

Industry vs. Inferiority

Erikson's Stage 4 Overview

Stage Basics

Age: 5 to 12 years (Elementary School) | Virtue: Competence

Industry (Success)

Key Characteristics:

- Masters formal skills (reading, writing)
- Completes tasks and projects
- Takes pride in accomplishments
- Persists through challenges
- Develops work ethic and discipline

Inferiority (Failure)

Key Characteristics:

- Feels inadequate or incompetent
- Avoids challenging tasks
- Negative self-comparison to peers
- Gives up quickly when struggling
- Believes effort is futile

Key Areas of Development

Academic Skills

- Reading and writing
- Mathematics
- Science projects
- Homework completion

Physical Skills

- Sports and athletics
- Physical education
- Coordination activities
- Team participation

Life Skills

- Household chores
- Musical instruments
- Arts and crafts
- Hobbies and interests

What Builds Industry

- ✓ Praise effort and improvement
- ✓ Provide achievable challenges
- ✓ Recognize diverse talents
- ✓ Focus on process, not just outcomes
- ✓ Teach growth mindset
- ✓ Support without taking over
- ✓ Celebrate progress and persistence

What Creates Inferiority

- ✗ Only praise high achievement
- ✗ Public comparisons and rankings
- ✗ Harsh criticism of mistakes
- ✗ Doing work for the child
- ✗ Unrealistic expectations
- ✗ Narrow definition of success
- ✗ Lack of recognition or support

Role of Significant Others

Teachers

- Use growth mindset feedback
- Minimize public comparison
- Recognize diverse abilities
- Create supportive environment

Parents

- Balance expectations with support
- Help without taking over
- Find areas of child's strength
- Emphasize effort and learning