

“Baskin Robbins” Stages of Social Development

Rosetta Lee

**“Sugar and Spice but Not Always Nice:
Gender, Bias, and Aggression in Adolescent Girls”**

Material Adapted From

Joanne Deak, *Girls Will Be Girls*

- **Self Awareness (0-2)**

This is that delightful stage when you discover the difference between yourself and others. You may look at your hands like they're strange things apart from your consciousness, but then you realize that you can feel and do with your fingers what others cannot.

- **Parallel Play (2-3)**

This is a stage when you learn how to play by yourself. If you learn to play with others, it's really only to watching what they do and mimic it in your own play. In parallel play, having the exact same toys is important, because you're too self-absorbed to know how to share or know that sharing is even an option.

- **Interactive Play (3-6)**

This is a stage when you learn to interact with others. You go through the clumsy steps of realizing the consequences of selfishness, kindness, communication, etc. with others.

- **Transitory Friendships (6-8)**

This stage begins the Baskin Robbins Years. You have to taste every flavor in order to discover which ones you like and which ones you don't like. You seem to drift from friend to friend, and you have no particular preferences. You see them equally for now, and each new flavor is exciting and gets a different reaction.

- **Friendship Clusters (8-10)**

You start to discover that you like flavors with nuts in them - pistachio, maple walnut, butter pecan, almond mocha. It's not that you don't like other flavors or don't appreciate differences - you just like these better. Your friendship cluster is accepting and more fluid. Your cluster won't freak out if bubble gum ice cream approaches you in the mall. You are exploring the beginnings of real friendships and relationships.

- **Best Friends or Generalists (10-12)**

You realize that butter pecan is far away your favorite flavor. Maple walnut comes pretty close, but nothing else really compares. Your best friend is someone you could spend 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with. Several times, you've spent all day at school together, you've gone home, and then you call your friend right away. You start to understand how to act in an intimate relationship.

But maybe you're not built for a best friend. Generalists never need this intimacy. If you are a generalist, you are simply wired to appreciate all flavors and keep social nets wide open.

- **Cliques (12-14)**

You're getting close to peers and drawing away from adults. Your friends sometimes even replace the stability offered by the anchor of adults. In this confusing time, it's sure nice being surrounded by others that look alike, talk alike, and act alike. You feel safe in your clique's cocoon until, one day, you are strong enough and independent enough to stand outside of the group, or somewhat alone.

- **Interest-Based Friendship Groups (14+)**

Your friends are based on shared interests, passions, or philosophies. You can be genuine friends with both boys and girls. Your groups are non-exclusive, and you may belong to more than one group. Some of your groups have cross-over because of interest cross-over. This stage feels like all the benefits of clusters and cliques without the downside: acceptance, activity, and social creativity, without insecurity, narrowness, and meanness. You live in this social place for a majority of your adult life.