Chapter 8 WHYL Answers

Body Changes

1. About how much does a well-nourished child grow in height and weight from ages 2 to 6?

Over each year of early childhood, a well-nourished child gains about 4½ pounds and grows about 3 inches. By age 6, the average child in a developed nation weighs between 40 and 50 pounds and is at least 3½ feet tall.

2. Why do many parents over-feed their children?

Many people believe that thin children are not healthy and thus, over-feed their children by encouraging them to eat beyond the point where they feel “full.” They are also unaware that as children get taller, they become thinner, a perfectly normal process as their nutritional needs decrease when growth slows. Normal, healthy children in this age group are frequently thin.

3. The incidence of what adult diseases increases with childhood obesity?

Being an obese child lends itself to becoming an obese adult as well as developing heart disease and diabetes.

4. What specific measures should be part of oral health in early childhood?

Learning to brush and care for the teeth and gums in childhood helps those skills become routine in later childhood and adulthood. Seeing a dentist on a regular basis should also be a part of overall healthcare.

5. When is it normal for children to be picky about eating and other daily routines?

The “just right” phase peaked at about age 3, when children: preferred to have things done in a particular order or in a certain way, had a strong preference to wear (or not wear) certain articles of clothing, prepared for bedtime by engaging in a special activity, routine, or ritual, and had strong preferences for certain foods.

Brain Development

6. How much does the brain grow from ages 2 to 6?

Between ages 2 and 6, the brain grows from 75 percent to 90 percent of its adult weight, with increases particularly in the areas that allow advanced language and social understanding.

7. Why is myelination important for thinking and motor skills?

Myelination speeds processing and allows for a faster response time.
8. What is the function of the corpus callosum?

The corpus callosum is a long, thick band of nerve fibers that connects the left and right sides of the brain. Growth of the corpus callosum makes communication between the hemispheres more efficient, allowing children to coordinate the two sides of the brain or body.

9. What should parents do if their toddler seems left-handed?

Parents should do nothing. Trying to change “handedness” may interfere with brain function and lateralization.

10. How does the prefrontal cortex affect impulsivity and perseveration?

Impulsiveness and perseveration are opposite manifestations of the same underlying cause: immaturity of the prefrontal cortex. As the brain matures (an innate function) and emotional regulation is learned, these issues subside and the child is better able to learn.

11. What are the functions of three areas of the brain that are part of the limbic system?

The amygdala regulates emotions in general, but fear and anxiety in particular. The hippocampus serves as a central processing center. It is particularly important for the memory of objects. Finally, the hypothalamus receives and responds to signals from the amygdala as well as hippocampus to produce hormones for the rest of the body.

12. Is stress beneficial or harmful to young children?

Stress can seem beneficial if there is someone there to moderate the stress for the child. However, flooding the brain with cortisol may actually destroy parts of the hippocampus.

13. What factors help children develop their motor skills?

Maturation of the prefrontal cortex improves impulse control, while myelination of the corpus callosum and lateralization of the brain permit better physical coordination, resulting in highly developed motor skills as a result of much active play.

14. What is known and unknown about the effects on young children of chemicals in food, air, and water?

Chemicals in food and water create many complications for children including respiratory illnesses like asthma. Pollutants in the air may result in complications for the central nervous system and thus impede balance, finger dexterity, and motivation. Lead has been proven to cause damage and, thus, has resulted in laws governing acceptable levels in the air, food, clothing, soil, etc.
15. How does brain and body maturation affect children’s artistic expression?

The corpus callosum, which allows a child to use and access both brain spheres, must be mature for artistic expression.

Injuries and Abuse

16. Why is the term “injury control” preferred over the term “accident prevention?”

Injury control implies that harm can be minimized with appropriate controls.

17. What primary measures prevent childhood injury, abuse, and neglect?

Primary prevention, like the wearing of helmets while bike riding, creates and supports conditions that reduce a child’s chance of injury.

18. What secondary measures prevent childhood injury, abuse, and neglect?

Secondary measures reduce risk in high-risk situations. Examples include cross-walks and flashing lights on stopped school buses.

19. What tertiary measures prevent further childhood injury, abuse, and neglect?

Tertiary measures reduce damage after injuries. These include such things as laws against hit-and-run drivers and immediate medical attention.

20. Why did few people recognize childhood maltreatment 50 years ago?

Prior to the late 70’s there was no research on the topic. It was a common belief that attacks came from outside a child’s family and were frequently perpetrated by strangers. Today, we know that maltreatment is neither rare nor sudden, and 80 percent of the perpetrators are one or both of the child’s parents (Children’s Bureau, 2010a).

21. Why is neglect in childhood considered more harmful, in the long term, than abuse?

Neglected children may have greater social deficits than abused ones because they were unable to relate to their parents. They may also suffer long-term effects of neglected nutritional and physical needs.

22. Why is it difficult to know exactly how often childhood maltreatment occurs?

Not all cases are noticed, reported, or substantiated. U.S. laws now require teachers and other professionals to report suspected maltreatment. Thus, reports have increased because of those laws.

23. What are the signs that a child may be mistreated?

Delayed development (such as slow growth, immature communication, lack of curiosity, or unusual social interactions), excessive fearfulness, a heightened startle response,
defensiveness, and confusion about the difference between fantasy and reality are all signs of possible maltreatment.

24. What are the long-term consequences of childhood maltreatment?

Maltreated children may be bullies, victims, or both, not only in childhood and adolescence but also in adulthood. They tend to dissociate, that is, to disconnect their memories from their understanding of themselves. Adults who were severely maltreated (physically, sexually, or emotionally) often abuse drugs or alcohol, enter unsupportive relationships, become victims or aggressors, sabotage their own careers, eat too much or too little, and engage in other self-destructive behavior.

25. Why would a child be placed in foster care?

If a child is legally removed from an abusive or neglectful home they may be placed in foster care. This is a tertiary form of prevention.