# Comparison between Learning in Adulthood and Learning in Childhood

|  | Adult | Children |
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| Life Experiences | Extensive pragmatic life experiences which tend to structure and limit new learning. Learning focuses largely on transforming or extending the meanings, values, skills, and strategies acquired in previous experience. | Few pragmatic life experiences. Learning focuses largely on forming and accumulating basic meanings, values, skills, and strategies. |
| Pressures for Change | Experience major pressures for change from factors related to social and work roles and expectations, and from personal needs for continuing productivity and self-definition. | Experience major pressures for change from factors related to physical growth, demands for socialization, and preparation for future social and work roles. |
| Learning Experiences | Learning needs related to current life situations.  Capacity for using generalized, abstract thought. | Learning needs related to developing organized patterns for understanding future experiences.  More likely to use specific, concrete thought. |
| Needs & Learning Processes | Likely to express their own needs and describe their own learning processes through verbal activities which allow them to negotiate and collaborate in planning their own learning programs. | Likely to express their own needs and learning processes through non-verbal activities, which leads to planning by “expert” observers and interpreters. |
| Self-Concept & Self-Esteem | Organized and consistent self-concept and self-esteem which allows them to participate as a self-separate from other selves and capable of acting independently of others. | Relatively less organized and consistent self-concept which allows them to perceive themselves as a self-separate from but dependent on others. |
| Status in Society | Assigned a responsible status in society, and are expected to be productive. | Assigned a non-responsible status in society, and are expected to play and learn. |

MacKeracher, D. (2004). *Making Sense of Adult Learning (2nd Edition),* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, pp. 27.