



Child Maturity Stage

Resource

CHILD MATURITY

Age: 4-12 years old

Primary Goal

- Learning to Take Care of Self

Childhood is a time of expanding their skill sets and exploring the world around them. In this way they learn their place in the world (their identity), who their people are (belonging and identity), and how to act like themselves in a way that gets their needs met.

A child is expected to be able to take care of one person - themselves. What they lack, is the ability to take care of you and themselves at the same time. Selfish! That's actually their job!

Child Stage Needs

- Help learning to how to appropriately articulate needs
- Challenge and encouragement to do difficult things
- Help doing what I don't feel like doing
 - Leadership Square: I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I help. You do, I watch.
- Help evaluating consequences of behaviors
- Help identifying what brings self satisfaction
- Help sorting out feelings, imaginations, and reality
- Feedback on guesses, attempts and failures
- Help developing talents and resources
- Be taught the family history / history of God's family / 'Big Picture' of Life

Child Stage Tasks

- Take care of self
- Learn to say what you think and feel and appropriately ask for what you need
 - Step 1: Learning to identify what you need, think and feel
- Discernment
 - Learn what brings personal satisfaction (brings you joy)
 - Distinguishing what is good for you from what is bad for you
- Discipline
 - Learning how to do hard things (persistence) - push through difficult tasks*
 - Learning how to wait for and work for what is good (kills entitlement)
 - Learning to say no to what is bad for them - not just doing anything you feel like doing, but doing what is good for you.
- Develop personal resources and talents
- Knows self and takes responsibility for making self understandable to others.
- Understand how you fit into the big picture of life.



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Child Maturity Holes: Obvious Immaturity

- Often very self-centered (can only take care of one at a time). Egocentric.
- May act like a different person in different situations (don't have a stable identity)
- May constantly be chasing excitement, fun, pleasure, etc., yet never really find satisfaction.
 - May find it difficult to control cravings, especially when under stress (addictions)
- Struggle to persevere in difficulty and do things they don't feel like doing
- Fills life with unproductive activities despite God given abilities
- Experiences continual frustration/disappointment because needs are not met. Often passive aggressive.

The child-level leader is good at taking care of themselves and making sure they get what they want, but not so good at creating an environment where everyone's needs are getting met.

("Child adults" can take care of themselves, but they can only take care of themselves, often at the expense of others.)

For other child-level leaders, with pseudo maturity, the roles are reversed. While there is still only one person being cared for, it is the other person, and self care drops off the radar. In other words, whoever has the need gets the care at the expense of self, family, and everyone else involved. *

Child Maturity Holes: Pseudo-Maturity (too much responsibility too early - parentified children)

- May work hard to serve others sacrificially but have little satisfaction for their efforts.
- May be serving out of fear (afraid of upsetting others, etc) rather than joy
- May discount or deny or be unaware of their own needs (can only take care of one at a time)

Primary Task to be completed:

Taking care of self

Primary Resulting Problem (as adult, if not completed):

Not taking responsibility for self

You will know when a person has graduated from the child level of maturity to the adult level because he will shift from being a self-centered child to a both-centered adult. While a child needs to learn me-centered fairness (how do I make it fair for me), an adult learns we-centered fairness (how do I make it fair for us).

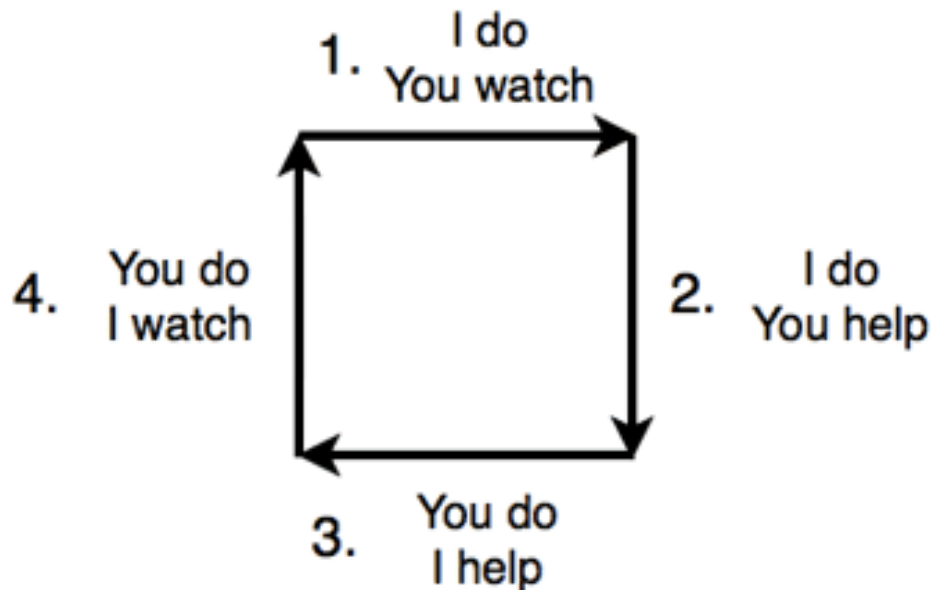


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The Life Model: Child Maturity Indicators¹

Personal Tasks	Community & Family Tasks	When the Tasks Fail
Asks for what is needed; can say what one thinks and feels	Teaches and allows child to appropriately articulate needs.	Experiences continual frustration/disappointment because needs are not met. Often passive aggressive.
Learns what brings personal satisfaction.	Helps child to evaluate consequences of own behaviors and to identify what satisfies self..	Is obsessed with or addicted to food, drugs, sex, money, and power in a desperate chase to find satisfaction
Develops personal resources and talents.	Provides opportunities to develop child's unique talents and interests.	Fills life with unproductive activities despite God given abilities.
Knows self and takes responsibility to make self understandable to others.	Guides in discovering the unique characteristics of the child's heart.	Fails to develop true identity; conforms to outside influences that misshape identity.
Understands how he or she fits into history as well as the "big picture" of what life is about.	Educates the child about the family history as well as the history of the family of God.	Feels disconnected from history and is unable to protect self from family lies or dysfunctions that are handed down.

Leadership Square²



¹ Chart adapted from Shepherd's House, Inc. © 2000

² Leadership Square 3Dm



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Child Maturity Stage Assessment³

No	At Times	Usually	Always	
				I can do things I don't feel like doing.
				I can do hard things (even if they cause me some pain)
				I can separate my feelings, my imagination, and reality in my relationships.
				I am comfortable with reasonable risk, attempts and failures.
				I can receive love I did not have to earn.
				I can take care of myself.
				I can ask for what I need.
				I am growing in the things I am good at doing, (personal, resources and talents)
				I have learned to control my cravings.
				I know what satisfies me.
				I see myself through the "eyes of heaven" (identity)
				I know how my family came to be the way it is (family history) & I my life is not an individual experience - I can impact history.

³ Modified from <https://lifemodelworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Maturity-Skills-Assessment.pdf>. This can also be found in *RARE Leadership*, by Marcus Warner & Jim Wilder and *The Complete Guide to Living with Men*, by E. James Wilder