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Abstract


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The American Oxford Dictionary defines development as a “stage of growth or advancement.” Anita Woolfolk (Educational Psychology 2001) suggests that most developmental theorists believe that there are three principles of child development: first, every child develops at a different rate; second, child development takes place in an orderly fashion (sit up, crawl, walk); and third, child development takes place gradually (e.g., an infant does not come home from the hospital, climb out of his crib, and walk into the kitchen to eat). While the work of Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Erik Erikson laid the foundation for the examination of child development, psychologists have seldom examined the ramifications of impeding child development by overburdening (paradoxically encouraging) children with extracurricular activities. In this project it is contended that this is a form of child violence (abuse) and the major effects of violence are examined.

This project presents an overview of the contemporary parental belief that an important part of the parenting role is to choose numerous experiences that will place a parent’s child ahead of other children with respect to their cognitive, social/emotional, and motor development. In doing this, however, the parent disregards his/her child’s displaying a disregard for their children’s unique rate of development by pushing them into activities for which they are not developmentally wired. This disregard for a child’s developmental process is both a new and subtle form of violence toward children (child abuse) which may ultimately lead to stunting the emotional, intellectual, and motor development of a child.