Families Today

Lesson 3.1 Healthy Family Development
Lesson 3.2 Family Types

Essential Question

In what ways do family relationships affect children?

Case Study — How Can Cultural Differences in a Family Impact Childrearing?

As a class, read the case study and discuss the questions that follow. After you finish studying the chapter, discuss this case study again. Have your opinions changed based on what you learned?

Camila and Jim are looking for a place to live together after they get married next month. Camila sees a home for sale that is nearby many members of their family.

Jim finds Camila's family warm and welcoming but is not sure iving so close to them is such a great idea. The interactions among Camila's family members are constant—similar to an extended family, although each has their own home. Jim was raised in a nuclear family. They visited relatives mainly during holidays and vacation times, but otherwise lived as an independent family unit.

Jim understands that Camila's family means well, but feels smothered when they want details about everything and are free with their advice. Jim mentions this to Camila, who does not understand Jim's feelings. Jim does not know what to do and wonders whether this is just the beginning of problems due to differences in family culture.

Give It Some Thought

1. How can Jim explain his objections without hurting Camila's or Camila's family's feelings?
2. Is there a compromise that would make both Jim and Camila happy?
3. If Jim and Camila start a family of their own, how would their different ideas about family affect their parenting decisions?
4. Is Jim worrying needlessly, or can different family cultures make for long-term, serious marital and childrearing problems?

Lesson 3.1

Healthy Family Development

Key Terms

active listening
beneficial
bias
body language
communication
comprise
cultural diversity
culture
detrimental
discontentment
essence
family life cycle
income
Industrial Revolution
inherent
marriage
multicultural family
norm

Learning Outcomes

After studying this lesson, you will be able to

3.1-1 **identify** criteria for a healthy family.

3.1-2 **assess** changes that take place during the family life cycle.

3.1-3 **describe** ways that culture influences the family.

3.1-4 **compare** past and present societal influences on families.

3.1-5 **determine** characteristics of healthy families.

Reading and Notetaking Activity

Imagine you are a family therapist. Your new clients are a family with two young children. The caregivers want to explore ways they could function better as a family and be happier. Write a two-paragraph speech recommending steps your clients can take to accomplish their goals. Incorporate information you have learned about child development and the kind of support children need. As you read the chapter, take detailed notes. After reading the chapter, read your speech again. With a partner, discuss what you would change about your speech based on any new information you have learned. Present your final speech to the class.

Introduction

How would you define *family*? The U.S. Census Bureau defines *family* as two or more people living in the same household who are related by blood (birth), marriage, or adoption. Perhaps your definition of family may be broader and include people who do not fit into the "traditional" definition. For example, many people consider other relatives or even close friends as family. If you were to ask others how they would define *family*, you would probably get many different responses.

The family is the oldest known social group. How well family members get along and work together help determine the stability of the family unit. Healthy families work on building healthy relationships. Families, just like individuals, change through the years, but continue to be the basic unit of society.

3.1-1 What Is a Family?

Why is it so difficult to define *family*? Every family is unique, and the relationships within the family are always special and complex. Adults bring to family relationships all of their childhood and adult experiences as well as their hopes and expectations. Children come into their families with certain inborn ways of reaching out to their parents to which parents respond.

Parent-child relationships are often embedded in relationships with other family members of different ages who will influence these relationships (**Figure 3.1**). The family also lives in a social and cultural setting that exerts its influence on the family. Thus, the family is not just simply two or more people related by blood, commitment, or ==marriage== (a legal contract and, ideally an emotional and social union between two partners). The family is more than parents and their children, more than common ancestors, or more than people who share a household. It is this "more than" thinking—this ==essence== (qualities that cannot be disregarded) that are ==inherent== (basic) to all families, that makes the word *family* difficult to define.

Figure 3.1 Establishing healthy relationships with family members is essential to the stability of the family unit and the health and development of any children. *How can you promote healthy relationships in your family?*

In this text, you will learn the following three things about families:

- Families can be classified by types (who belongs), and these types can change over time or with certain events.
- *Family dynamics*, the roles of family members and their patterns of relating within the family, can be **beneficial** (helpful) or **detrimental** (unhelpful or harmful) to a child's development.
- The family is the strongest and the most lasting influence in a child's life. The family is the foundation for all domains of the child's development.

Identifying Healthy Families

What makes for a healthy family? There are many criteria for a healthy family, and the more criteria the family meets, the greater the chance for its lasting health. The criteria include adults who are emotionally committed to each other and who feel accountable to each other and to their children even if conflicts and periods of **discontentment** (unhappiness) occur. The criteria also include adults who have established healthy family dynamics, such as

- encouraging all members of the family to work together for the well-being of the family
- keeping the avenues of **communication** (exchange of messages and information between at least two people) open through verbal messages, **active listening** (the receiver of a message provides feedback to the speaker, indicating the message is understood), and **body language**, which is the sending of nonverbal messages through body movements (**Figure 3.2**)
- establishing rules and boundaries that are clearly stated and evenly applied, but flexible enough to respond to each family member's needs
- creating expectations that are reasonable
- being models of family values and desired behaviors
- having fun and humor to ease the burden of family challenges

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Figure 3.2 Nonverbal communication includes facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body movements, posture, and other elements of body language. All of these factors contribute to the message that is sent. *How are the two people in this photo communicating nonverbally? What messages are they sending?*

- allowing room for each family member to fulfill personal goals and to mature and change
- not keeping secrets from each other

Laying the Developmental Foundation for Children

Through family, children receive care during their dependent years. Adults are the decision-makers and providers of children's food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, and access to health care and education. Adults are the custodians of their children's schedules for all daily activities, such as eating, sleeping, and playing. They are also the role models for physical habits and a voice of influence when their children are cared for outside of the family.

The first and most continuous social relationships of children are familial. The family is where children acquire their first experiences of being loved and respected as individuals in their own right. The ability to meet life's demands and challenges is greatly influenced by the family dynamics of a child's home. The family instructs, gives guidance, and models social behaviors.

Even in the healthiest of families, harmony does not always prevail. So healthy families model and engage children in effective conflict resolution and problem-solving (**Figure 3.3**).

Healthy families sow the seeds for children to grow up with positive attitudes and life management skills. When families have unhealthy dynamics due to social strains, many children are unable to cope with stress and are at greater risk of becoming mentally unhealthy, having poor social skills, having weak impulse control (are "mad at the world"), and being poor problem-solvers. In short, all children depend on adults in their families to help them develop healthy human relationships.

3.1-2 The Family Life Cycle

Many parents and their children go through similar stages called the **family life cycle**. The traditional family life cycle consists of six stages (**Figure 3.4**). The *beginning stage* consists of an individual or a couple. During this time, they decide whether they want to become parents and, if so, how many children they want to have.

In the *childbearing stage*, parents give birth to or adopt one or more children and assume their roles and responsibilities in caring for and guiding children through their earliest years. If a couple or individual has more than one child, the childbearing and parenting stages often overlap.

Figure 3.3 Steps in Problem Solving

Step	Questions
Step 1. Identify the problem	• What is the problem that is getting in the way of achieving a goal? Be specific. • How is the problem affecting me? How is it affecting others? • What is happening? When is it happening? What causes the problem?
Step 2. Look at alternative solutions	• Brainstorm as many solutions as possible. • Do not discard any idea. Sometimes seemingly "bad ideas" can develop into "good solutions."
Step 3. Analyze the alternative solutions	• Write the good and bad points for each possible solution. • Group alternative solutions, when possible.
Step 4. Select a possible solution	• Decide which solutions might have the most impact on the problem. Decide if the solution is realistic and manageable. • As you consider possible solutions, think of the consequences of each. What is the extent of a risk involved in each possible solution? • Do not hurry this step. Talk to others, including those affected by the problem.
Step 5. Implement a solution	• After choosing a solution, plan how and when you will implement it. • Be specific on the steps to implement the plan. • Communicate the implementation steps to all involved.
Step 6. Evaluate the results	• Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution. Is the solution achieving the desired goal? Did the solution have any unforeseen risks? • If the problem has not been resolved, ask the following: Do I need to give it more time to work? Should I change the plan of action? Do I need to begin the entire process again? • If the problem seems to be resolved, continue to monitor. Problems do not always stay solved.

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Figure 3.4 **The Family Life Cycle**

Stage	Definition	Example
Beginning stage	Either a couple or an individual determines whether they want to embark on parenthood and, if so, how many children they would like to have. This stage lasts until the individual or couple has a child. Individuals and couples who remain childless stay in the beginning stage of the family life cycle until they reach the mid-years stage.	_Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com_
Childbearing stage	The individual or couple starts having children. The stages of the family life cycle for parents of multiple children are overlapping. The childbearing stage continues until individuals or couples have their last child.	_Ground Picture/Shutterstock.com_
Parenting stage	The individual or couple focuses on guiding their children through the school-age and teen years. Balancing children's school and extracurricular activities with family and work demands can pose many scheduling challenges during this stage.	_Monkey Business Images/Stockbroker/ Monkey Business via Getty Images Plus;_
Launching stage	The children begin leaving home to attend college, find a job and live on their own, or possibly start their own families. The individual or couple often begins to have more free time for themselves.	_kali9/E+ via Getty Images_
Mid-years stage	The individual or couple faces an _empty nest_ when all of their children leave home, and they may feel a void in their lives without the busyness of taking care of their children. They refocus on planning for their future and possibly becoming grandparents. This stage lasts until the individual or couple retires.	_adamkaz/E+ via Getty Images_
Aging stage	The individual or couple retires and adjusts to this change in lifestyle. Their health may decline, which might result in grown children becoming caregivers of their parents. This stage lasts throughout the remainder of life.	_Lordn/Shutterstock.com_

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During the *parenting stage*, parents focus on guiding and nurturing their children through the school-age and teen years. They are preparing their children to become productive members of society. Children begin to learn more from teachers and peers. During adolescence, parents begin treating their children as adults. They also know when to provide guidance and help.

The *launching stage* brings new feelings for parents. During this stage, children start to leave home to make their own lives. As each child leaves home, parents may feel lonelier. They may also feel their children no longer need them. In this stage, parents must acknowledge their children are adults and their relationships may be more equal. Parents learn new ways to offer support to and interact with their grown children.

In the *mid-years stage*, parents may find more time for themselves than they did when their children lived at home. They may devote more time to new interests or hobbies. Keeping in touch with their children is still important, and they may become grandparents. The couple or individual also begins to focus on retirement.

In some cases, economic troubles, divorce, or other situations may cause grown children to return to the family home. Parents then have to learn new ways to relate to their children. They may have adjusted to their children becoming adults and do not know how to treat them as adults when they all live in the same home. Grandchildren may also come to live in the home. Open communication can help ensure that family members continue to get along.

The final stage of the family life cycle is the *aging stage*. This stage lasts from retirement to the death of a partner. In this stage, the couple or individual may pursue new hobbies and spend time with family and friends. They may have health conditions that cause them to need help from their children. The couple or individual may face different challenges and have new concerns. During this stage, family members may need to make many adjustments.

Keep in mind that while many families follow this traditional family life cycle in whole or in part, that does not mean all families do, and it does not mean that it is always the best way to do things.

Focus on Careers

Marriage and Family Therapist

Marriage and family therapists are professionals who work to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the family's well-being. They help families overcome stress, mental health issues, and behavioral problems.

Career cluster: Human services.

Education: Educational requirements often include a master's degree. All states have some licensure, certification, or registration requirement.

Job outlook: Future employment opportunities for marriage and family therapists are expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations.

To learn more about a career as a marriage and family therapist, visit the United States Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* website. You will also be able to compare the job responsibilities, educational requirements, job outlook, and average pay of marriage and family therapists with similar occupations.

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There are many ways that healthy families form and evolve/change, and we need to remember that there is no one right way to make a family.

3.1-3 Cultural Influences on Families

Families may go through similar stages and are alike in many ways, but they may differ in the cultural groups to which they belong. **Culture**, a way of life within a group of people that includes language, beliefs, attitudes, values, rituals, and skills, greatly affects a family's life (**Figure 3.5**). Because not every family belongs to the same culture, the effects of culture differ widely from one family to the next.

People of many cultural groups live in the United States. Families who once came from many parts of the world call the United States home. The United States is an example of a nation with great **cultural diversity**, which means it has more than one culture represented among its people.

Figure 3.5 Aspects of a Person's Culture

- History, folklore, heroes
- Language (written, verbal, slang, body language, and gestures)
- Humor
- Names (surname and given name)
- Holiday celebrations, traditions, rites and rituals
- Methods of greeting (such as eye contact, handshakes, hugs, kisses, and bowing)
- Preferences about personal space and touching
- Cherished values and traits
- Foods, eating methods, eating manners
- Dress and body decorations
- Home furnishings and decorations
- Arts and crafts
- Music

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How Cultures Vary

Families often identify their culture in terms of their origin or ancestors. People often reference a region of origin, specific country, or language to identify their culture because of the customs, traditions, values, and religions that **comprise** (make up) each culture. These components help describe a family's cultural identification.

Each culture's practices support its beliefs and customs. For example, goals for achievement vary from culture to culture. Some cultures stress academic achievement as a way to honor the family and achieve economic success that will help the entire family. These families view academic learning as the top priority for children. Other cultures stress achievement in social interactions. In these cultures, showing dignity and respect in interactions with others brings honor to the individual or family. These families emphasize play as well as academic skills. Because they have such different views, these two types of families differ in their parenting practices, modeling, praise, and criticism regarding the role of education.

Cultures differ in the way they view the concept of family. In some cultures, *family* includes only the immediate family. In other cultures, this term has a broader meaning that includes other relatives, close family friends, and neighbors.

The importance of the family also varies from culture to culture (see **Figure 3.6**). In cultures with a group orientation, family is most important. Cultures with an individual orientation focus on each person as an individual more than on the family as a group.

Language and dialect can vary from one culture to the next, too. Families generally use their culture's native language and teach this language to their children. Using the language of their people can bring a sense of unity and belonging and contribute to their culture. Families may use language as a way to foster this involvement in the culture.

The use and meaning of body language can vary from group to group. This explains the well-known saying: *Not all people smile in the same language*. In some cultures, smiling expresses friendliness, pleasure, or understanding of humor.

In other cultures, a smile is used to acknowledge a fault. Some cultures might use smiling to mask emotion (hurt or disagreement) or avoid conflict.

In other cultures, people smile in response to a compliment if they feel verbal response would show a lack of modesty.

Figure 3.6 **Cultures See Families Differently**

Group-Oriented Culture	Individual-Oriented Culture
Edwin Tan/E+ via Getty Images	*kali9/E+ via Getty Images*
Family includes kin and perhaps others.	Family includes parents and their children.
Family members live in same house or near each other.	Family members live in different houses and may live far away from one another.
Status in the family (and possibly in the group) is achieved by age and/or gender.	Status in the family is determined by achievement.
Elders make decisions based on the welfare of the whole family (collective responsibility).	The individual considers their own welfare when making decisions for themselves (individual responsibility).
Members take pride in their family name, family history, and family honor.	Members take pride in their own talents, achievements, and status.
Family members conform to those in authority.	Family members may challenge or question those in authority.
Members value cooperation and togetherness.	Members value competition and achievement.
Family harmony is emphasized.	Individual happiness is emphasized.
Early dependence on group is encouraged.	Early independence is encouraged.
Group members help each other, even at their own expense.	Each person is expected to help themselves with little assistance from the family.
Parent-child bond is stressed. Children are seen as extensions of parents (children bring honor to and help the family throughout life).	Marital bond is stressed. Children are seen as individuals who as adults take care of themselves.
Family looks more to the past and traditions and has a more lax approach to time.	Family looks more to the future and values efficiency and timeliness.
Expression of emotion is more indirect (emotionally controlled; modest; formal toward elders to show respect).	Expression of emotion is more direct (emotionally expressive; more "I-centered"; informal).

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Focus on

Social Studies

Cultural Diversity

Speaking different languages is not the only way communication differs across cultures. The role of language can differ, too. For instance, some cultures teach children to talk often, be open and direct, and be informal. These children might address people by their first names without asking and soon after meeting, use slang, and talk to strangers. Other cultures value silence—talking only when necessary. These cultures teach children to notice other body language clues (such as "reading the eyes") to help them understand without being told. These cultures prefer formal word choice and the use of courtesy titles when addressing elders or strangers. In these cultures, children are taught to address elders in a way that shows respect.

In what ways do you think your cultural background will influence the way you parent or care for children? How can children benefit from these influences?

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Multicultural Families

As the United States increases in cultural diversity, the number of *multicultural families* continues to grow. A **multicultural family** is a family with members from two or more cultural groups. Multicultural families offer family members unique opportunities to learn about and experience different cultures' practices firsthand. In mixing and navigating different cultural expectations, multicultural families may experience many advantages as well as added challenges.

Adults in multicultural families know from the beginning that they must mix cultural backgrounds. They may often have to consider each cultural groups practices to decide

- where to live, such as near which relatives or in which community type;
- what religion to follow;
- what holidays to observe;
- if bilingual (speaking two languages), what language to speak;
- how to handle differences with relatives;
- what types of food to make; and
- how to handle childrearing.

There are several advantages of living in a multicultural family. Children are exposed to a broader cultural view. Many children in multicultural families also become bilingual at an early age, which is an advantage in today's global society. Most children raised in multicultural homes are happy and grow up to respect diversity and have a strong sense of self. Recent studies show that children in multicultural families may be more creative. Multicultural families that are strong seem to have much in common (**Figure 3.7**).

Figure 3.7 ## What Makes Multicultural Families Strong?

Studies have shown that strong multicultural families often share the following characteristics:
- Parents have strong cultural identities and feel good about their multicultural family.
- The family talks about cultural issues in the home.
- Parents and children develop creative ways to solve problems that show equal respect for both cultures.
- The family surrounds itself with supportive family and friends.
- Parents work with child care staff and teachers on behalf of their children.
- The family celebrates all cultures.
- Parents tolerate no biased remarks within their circle of family, friends, and peers.

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Unfortunately, multicultural families are more likely to experience **bias** (favoring; unequal treatment). Children of multicultural families may feel pressured to choose one culture over another. Despite these challenges, the diverse experiences of children in multicultural families gives them greater understanding of, and openness toward, other cultures.

3.1-4 Societal Influences on Families

Changes in society cause major changes in the family. In the past, before the **Industrial Revolution** (time in history in which society began to focus on industry and manufacturing), many families lived on farms and met most of their own needs. These families consisted of the immediate family (parents and their children) as well as grandparents and other family members. They often lived together or in nearby houses as part of an extended family group.

During the Industrial Revolution, many families left their farms and moved into the cities to work in factories, leaving behind relatives and friends. Away from other relatives, people began to turn to their immediate family members for companionship and emotional support. The immediate family became more important for love and security.

The societal views of children during this time were different from those of today. Children were considered an asset to the family because they helped the family earn money. When children reached four to seven years of age, they were expected to work long days in factories or on farms. Today, society values children and sees childhood as a special time. Labor laws changed the role children played in the economy while protecting them as individuals. Children now lead lives as *children*, not as a source of family **income** (money received for working). In the past, because children were a source of income, families tended to be larger, with many children. Today, children are a source of expense (costing money), and families tend to be much smaller.

Families continue to respond and adapt to societal changes, such as advancements in medicine and technology. Medical advances allow people to live longer. In the United States and elsewhere, the life expectancy rate has steadily increased in the past few decades. Technological advancements also change the **norm** (normal, socially acceptable pattern) of living. Electronic devices, such as home appliances, cell phones, tablets, televisions, and video consoles, affect how family members communicate with each other, use time for entertainment, and help complete tasks around the house. Technology also affects how people learn. Information is more readily available today than in the past.

3.1-5 Characteristics of Healthy Families

There is no magic recipe to create a healthy family. Families can be very different and yet strong. Some common characteristics are often seen in healthy families (**Figure 3.8**). The most common characteristic is that families share similar values.

Figure 3.8 Characteristics of a Healthy Family

- Relationships built on and directed by shared values
- Acceptance of family members' differences
- Expectation that family values and structure will change
- Willingness to adjust
- Mutual commitment to family life
- Others-centeredness, not self-centeredness
- Sharing of responsibilities
- Honesty and dependability
- Open, honest communication

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Culturally Sensitive Trauma-Informed Care

In Chapter 2, you learned about the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on the developing brain. You also learned how important it is to implement trauma-informed care (TIC) to promote resilience in children who have suffered a trauma. But just as families from different cultures have different approaches to language, behavior, customs, and religion, they may also have different needs with regard to TIC.

Culturally sensitive TIC refers to the capacity for health care professionals to equally provide trauma-informed assessment and intervention that acknowledges, respects, and integrates families' cultural values, beliefs, and practices. Although research suggests that there is a universal biological response to trauma, cultural factors can affect the way a family reacts to highly stressful situations. When working with the family of a child who has experienced an ACE, it is important to listen carefully and be respectful of the family's culture.

Following is advice on applying culturally sensitive TIC:

Listen for variations in understanding. When viewed through their cultural lens, a family's perception of a traumatic event may differ from yours. It is helpful to ask families to explain what happened in their own words. Ask what is troubling them and the child the most and how the family feels about it.

Be open to involving others. One family may be **adamant** (refuse to change their minds) that extended families or other health care professionals be involved; others may want to involve as few people as possible. Some families may feel uncomfortable seeking resources outside their cultural community. It is important to listen with an open mind and understand that families need to feel safe before they can heal.

Be respectful of varying communication styles. All families are different. In some families, one family member makes most or all of the decisions. In others, decisions are more of a collaborative process. Some families take a more private approach to family business; others are more open and willing to share. Ask questions to find out how the family functions as a unit.

Look beyond your words. Some cultures are highly sensitive to nonverbal communication. Cues like eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and touch can mean different things to different people. For example, in some cultures it is considered highly disrespectful for a child to look an adult in the eye when being spoken to. If you ask them to look you in the eye, you could be asking them to do something that is very uncomfortable for them. Culturally appropriate communication practices have been shown to result in a higher level of trust between families and care professionals.

Application Activity

Research methods of nonverbal and verbal communication in three different cultures. On a piece of paper, draw three columns and label each with the name of one culture. Then list any communication conventions specific to each culture.

Find a partner and discuss your findings. Where there any communication styles that were the same across two or more cultures? What were the differences? How would you apply what you've learned if you were working with a family from each of these cultures?

Photo: Tom Wang/Shutterstock.com

They use these values to decide on goals together and guide them in raising their children.

Closely tied to shared values is the belief that family members are individuals. Strong families accept that even people who share many values will be somewhat different. They also realize life itself can change the family's goals. Healthy families are willing to adjust as needed.

Healthy families share a mutual commitment to family life. In these families, members want their own relationships to succeed. They want to be successful as a family unit. Part of the commitment involves growth—becoming more loving, caring, and understanding. These family members also want to do many activities as a family unit.

In healthy families, members want to help each other rather than being self-centered. Members share responsibilities. Although each family may divide tasks differently, healthy families seem to happily follow their own choices about duties. Each member can depend on the others to keep promises, fulfill commitments, and be honest.

Lesson 3.1 Review and Assessment

1. Which of the following is *not* a way to establish healthy family dynamics? (3.1.1)
   A. Encourage all members of the family to work together for the well-being of the family.
   B. Discourage the fulfillment of personal goals so that the focus remains on the family unit.
   C. Create reasonable expectations.
   D. Use fun and humor to ease the burden of family challenges.

2. There are _____ stages of the family life cycle. (3.1.2)
   A. 6
   B. 7
   C. 8
   D. 9

3. **True or False.** Culture is a way of life of a group of people that includes language, beliefs, attitudes, values, rituals, and skills. (3.1.3)

4. What is one way societal views of children today differ from societal views of children before and during the Industrial Revolution? (3.1.4)
   A. Children are considered lazy.
   B. Families want to send their children into the workforce at a younger age.
   C. Childhood is valued and seen as a special time.
   D. Companies no longer pay children for their labor.

5. Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of a healthy family? (3.1.5)
   A. Acceptance of family members' differences
   B. Expectation that family values and structure will change
   C. Avoiding difficult topics of conversation
   D. Willingness to adjust

Family Types

Key Terms

adoption
adoption agency
child support order
closed adoption
consenting
custodial parent
extended family
foster family
guardian
illegal market adoption
independent adoption
joint custody
kin care
noncustodial parent
nuclear family
open adoption
recession
single-parent family
stepfamily

Learning Outcomes

After studying this lesson, you will be able to

3.2-1 **identify** various types of family structures and analyze the advantages and challenges of each.

3.2-2 **compare** and **contrast** different types of adoptions.

Reading and Notetaking Activity

How would you describe your ideal family? Before reading this lesson, write a one-page short story about your idea of a model family. Who would be a part of the family, and what kinds of relationships would you have with them? How would members of your family treat each other, and what values would they hold? Keep your short story, and after reading this lesson, title it with the family type that best describes your family. Write one paragraph justifying this title and then share your short story with a classmate whose short story had a different title.

3.2-1 Different Types of Families

There are many types of families that comprise the U.S. population. The family type describes which people live in the household and how these people are related. Children usually enter families through birth and live in these families throughout childhood. Some children, however, have families who form differently. In these cases, children can have more than one type of family. This lesson describes different family types and their effects on children.

Nuclear Families

Two parents and their biological child or children who live together form a **nuclear family**. This type of family exists in most societies. In nuclear families, children often leave home when they become adults, especially when they marry and have their own families.

Compared to other family types, nuclear families can have some disadvantages. Family members, such as grandparents or aunts and uncles, do not

live in the home and children may lose out on the skills these other people can teach them. The family may live too far from relatives to rely on them for support in times of stress. Parents who do not get along may expose children to stress. This is especially true if the relationship is abusive.

On the other hand, nuclear families have some advantages. Both the adults and the children may have their needs met more easily because family members can share responsibilities. Children may be **apt** (likely) to learn more flexible home and child care roles in the nuclear family. Adults often share these tasks, and children who see role sharing may be better prepared for the future than those who do not. Children also have the chance to see how spouses relate to each other in positive ways.

Single-Parent Families

A **single-parent family** is made up of one parent and their child or children. Single-parent families can form in several different ways. Certain *circumstances* (situations or conditions) such as the death of a parent or a couple's marital separation or divorce can change a nuclear family to a single-parent family (**Figure 3.9**). Single-parent families may also form when parents never marry and live apart, or when a person decides to have a child on their own through adoption, surrogacy, artificial insemination or other means. In the majority of single-parent families, the mother is the **custodial parent** (the parent who heads the household and has legal responsibility for caregiving). A growing number of single fathers, however, are also becoming custodial parents.

One of the most common challenges single-parent families face is reduced resources, such as income, time, and energy. In a single-parent family, one custodial parent provides for the majority of the family's needs. This can put single-parent families at a disadvantage compared to families in which both parents work and take responsibility for providing for children. While the custodial parent is responsible for meeting children's needs, the **noncustodial parent** (parent who lives separately from their children), when present, may have a legal responsibility to contribute financially toward a child's care. If a noncustodial parent refuses to pay, a child support order can be issued by the court. A **child support order** is a judgment of the court that states how much the noncustodial parent must pay toward the child's expenses.

If children live with a single parent, this does not always mean the other parent cannot take an active role in the children's lives. When possible, parents can work together to raise children even if they do not live in the same house. Some co-parents go to court to seek **joint custody**, which is the shared legal right to provide care for, and make decisions about, their children's lives. Joint custody avoids the issue of determining which parent will be the primary caregiver.

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Figure 3.9 Any number of circumstances can change a nuclear family to a single-parent family. *What are some advantages of single-parent families? some challenges?*

Depending on the manner in which they form, single-parent families can face difficult emotional concerns. When death or divorce changes a nuclear family to a single-parent family, children feel the loss of a relationship and role model. In these families, children's daily routines change as one parent takes over the duties of two parents. Single parents must learn to <mark>cope</mark> (handle challenges in a healthy manner) with their own feelings about the change as well as help their children cope. When one parent is absent, children may wonder whether they caused the parent to abandon them. They may wonder why other children have two parents and they have only one. These children may feel a lasting sense of loss, especially if they have never known or no longer have contact with the second parent. They may feel anger toward either parent, which may cause strained family relationships.

If only one parent participates in the child's life, there are sources of support and help available. Other family members, friends, and neighbors may provide help in caring for the children. Adults from an organization such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America can serve as role models for the children. Some single parents find support groups or social groups, such as Parents Without Partners®, helpful in providing social and emotional supports. Social service agencies may offer emotional, practical, and financial help, too.

Despite the challenges, children in single-parent families also have many advantages. Children in single-parent homes often have a less stressful and more secure environment than children in two-parent homes where the parents frequently argue. The relationship between children and their single parent is often very strong. Because single parents have such busy schedules, children are often encouraged to help out around the home and do things for themselves, which helps teach children to be independent and responsible.

Focus on
FINANCIAL LITERACY

Cost of Raising a Child

According to 2020 data from the US Department of Agriculture, the average cost of raising a child through age 17 is $233,610. The cost of raising a child includes monthly expenses such as:

- Housing
- Food
- Transportation
- Healthcare
- Child care
- Clothing
- Personal care items
- Entertainment

It also includes one-time expenses (such as car seats, cribs, strollers, etc.) and limited-time expenses (e.g., diapers, baby bottles). Using an online cost of raising a child calculator or data about expenses in your area (e.g., cost of housing, cost of child care), calculate how much money per month you would need to raise a child. How might decisions you make raise or lower these costs? Do you think these costs will increase or decrease as the child ages? What about the cost of college? How will that be funded?

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Extended Families

An **extended family** is a household that includes the parent or parents and their children and other relatives. Other relatives who live in an extended family may include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. There are three extended family types:

- *One-generation extended family.* In a one-generation extended family, everyone in the household is of the same generation. Members of this family type might include a married couple and their siblings or cousins.
- *Two-generation extended family.* In a two-generation extended family, the family members span two generations. An example of this family type might include parents, their adult child, and their son-in-law or daughter-in-law.
- *Three-generation extended family.* A three-generation extended family is commonly called a *multigenerational family*. Parents, their children, and their aging parents living in the same household is an example of a multigenerational family.

Although there may be several generations of family members living together in an extended family, there is usually only one head of the household. For example, if a young couple moves into a parent's home, the young couple will likely consider the parent as the head of the household. If an older adult moves in with their adult child, the older adult will see the adult child as the head of the household.

Extended families are very common in many countries around the world. In the United States, extended families may form for many reasons. An extended family may form when a single parent and their children move in with other family members to combine resources and provide care for the children. Extended families may also form as aging family members move in with their adult children. When the economy is in **recession** (economic period with minimal or no growth), there are always more extended families due to financial circumstances. Other families choose this family structure due to cultural tradition.

Extended families experience certain challenges. Sometimes family members find they do not have enough privacy. There may be more disagreements among family members sharing spaces and resources. Also, decisions are more often made for the good of the entire family rather than the needs of each person.

Extended families also have many advantages. Children learn to interact with people of all ages because younger and older family members are in daily contact. Extended families are good at handing down family beliefs and *family history*, or stories of a family's past (**Figure 3.10**). Because there are so many members, extended families can perform more duties than small family groups.

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Figure 3.10 Family history and beliefs can be passed down through conversations; through time spent together; through letters and heirlooms; or through scrapbooks, as shown in the picture above. *What family beliefs and history have been passed down to you?*

When stressful events happen in extended families, family members are there to help support one another.

Stepfamilies and Blended Families

A **stepfamily** forms when one or both adults in the relationship have children from a previous relationship living in the home. The terms *stepparent* and *stepchild* refer to the parents and children in the family who are brought together by the adults' relationship. In many cases, stepfamilies form when an individual remarries after divorce or death or when a single parent chooses to marry.

The stepfamily is a fairly common family form. Many of today's children have two stepfamilies—that of each parent and the parent's new partner. Often, children live with only one of these stepfamilies. Other times, children live with each stepfamily part of the year. Each situation is unique.

Many people use the terms *stepfamily* and *blended family* interchangeably. A *blended family* will start as a stepfamily, but members must then work together to merge, or blend, the families into a cohesive family unit that creates a healthy family bond. Adjustment challenges are common when blending families (**Figure 3.11**).

Figure 3.11 Adjustment Challenges of Blending Families

- Family members find themselves in instant relationships—stepparents must relate with stepchildren and stepchildren must relate with each other.
- Parents must adjust to their new roles as a married couple while dealing with children from the beginning of marriage.
- Both parents have to adjust from being heads of single households to sharing roles and discipline and guidance of children.
- Children usually maintain relationships with the family of their other parent, too. Many children must adjust to two sets of rules, which can be a major challenge for school-age children.
- Sibling rivalry is common in all families but can be worse among stepsiblings.
- Housing space may be a concern.

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Some ways stepparents can help create a family bond include

- letting stepchildren set the pace for their relationships with stepparents
- letting stepchildren know they are appreciated
- explaining to children that a stepparent is another person to love and support them
- encouraging stepchildren to have one-on-one time with both their biological parents
- planning activities with stepchildren, but avoiding attempts to "buy" their love
- insisting on respect, but letting biological parents remain primarily responsible for discipline until solid bonds are established
- avoiding showing favoritism among children by treating all children equally
- keeping family communication open and frequent

Blending two families requires many adjustments, but being part of a blended family offers many benefits, too. Parents can provide a strong emotional support system for each other and their children. Blended families are also able to combine resources and incomes to reduce stress related to lack of time, energy, or money. Children in blended families can benefit from the companionship, love, and support of new siblings and other relatives, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Families with Adopted Children

Adoption occurs when a child of one pair of parents legally becomes the child of other parents (or parent). Adoption legally ends the rights and responsibilities between a child and the birthparents (biological parents). The adoptive parents are then granted these rights. Many of the children available for adoption are older, have special needs, are born outside the United States, or are living in foster families and group homes. People often want to adopt for the following reasons:

- They cannot give birth or can give birth only with great difficulty.
- They may want to add to their current family.
- They know a child who needs a home.
- They want to be a parent and provide a home for children.

Children who are adopted generally have stable, happy home lives because their adopted families want and love them very much. Some challenges, however, may exist. In most cases, adoptive parents do not have the nine months of pregnancy to make the transition to parenthood. Instead, they take on their new roles very quickly. People wanting to adopt may be on a waiting list for many years. Then one day the adoption agency may call and announce a child will be ready for them the next day.

Other challenges may arise related to the adopted child's birthparents, especially if the adoption is closed. Birthparents may want to see the child or become part of the child's life. Adoptive parents may not agree that this is best for the child.

Children who are adopted often ask questions about the adoption. They may want to know about or meet their birthparents. Older children who lived with their birthparents and are then adopted by a new family need time to adjust. These children may miss their birthparents or want to be with them. To help these children adjust, adoptive parents can answer their children's questions about the adoption in direct and honest ways. Adoptive parents may also wish to seek counseling to help them guide the children and offer them the support they need to make the adjustment.

Adjustments to living in an adoptive family take time for all family members. Soon, however, families are likely to adapt. Many adoptive parents create a loving family life that helps adopted children overcome any stress they may feel.

Foster Families

A **foster family** is a family in which an adult provides a temporary home for a child who cannot live with their birthparents. Foster parents assume the parenting responsibilities for the children in their care. They fill these roles until children reunite with their birthparents, are adopted, or become adults. Some foster children live in institutions or group homes rather than in family settings.

Children often enter foster families because of problems in their birth families. These problems often include abuse, neglect, incarceration, or substance abuse by the birthparents or other family members. In these cases, the courts intervene to protect the children by placing them in a foster family and providing counseling, treatment, and other help for the birthparents. The goal is to reunite children with their birthparents if they are able to provide a safe, secure home for their children. In serious or prolonged cases of neglect or abuse, the court may **sever** (end or cut off) the rights of the birthparents. The children remain in foster care until they can be adopted and given a permanent home. Sometimes children can be adopted by their foster parents.

A foster family may have one or two parents, and may include other biological, adoptive, or foster children. A foster child may be placed with brothers and sisters or apart from them, depending on the situation. Foster families can offer a stable, secure home for children. Joining a foster family, however, is a major adjustment. In many cases, foster children need counseling for the problems they faced in their birth families. They may also miss their birthparents and other family members. To ease separation stress, contact or visitation is sometimes granted. Other children may grieve if they know they will never return to live with their birthparents. Each situation is unique. Foster parents need to be flexible, supportive, and understanding of the children in their care.

Focus on Mental Health

Children who live in an unstable home environment, especially one that involves abuse, neglect, or substance abuse, are at a greater risk of developing mental health problems, limiting children's success now and in the future. Children need a loving, stable home environment to promote healthy development.

If you or a child you know is experiencing abuse, you can call the National Child Abuse Hotline. Professional crisis counselors provide support and assistance 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year. Calls, texts, and chats are confidential.

Families with Guardians

A **guardian** is a person who is legally appointed by the court to take responsibility for a child in the event of the birthparents' death or extended absence. The guardian is often chosen by a child's biological parents and is usually someone who has close ties to the family, such as a relative or friend. The guardian assumes parental responsibilities. Some guardians manage the child's inherited money, while others take full financial responsibility for childrearing costs. The court supervises the guardian and may even make some decisions for the child. A child remains with their guardian until the child becomes a legal adult or the court terminates the relationship.

Kin Care

Growing numbers of children in the United States are living in households headed by grandparents and other relatives (**Figure 3.12**). This is called **kin care** (care of children by relatives other than the parents). These family heads often do not have legal guardianship, but assume the parenting responsibilities of a guardian. Not having legal rights as a guardian may present challenges for the children and the guardian.

Kin care may be provided by aunts, uncles, cousins, or even older siblings, but the most common type of kin care is grandparents raising grandchildren. While grandparents are often the safety net for their grandchildren, parenting grandchildren can be high-risk for grandparents. These risks include

- not being able to physically care for grandchildren until the children are grown. *Vigor* (strength and energy) and health decrease as grandparents age.
- having less income due to retirement or loss of a spouse. (About 20 percent of these grandparents live at the poverty level.)
- giving up plans for the retirement years, such as leisure, hobbies, or travel.
- grieving over their grandchildren's parents. Usually the need for grandparents to become the active parents is due to one of the *Four Ds*: drugs, divorce, desertion, or death. Because of the Four Ds, parenting the second time around is long-term.

Figure 3.12 Statistics on Raising Grandchildren

- Eighty percent of children who live with relatives are with grandparents.
- Over 33 percent of these households are without any parental help.
- Fifty-one percent of the children are younger than six years of age, which means many years of child-raising.
- Fifty percent of the children are raised by two grandparents, and fifty percent by grandmothers.
- Fifty percent of the households have two or more children.
- Almost 20 percent of the households are in poverty.
- Sixty-seven percent of grandparents are under 60 years of age.

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- having anxiety about meeting the needs of grandchildren whose cultural and technological experiences are often so different from their own.
- dealing with their grandchildren's special needs, such as addictions, malnourishment, disabilities, and disorders, often due to earlier parental neglect and abuse.

On the positive side, grandparents often do an excellent job in raising their grandchildren. Grandparents usually have good parenting skills and they love their grandchildren unconditionally. Grandchildren typically respond in positive ways to their grandparents.

3.2-2 Different Types of Adoption

Most parents who adopt children spend much effort finding them. Buying or selling a child for adoption, which is called an **illegal market adoption**, is illegal in all states. Legal adoptions are expensive because parents pay providers for their time and expenses. For example, some expenses may include maternal expenses, such as health care not covered by insurance, salary and transportation costs for social workers, legal fees, and office expenses. Paying expenses, however, is different from buying and selling children. There are two ways to adopt children legally—through an adoption agency and through an independent source.

An **adoption agency** is an agency licensed by the state to handle adoptions. The agency works out the details between the birthparents and the adoptive parents. State courts handle the final legal aspects of the adoption. Adoption agencies are either state-funded or private (managed by a religious or a service organization).

In an **independent adoption**, a person, such as a lawyer or physician, works out the details between the birthparents and adoptive parents. Independent adoptions are handled in state courts and thus follow state laws. Foreign adoptions can be handled through an adoption agency or an independent source. **Figure 3.13** compares the pros and cons of each type of adoption.

Adoption Options and Rights

The laws of each state govern adoption options and rights. Adoption rights protect those involved in an adoption. In most states, the birthfather has legal rights. State laws may permit the birthfather to deny *paternity* (fathering of a child), give all rights to the birthmother, and give permission along with the birthmother for the child to be adopted. In some states, if the father cannot be found, steps can be taken to end his rights to make decisions about the child.

Focus on Careers

Social Worker— Adoption Coordinator

Social worker is a category of careers in which professionals help families meet their basic needs. Some social workers, called *adoption coordinators*, work with adoption agencies to help families going through the adoption process. Adoption coordinators facilitate the placement of children for adoption. They conduct home studies and monitor children throughout the adoption process. Adoption coordinators must also possess a working knowledge of state laws as they relate to adoption.

Career cluster: Human services.

Education: Educational requirements include a bachelor's or master's degree in social work.

Job outlook: Future employment opportunities for social workers are expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations.

To learn more about a career as an adoption coordinator, visit the United States Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* website. You will also be able to compare the job responsibilities, educational requirements, job outlook, and average pay of adoption coordinators with similar occupations.

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Figure 3.13 Pros and Cons of Agency and Independent Adoptions

Type	Pros	Cons
Agency	• Agency handles the legal aspects to meet the needs of all involved. • Children are closely matched with adoptive families to ensure good placement. Emphasis is on meeting the child's needs. • Birthparents can request certain types of adoptive families. (They can choose or meet adoptive parents in an open adoption.) • Adoptive parent can choose a child of a certain gender, age, and family background. • Information is exchanged between birthparents and the adoptive family (non-identifying information only in a closed adoption). • Social workers counsel both sets of parents. • Adoptive families are supervised from the time children are placed until the time the adoption is final. • Cost may be lower for the adoptive parents. Agency may charge based on parents' ability to pay.	• Agency sets criteria for adoptive parents. Many suitable homes may be turned down in favor of "more qualified" homes. People who are newly married, remarried, single, gay/lesbian, or older may have a harder time using an agency. • Income, religious, and housing guidelines may also exclude some people wanting to adopt. • The study of people wanting to adopt is extremely detailed and goes into all aspects of personal and married life. • Fewer babies are available for adoption. Also, available children may not be of the same culture as the adoptive parents. • When fewer children are available for adoption, long waiting periods are common. • People wanting to adopt may wait a long time before a good match with a child is found.
Independent	• There are no stated qualifications for adoptive parents. Thus, many people who might not be chosen to adopt through an agency (people who are newly married, remarried, single, gay/lesbian, or older) can become adoptive parents. • If they wish, birthparents can arrange for someone they already know as adoptive parents. • It may be easier to adopt a baby or to adopt a child of the same culture as the adoptive parents.	• Less emphasis may be placed on the child's welfare. • Adoptive parents are screened less thoroughly. Placement occurs before a study is done, so the child may be in an unsuitable home. • Adoptive parents may receive less information about the child's background and health history. • Adoptive parents need to hire lawyers to help with legal details. • May be less privacy for both sets of parents than in an agency adoption. • Counseling is not provided as part of the adoption. • Cost may be higher than with an agency. (Some adoptive parents unknowingly enter illegal market adoptions.) • Birthparent(s) might change their mind and not follow through with the adoption or seek to regain custody of the child after placement

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Both agency and independent adoptions may be either closed or open adoptions. A <mark>closed adoption</mark> (also called *confidential adoption*) is an adoption in which the identities of the birthparents and adopting family are not revealed. An <mark>open adoption</mark> is a type of adoption that involves some degree of communication between the birthparent(s) and adoptive family. Birthparents and adoptive parents can choose the type of adoption they prefer. The two options differ in how much information is exchanged and how much contact occurs between the birthparents and the adoptive family (**Figure 3.14**).

Figure 3.14 Differences in Closed and Open Adoptions

Adoption Options	Details
Closed	• Certain identifying information, as determined by state law, is kept private. This information most often includes names, addresses, and other identifying information about the birthparents and adopting families. • Sometimes even adopted children as adults cannot obtain information about birthparents. • Adoption is handled through an adoption agency, attorney, or doctor and is finalized in the courts. • Birthparents can get information on the type of home in which their child is placed. • Adoptive parents receive medical and social backgrounds of the child. • Sometimes birthparents write a letter for the child to read when they are old enough to understand. (This letter is often signed with a non-identifying signature, such as *Your Birthmom*.)
Open	• Birthparents often choose the adoptive parents from résumés and/or photographs sent to an agency or attorney. After the initial selection, identities of all parents are made known and birthparents may choose to meet the adoptive parents before making a final decision. • Information is exchanged between birthparents and adoptive families as an aid for parenting. • After the adoption, visitation and other forms of contact may continue between both families for as long as desired. • All adoption records are usually accessible to adopted children when they become adults. • Children benefit from knowing their adoptions are loving decisions that involve open communication between both sets of parents.

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For all adoptions, birthparents must sign papers **consenting** (giving permission) to the adoption. Adoption agencies will have a waiting period in which they determine "the fit" between the adoptive parents and the child. Then, the matter must be presented in court, and a judge must declare the adoption final. When the adoption is complete, the child's original birth certificate is placed under court seal. A new birth certificate is issued listing the adoptive parents as the child's parents.

Lesson 3.2 Review and Assessment

1. Which of the following is an advantage of the nuclear family? (3.2.1)
   A. Both the adults and the children may have their needs met more easily because family members can share responsibilities.
   B. Children can benefit from multi-generational influences in their home.
   C. Children can benefit from the companionship, love, and support of new step-siblings.
   D. Two parents don't have to agree on the rules.
2. Which of the following is *not* a way stepparents can help create a family bond? (3.2.1)
   A. Letting stepchildren set the pace for their relationships with stepparents
   B. Letting stepchildren know they are appreciated
   C. Explaining to children that a stepparent is another person to love and support them
   D. Discouraging stepchildren to have one-on-one time with both their biological parents
3. **True or False**. There is no difference between a *foster parent* and a *guardian*. (3.2.1)
4. **True or False**. In an independent adoption, a person, such as a lawyer or physician, works out the details between the birthparents and adoptive parents. (3.2.2)

Summary

Lesson 3.1

3.1-1 The family is the basic unit of society and is often the most lasting influence in a child's life.

3.1-1 How family members interact with one another can be helpful or unhelpful to a child's development.

3.1-1, 3.1-5
Healthy families work together for the well-being of the family. They communicate openly, respect one another, meet each other's needs, solve problems together, have fun together, and encourage one another to fulfill personal goals.

3.1-1, 3.1-5
Healthy families sow the seeds for children to grow up with positive attitudes and life management skills.

3.1-2 Changes take place during the six stages of the family life cycle. From the beginning stage through the childbearing, parenting, launching, mid-years, and aging stages, the family grows and develops.

3.1-3 Culture, which is identified in different ways, influences how each family lives.

3.1-3 Multicultural families offer family members unique opportunities to learn about and experience different cultures' practices firsthand.

3.1-4 Society influences the way families operate.

Lesson 3.2

3.2-1 Family types include nuclear, single-parent, stepfamilies, extended families, families with adopted children, foster families, families with guardians, and families with grandparents or other relatives as the head of household.

3.2-1 Each family type has unique challenges and strengths.

3.2-2 An adoption agency is an agency licensed by the state to handle adoptions.

3.2-2 In an independent adoption, a person, such as a lawyer or physician, works out the details between the birthparents and adoptive parents.

3.2-2 A closed adoption (also called *confidential adoption*) is an adoption in which the identities of the birthparents and adopting family are not revealed. An open adoption is a type of adoption that involves some degree of communication between the birthparent(s) and adoptive family.

College and Career Portfolio

Portfolio Organization

A portfolio is a collection of documents that represent the work you have done as a student. A portfolio may include examples of successful coursework, student assessments, proof of volunteer hours, a statement of your goals, letters of recommendation, awards, trainings, and degrees and certifications. The purpose of a portfolio is to provide insight into the kind of career you are interested in and the steps you are taking to achieve your goals.

As you collect items for your portfolio, you will need to keep your documents safe and well organized. Keep all your files in one place, and always keep back-up copies of everything. Before you begin collecting items for your portfolio, write a paragraph that describes your plan for storing and labeling the items. Refer to this plan each time you add items to the portfolio.

Recall and Application

1. _____ is when the receiver of a message provides feedback to the speaker, indicating the message is understood. (3.1.1)
   A. Body language
   B. Communication
   C. Active listening
   D. Discontentment

2. Many parents and their children go through similar stages called the _____. (3.1.2)
   A. family life cycle
   B. group-oriented culture
   C. steps in problem solving
   D. Industrial Revolution

3. The United States is an example of a nation with great _____, which means it has more than one culture represented among its people. (3.1.3)
   A. human services
   B. cultural diversity
   C. family life cycles
   D. group-oriented culture

4. A(n) _____ is made up of one parent and their child or children. (3.2.1)
   A. single-parent family
   B. nuclear family
   C. child support order
   D. extended family

5. A(n) _____ forms when one or both adults in the relationship have children from a previous relationship living in the home. (3.2.1)
   A. single-parent family
   B. nuclear family
   C. extended family
   D. stepfamily

6. A(n) _____ is a type of adoption that involves some degree of communication between the birth parent(s) and the adoptive family. (3.2.2)
   A. closed adoption
   B. open adoption
   C. foster family
   D. guardianship

Critical Thinking

1. **Analyze.** Analyze the different factors that affect how *family* is defined. How do a person's relationships affect this definition? How do cultural and social settings influence family dynamics? Write 3-4 sentences explaining how you would define your current family type(s) and family dynamics.

2. **Evaluate.** Before Adrian and Darryl can adopt a child into their family, a social worker must evaluate their family dynamics. The social worker's notes read as follows:
   - Established rules and boundaries clearly stated but applied unevenly
   - Adults model family values and desired behaviors
   - Unreasonable expectations for child achievement

   Evaluate the dynamics of Adrian and Darryl's family. Are these notes positive or negative? In which ways could this family improve their healthy dynamics?

3. **Make inferences.** Select one of the figures in this chapter and then write a short paragraph interpreting the body language in that image. Make inferences about what kind of situation is occurring.

4. **Cause and effect.** Identify two events that might cause a family to repeat stages of the family life cycle. For example, a grown child recently divorced and needs to move back into the parent's home. Then, describe how each event might affect the family.

5. **Draw conclusions.** Choose a current cultural or historical event. Then, describe how this event has impacted family life both positively and negatively.

6. **Analyze.** Because family is the basic unit of society, culture plays a large role in impacting family life. Conversely, family types and behaviors influence culture. Analyze how family life influences cultural trends and behaviors. For example, how does a shift in family living affect society at large? Share your thoughts with the class.

7. **Compare and contrast.** Choose two of the types of families discussed in this chapter. For each type, make a T-chart listing the pros and cons of living in that family. Finally, write a one-page paper comparing and contrasting the benefits and challenges of these family types.

8. **Identify.** On a piece of paper, list your friends and acquaintances, whether current or from the past. Then, identify what type of family that person has. Is one type of family predominant over the others?

9. **Determine.** Consider some possible benefits and challenges of open adoption for each of the following: birthparents, adoptive family, and the adopted child. Whose benefit do you think should take priority, and why? What factors should each party consider when deciding between an open and closed adoption?

Core Skills

1. **Listening.** Ask your family about the roles and responsibilities of being a caretaker. Demonstrate active listening by taking notes and being attentive. Ask if your family has any advice for you about forming healthy family dynamics. Share these pieces of advice with the class. Finally, as a class, discuss the best tips for forming healthy families and assess how effective these might be.

2. **Speaking.** In small groups, role-play the roles of family members in each stage of the family life cycle. In your role-plays, emphasize the changes that take place in each stage and how these changes impact relationships. After practicing, perform your role-plays for the class and ask the class to guess which stage of the family life cycle you are representing. Lead the class in a discussion about how roles changed during each stage.

3. **Research, social studies, and reading.** Choose a culture other than your own and then use a library or the internet to locate information about family living in that culture. Write a short essay summarizing your findings.

4. **History and research.** Use internet or print sources to research the Industrial Revolution time line. How did the Industrial Revolution affect families? How are families now different than during the Industrial Revolution? Share your findings with the class.

5. **Art and speaking.** Review the qualities of a healthy family listed in this chapter. Then, using this list, make a list of the qualities of an unhealthy family. Draw two pictures—one illustrating a healthy family and another illustrating an unhealthy family. Present and explain your drawings to the class.

6. **Math, technology, and speaking.** Visit the United States Census Bureau website and view the most current information about the marital statuses and living arrangements for adults of all races. Choose one marital status or living arrangement and note what percentage of the population it describes. Then, apply that percentage to the size of your class. Give a short presentation informing your class of how these statistics apply to them.

7. **Writing.** Write a fiction story entitled, "The Joys and Trials of Living in a _____ Family Type." Base the story on your own family type or describe what you think it would be like to live in a family type different from your own. Check your story for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

8. **Listening.** Choose one family type you are not familiar with and interview a person living in that type of family. How did the person's family form? How long has the person been living in their type of family? In their opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the family type? Take notes about the person's answers to these questions and then discuss with a partner.

9. **CTE Career Readiness Practice.** Presume you are a family counselor. Your interpersonal skills—your ability to listen, speak, and empathize—are a great asset in working with clients.

   You are currently counseling Dante and his teenage children, Vanita and Alex. Their mother pays child support to help Dante financially, but as a single father, Dante often resorts to ordering takeout for dinner or letting the laundry pile up because he does not have enough time to do everything. Sometimes, Dante gets discouraged about his success as a parent. How would you counsel Dante to improve his day-to-day schedule? What resources would you present to Dante for social, emotional, and practical support?

Observations

1. Watch one or two episodes of a television show that features an entire family. Try to identify where the family is on the family life cycle and assess how healthy the family is based on how the members interact. Write a short report summarizing your thoughts and then present your assessment to the class.

2. Choose a friend who has a different type of family from your own, and ask if you can come over for dinner one night. While at dinner, observe how the family interacts and consider how the family is similar to and different from yours. List these similarities and differences and write a short paragraph reflecting on how family types affect family living and behaviors.