	family-school connection
EXO	parent workplace policy
MACRO	cultural values or laws
CHRONO	history and life transitions

PARENTING STYLES

AUTHORITARIAN	AUTHORITATIVE	PERMISSIVE
high control	clear structure	low control
low responsiveness	high responsiveness	high responsiveness

ATTACHMENT PATTERNS

SECURE	AVOIDANT	ANXIOUS	DISORGANIZED
trust + comfort	avoids caregiver	distress + hard to settle	confused behavior

Temperament affects interactions. Separation anxiety is distress away from a caregiver. Harlow's monkeys highlighted contact comfort.

2 Relationships and identity across life

Social expectations and psychosocial conflicts change, but development remains open to experience and support.

FROM PEERS TO ADULT ROLES

PLAY → parallel + pretend

ADOLESCENCE → peers + egocentrism

EMERGING → transition to adulthood

ADULTHOOD → bonds + social clock

Imaginary audience = belief others are watching. Personal fable = belief one's experience is unique or invulnerable. Social clock = cultural timing expectations.

ERIKSON: EIGHT PSYCHOSOCIAL CONFLICTS

INFANCY	trust vs mistrust
TODDLER	autonomy vs shame
PRESCHOOL	initiative vs guilt
SCHOOL AGE	industry vs inferiority
ADOLESCENCE	identity vs role confusion
YOUNG ADULT	intimacy vs isolation
MIDDLE ADULT	generativity vs stagnation
LATE ADULT	integrity vs despair

IDENTITY STATUS = EXPLORATION x COMMITMENT

MORATORIUM
explore yes | commit no

ACHIEVEMENT
explore yes | commit yes

DIFFUSION
explore no | commit no

FORECLOSURE
explore no | commit yes

ACEs: RISK, NOT DESTINY

Adverse childhood experiences can raise later risk. Resilience, support, and sociocultural context shape outcomes.

SCENARIO CLUE

For identity, check exploration and commitment. For ACEs, explain increased risk without claiming a guaranteed outcome.