

## Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development - Stage 1 (Infancy)

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development has 8 distinct stages. Erikson assumes that a psychosocial crisis occurs at each stage of development. Erikson believes the psychological needs of the individual (i.e. psycho) are in conflict with the needs of society (i.e. social), hence the name, psychosocial. During the infancy stage of development, Erikson believes an infant must first form a loving, trusting relationship with the caregiver, or develop a sense of mistrust instead.



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### Age

#### Infancy (Birth to 18 months)

##### Infants

Erikson's first stage of psychosocial development occurs during the first year and a half of life, from birth to 18 months of age.

### Basic Conflict

#### Trust vs. Mistrust

##### Trust-fall vs. Missed-trust-fall

During the first 1 and a half years of life, Erikson believes that all infants are uncertain about the world around them. He believes that in order to resolve these feelings of uncertainty, an infant must look towards their primary caregiver for stability and consistent, reliable care. The infant will develop trust, confidence and security if they receive consistent, reliable and predictable care. Success in this stage will lead the infant to the virtue of hope. If the infant experiences abuse, neglect or cruelty, it will destroy trust and then foster mistrust. Then, the infant can develop insecurity, worthlessness and anxiety about the world around them.

### Important Events

#### Feeding

##### Feeding

A sense of trust in infants stems partly from being comforted and fed on a consistent, and predictable basis. Part of the conflict in this stage involves weaning from the breast, and the infant being able to trust they will still be fed if they are no longer getting the oral gratification from sucking.

### Virtue

#### Hope

##### Hope-rope

If a sense of trust is developed, an infant can then have hope that, if faced with a new crises, there will be a good possibility that other people will be there to support them. If an infant develops hope, they are thought to have a basic feeling that everything will be okay if exposed to risk, a sense of grounding, as well as a trust in life, self and others. Failing to attain the virtue of hope will result in development of fear.

### Freud Stage

#### Oral

##### Mouth

Freud's psychosexual stage during infancy that parallels Erikson's psychosocial "trust vs. mistrust" stage has to do with the mouth and everything oral. The oral stage includes feeding, crying, teething, thumb-sucking, and biting, in that the infant's mouth and the breast are the center of all infantile experiences.