# Unit-6

# MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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**6.1   OBJECTIVES**

After reading the unit, students will be able to:

1.   Define moral development
2.   Explain morality within the context of nature and nurture
3.   Describe moral characteristics of learners from infancy to childhood
4.   Describe various activities from preschool to elementary level to inculcate moral values among learners

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**6.2   OVERVIEW**

Dear students this unit deals with moral development. You will learn the meaning and nature of moral development, its importance and need in child's personal and social life. Moral development has a significant role in shaping the personality of a child. In order to know the student, teacher must have the knowledge of various patterns of morality which appear at different phases of child's development. Moral development like other aspects of development occurs along with the social, emotional and cognitive aspects of development.

**6.3   MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

Moral development relates to an individual's sense of right and wrong. It focuses on the beginning, understanding and change of morality from infancy through old age. What do we mean by morality? According to one definition, morality refers to "a set of principles or ideals that help the individual to distinguish right from wrong and to act on this distinction" (Shaffer, 1993).Morality principles guide how people should treat one another, with respect to justice, others' rights and welfare.

Morality is the sense of right and wrong



*Source:* Google image

**Moral development includes:**

Learning the difference between right and wrong;

To use this knowledge to reach at proper decisions in complex choices; and

Possessing strength and freedom to act according to the right decision. It can be referred to do the right thing even in difficult situations.

Morality is shaped by several factors like children's experiences of interaction with family, friends, and other adults. Some other factors as their physical growth, cognitive, emotional and social skills combine to influence moral development.


**Source:** *Google image*

## 6.4    MORAL COMPONENTS
There are three moral components according to Shaffer (1993):
First *Cognitive component* relates to the thinking about moral issues and making decisions about right and wrong. Second *Emotional component* is linked to the feelings associated with moral thoughts and decisions. These feelings include guilt, shame and pride. Third is *behavioral component*. This is concerned with the ways we behave (act) and includes the limit to which we steal, lie, cheat and behave nobly.

### 6.4.1 Factors affecting moral development
There are various factors which affect moral development of an individual. Let's have a look:

### i.    Family
Family plays an important role in a child's moral development. Parents show acceptance or rejection of child's actions. And set the meanings of right and wrong for the child. The actions which are approved by the parents are viewed as good and those rejected by them are viewed as bad. This makes his first orientation to morality.

### ii.    School
School, too, has important part in making moral concepts. The child gets influenced by the concepts of the good and the bad as a result of his relationship with his classmates, teachers and senior students.
 Children take many actions which they see their seniors doing in the school. Most of what has been learnt at home from parents and family is rejected.  School can play a positive role by providing special teaching and training for moral development.

### iii.    Peer Group
Friends and play mates affect child's perception of good and bad. Child accepts the ideas of his companions.

### iv.    Society and Culture
The common social environment also affects the moral development of the individual. Due to the fact, the moral behavior of individuals from cultured societies is distinctly changed from that of individuals belonging to uncivilized societies.

*v.*     *Age*

Age is an important source in making moral concepts and moral behaviors. As the individual develops from infancy to adolescence, he becomes more open-minded towards certain those ideals which sometimes do not fit with what he thinks to be good. In later adolescence he approves many things which he had earlier rejected.

*vi.*     *Gender*

Another important factor in moral development is gender.  Girls are held with the sense of guilt and shame if their behavior does not match with the accepted moral code. They try to be less critical of the moral tone set by their elders. Boys, on the other hand, are more aggressive than the girls. Often they set their own standards of moral behavior and put effort to follow them.

To conclude we can say that moral development is a complicated process in which an individual's interaction with people and objects in his surrounding, play an important role.

**6.4.2  What is the importance of moral development?**

Society cannot work in a proper way in the absence of ethical and moral principles on what is right and what is wrong.



*Source:* *Google image*

Moral education starts from early childhood and continues during childhood and adolescence. Impact of moral development will be reflected through individual's personality, behavior and attitudes. The quality of inter personal relations depends on the quality of manners and behaviors people act upon. Starting from individual level, morality spreads out to society and is an important element for peace and unity. Thus, teaching positive values such as honesty, courage, responsibility, compassion, integrity, self-discipline, self-reliance, kindness, friendliness, tolerance, respect, love, justice and mercy becomes essential.

**Summary**

Dear students in this section you learnt the meaning of moral development and the factors which affect an individual's concept of right and wrong. Three components i.e. cognitive, emotional and behavioral are essential to moral development.  A child's home and family play important role in shaping his thinking. School, peers, age, society and gender are other influencing factors on moral development. Society cannot work properly in the absence of moral principles on right and wrong.

Activity for the students

| Enlist the factors which have influenced your concept of morality. |
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## 6.5    THEORIES RELATED TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Psychologists have studied morality in various ways. In the following section we will present an introduction of the two major theories related to moral development.

### Jean Piaget's Theory

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) focused specially on the moral lives of children. He studied the way children play games in order to learn about children's beliefs about right and wrong.  He watched children play marbles to learn how they used and thought about the game's rules. He also asked children questions about moral issues like: theft; lies; punishment; justice.

Through his studies, Piaget concluded those children, depending on their developmental maturity, thinking two unique ways about morality. He termed the ways as Heteronymous and Autonomous morality.



*Source*: http://www.slideshare.net/leehan16/moral-development

### Heteronymous Morality

This is the first stage of moral development in Piaget's theory. It arises from 2 to 7 years of age. Here, justice and rules are considered of as unchangeable things of the world which are beyond control of people.

### Autonomous Morality

This is exhibited by older children (about 10 years of age and older). The child becomes aware that rules and laws are created by people and that, in judging an action, one should consider the actor's intentions as well as the consequences.

Dear students, you will recall Piaget's theory of cognitive development. His explanations support our understanding on the process through which the child continues to understand the world and how he adds rules and values and takes moral decisions.

### Activity for students

> Summarize the important points of Piaget's theory of moral development.

We shall now study another important theory, that of Kohlberg.

### 6.5.1  Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory        (1927-1987)

Lawrence Kohlberg started as a developmental psychologist and then moved on to the field of moral education. Through his studies, Kohlberg displayed that people developed in their moral reasoning through a series of stages. He

believed that there were six identifiable stages of moral reasoning. These stages can be clustered into three levels of complexity. They are:

**Level I - Pre-Conventional Reasoning**
At this level, the child cannot understand the concept of moral values. Moral reasoning is controlled by external rewards and punishments.

*Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience*
Moral thinking is based on punishment. Children obey because adults tell them to obey.
Whatever is rewarded is good; whatever is punished is bad.

*Stage 2: Individualism and Purpose*
Moral thinking is based on rewards and self-interest. Children obey when they want to obey and when it is in their best interests to obey. What is right is what feels good and what is rewarding.

I'll do something good for you if you do something good for me.
**Level 2 - Conventional Reasoning**
At this level, internalization is transitional. The child abides by certain standards (internal). However, these are the standards of others (external) such as parents or the laws of society.

***Stage 3: Interpersonal Norms***
Children give importance to trust, caring and faithfulness to others as the basis of moral judgment. At this stage, children often adopt their parents' moral standards. They make efforts to be considered by parents as a" good boy" or a "good girl. This impression is rewarding for children.

***Stage 4: Social System Morality***
Moral judgments are based on understanding the social order, law, justice and duty. For example, a child might say that it is always wrong to steal because laws that have been developed are for the benefit of society.

Good is defined by laws of society, by doing one's duty. A law should be obeyed even if it is not fair.

**Level 3 - Post-Conventional Reasoning**
At this level morality is completely internalized (adopted) by the individual and is not based on others' standards. The adolescent identifies alternative moral ways, searches for the choices and then decides on personal moral codes.

***Stage 5: Community Rights versus Individual Rights***
The adolescent understands that values and laws are not absolute but relative. He also knows that standards may differ from one person to another. The person recognizes that laws are important for society but knows that laws can be changed. He believes that some values, such as liberty, are more important than the law. Values and laws are relative and standards may vary from one person to another.

Good is understood in terms of abstract (mental) principles that the society has settled down. An unfair law ought to be changed.
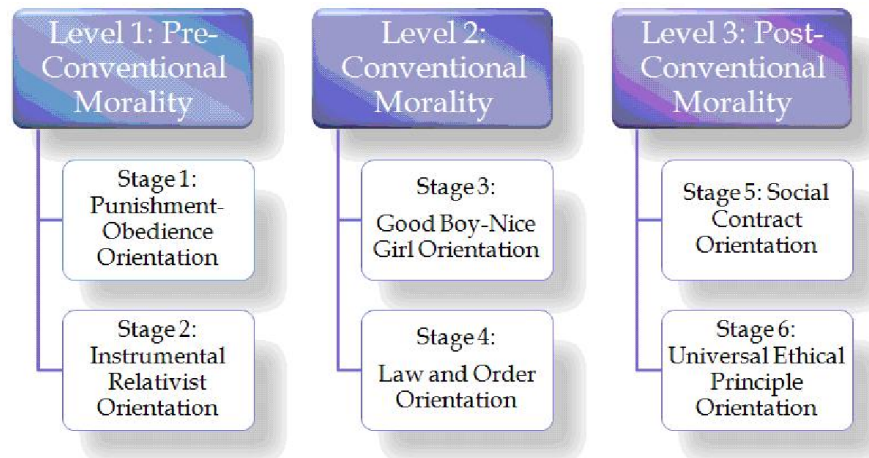
### Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles
At this stage individual has developed a moral standard based on universal human rights. When faced with a conflict between law and conscience, the person will follow conscience, even though the decision might involve personal risks. Good is understood in terms of abstract principles. The emphasis is on human rights without caring for the approval of society.

Kohlberg's theory shows us that moral reasoning is a complex process and the child needs guidance throughout his developmental stages.

In the pre-school age, you will be dealing with children of the first two stages and in the long run the third stage, but it is important for you to understand the whole process of moral development according to the perspective of Lawrence Kohlberg.



## KOHLBERG'S STAGES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

| Level 1: Pre-Conventional Morality | Level 2: Conventional Morality | Level 3: Post-Conventional Morality |
|---|---|---|
| Stage 1: Punishment-Obedience Orientation | Stage 3: Good Boy-Nice Girl Orientation | Stage 5: Social Contract Orientation |
| Stage 2: Instrumental Relativist Orientation | Stage 4: Law and Order Orientation | Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle Orientation |

*Source: http://www.tetsuccesskey.com/2014/01/kohlbergs-stages-of-moraldevelopment.html*

**Activity for students**

> Dear students observe children from your surrounding and compare their moral characteristic with those of Kohlberg's.

**6.5.2 Criticism on Kohlberg's theory: Gilligan's theory**
Carol Gilligan was born on November 28, 1936, in New York. In 1970 she became a research assistant for Lawrence Kohlberg.



*Source: Google image*

Gilligan felt her teacher's theory did not sufficiently address the gender differences of moral development due to two reasons: Kohlberg conducted this study on males and because his theory did not include the caring perspective.

Gilligan claimed that males and females are often socialized differently, and females are more appropriate than males to worry about interpersonal relationships and take responsibility for the well-being of others. Gilligan suggested this difference is due to the child's relationship with the mother and that females are traditionally taught a moral perspective that focuses on community and caring about personal relationships. She presented the following stages of moral development:

***Pre Conventional***
-Person only cares for himself in order to safeguard existence
-This is how everyone is as children
In this transitional phase, the individual's attitude is considered selfish on one hand , and on the other hand the person sees the connection between themselves and others.
*Conventional*
- Responsibility
- More care shown for other people.
- Gilligan says this is shown in the role of mother &wife
- Situation sometimes carries on to ignoring needs of self.

In this transitional phase, tensions between responsibility of caring for others and caring for self are faced.

***Post Conventional***
- Acceptance of the principle of care for self and others is shown.
- Some people never reach this level.

Gilligan argued that boys develop the *morality of justice*, in which they focus on the use of laws and rules of moral principles in order to ensure that justice is served. In contrast, girls develop the *morality of care* in which their main focus is on human well-being and on compassion for others.

**Summary**
Moral development concerns the integration of rules and values that are endorsed by one's social environment. This is learnt through social interactions starting as early as infancy while observing important adults (parents, teachers, ideal personality). In this section, we have studied the meaning of morality and analyzed through the theories of two eminent psychologists, Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg and how children proceed in their moral development. Two perspectives are proposed by Piaget's Heteronomous and Autonomous morality. Kohlberg refers to three levels of reasoning: Pre-Conventional Reasoning, Conventional Reasoning and Post-Conventional Reasoning. Gilligan presented the ideas of morality of justice and morality of care based on gender differences.

Research shows that the roots of moral functioning appear early in life, in infancy, and depend on the affective quality of family and community support.

Activity for students:

> Compare theories of moral development you have studied in this section and prepare a list of similar and different ideas presented

### 6.6  MORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS

Preschool years mark child's transition from egocentricity (self -interest) to empathy—or at least the potential for empathy

Child becomes increasingly helpful and caring of others
When forced to choose between her own self-interest and empathy, a four-year-old will still perhaps choose self-interest.

Preschoolers tend to think of right and wrong in black and white terms. That is, an act is always right or always wrong. There are no shades of gray and there is no room to negotiate. People are good or people are bad. Good people are always good and bad people are always bad.

At the age of preschool some more features emerge as:
 Strict equality
 Reciprocity (mutuality); merit, deserving

### 6.6.1  Characteristics of learners at kindergarten

Young children think of right and wrong in following terms:

**Absolutes**. Things are always good or always bad. It is unimportant whether an act was intentional or unintentional.

 **How much physical damage was done**? Greater the damage worse is perception of the act.

**Whether an act will evoke punishment**. If an act will be punished then it is wrong.

**Rules**. Rules should never be broken. Breaking rules is viewed as wrong.

**Their own perspective**: Children have difficulty taking another person's view of an issue.

### 6.6.2  Classroom activities to develop morality

Majority of childhood education experts agree that building a child's character must begin at preschool age. During this period, children can be easily molded and guided to learn about what is right and what is wrong, and to learn to live a value-filled life. They can easily absorb and follow what they see and hear from the adults in their surroundings.

Thus, teaching positive values such as honesty, courage, responsibility, sympathy, honesty, self-discipline, self-reliance, kindness, friendliness, tolerance, respect, love, justice and pity will likely be more effective when the youngsters are at preschool age than when they are at adolescent age.

At this level teacher can use the following classroom activities to promote moral development.

1.    Telling and Reading Stories:
       All children enjoy listening to and reading folk tales, fairy tales, and stories where animals are the main characters.  Teachers can select such story books in Urdu or in mother tongue

2.    Learning and Singing Songs:

Most children love learning and singing songs. Adolescents and adults also like songs and singing, especially if they can identify with the music. Through poems and songs moral values can be indorsed.

3. Role-playing a Story

Majority of children like to wear particular dress and acting out the roles of different characters. For teaching the value of hard work, truth, empathy teacher can use role playing in classroom.

### 6.6.3 Characteristics of elementary learners

In elementary school child can easily put himself in another person's shoes; can show empathy.

Children are able to take need as an important reason for kindness.

Children try to reason things out and increase their moral understanding. They often shout "it's not fair.

It should be noted that elementary children will test boundaries as part of their moral development. They are exploring where the line falls. This requires the adults in their world to follow rules which are put in place. Failure to do so results in moral ambiguity which the elementary child quickly picks up on, learning that we don't really mean what we say. Not ideal when these children are forming their sense of morality.

### 6.6.4 Classroom activities for elementary level

Teacher can help in moral development of students by inculcating moral values through classroom activities. Some of the ideas are presented here; you can innovate your own ways.

**Thinking about rules**

Objective: To teach children that some rules are inflexible, while other rules can be changed.

Skill: Respect, creating agreement

Ask the group, "What does it mean to follow rules? What would happen if people didn't follow them?" Write down their answers on the board or a large sheet of paper.

Tell them:
Rules tell us how to behave. Some rules should always be followed so that people don't get unhappy or have something bad happen. "Don't steal," "Don't cheat," and "Tell the truth" are all rules that should always be followed. In a group like this one, there are certain rules that we follow so that everyone can participate. Some of the rules are: don't disturb others, don't use bad language, and don't say things that will be unkind to others. If we didn't have these rules, it would be very difficult for us to live together in a society.
Other rules are more flexible. If your sleep time is fixed, your mother might change the rule and allow you to stay awake later sometimes. Rules can only be changed only if no one gets hurt.

Ask the children which of the following rules must always be kept and which can be changed sometimes. Also ask them the reasons for their answer.
• Don't hit anyone in anger.
• Eat a balanced meal.
• Keep your room neat.
• Don't talk behind people's backs.
• Listen to the teacher.

Children can offer other rules from home and school, and tell why these rules should always be kept or can sometimes be bent.

**Role model**
Learning Objective: To identify positive qualities of role models

Skill: Self-awareness
Ask, "What is a 'role model'?" Brainstorm ideas and write them on the board or a large sheet of paper.

Tell the group:
Role models are people you admire. You may like their values, the way they live their lives, and the things that are important to them. You may want to copy their style.

Most people's role models are famous people—celebrities, sports stars, politicians, and so on. In this activity, try to think of someone you know personally who is really great. It could be a parent, teacher, or friend.
Ask students to talk about their role models. Encourage them by asking these questions:
• 	What has that person done to become your role model?
• 	Does your role model help others? How?
• 	What's the most important quality a role model should have?
• 	What could you do to be like your role model?

**Dear students**
You have got an orientation to classroom activities which can be used for the development of moral values at various levels. You can innovate new activities and mold these according to your class level.

Activity for students:

> Design three different activities to develop the value of truth, kindness and empathy among elementary students.

### 6.7    EXERCISE

1.    What do you understand by moral development?

2.    Why the development of morality is essential for an in individuals success in society?

3.    Summarize the main ideas presented in theories of moral development. Why this knowledge is important for an ECE teacher?

4.    Extend your reading on theories of moral development and prepare a list of salient features of moral development prescribed by each theory.

5.    Design two activities each to promote moral development at preschool, kindergarten and elementary level.

6.    Look at the picture given below. How can you use it for developing moral values in your kindergarten class?

### 6.8    BIBLIOGRAPHY

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