

# Development of Children and Adolescents



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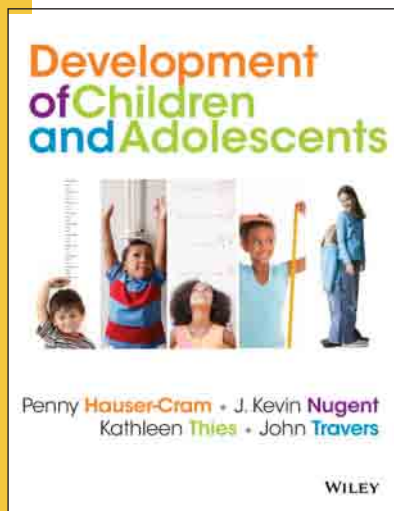
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# The Development of Children and Adolescents

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*To John Travers—an extraordinary colleague, mentor,  
and friend, a teacher and scholar who inspired generations  
of students, and a man who unequivocally bequeathed  
good to all who were fortunate enough to meet him.*



# Brief Contents

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## Part 1 INTRODUCTION }-----

**Chapter 1** A Child's Journey 3

## Part 2 BIOLOGICAL BEGINNINGS }-----

**Chapter 2** Biological Foundations of Child Development 43

**Chapter 3** Prenatal Development 81

**Chapter 4** Birth and the Newborn 119

## Part 3 INFANCY }-----

**Chapter 5** Physical Development and Health in Infancy and Toddlerhood 155

**Chapter 6** Cognitive Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood 197

**Chapter 7** Psychosocial Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood 231

## Part 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD }-----

**Chapter 8** Physical Development and Health in Early Childhood 273

**Chapter 9** Cognitive Development in Early Childhood 313

**Chapter 10** Psychosocial Development in Early Childhood 355

## Part 5 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD }-----

**Chapter 11** Physical Development and Health in Middle Childhood 397

**Chapter 12** Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood 435

**Chapter 13** Psychosocial Development in Middle Childhood 475

## Part 6 ADOLESCENCE }-----

**Chapter 14** Physical Development and Health in Adolescence 515

**Chapter 15** Cognitive Development in Adolescence 555

**Chapter 16** Psychosocial Development in Adolescence 591

# Contents

## Part 1 } INTRODUCTION

### Chapter 1 A Child's Journey 3

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** All Children Have Birthdays 3

#### Children and Their Development 4

What Is Development? 5

The Study of Development 5

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Developmental Domains 5

Developmental Epochs: Is Age the Answer? 6

Issues in Development 6

#### A Child's Journey in the 21st Century 9

**Research Insights:** Are Today's Children More Imaginative? 10

**Parenting:** Children in the Home 10

Children and Their Cultural Communities 12

Children in a Technological World 13

**Culture and Parents' Views on Children's Disabilities** 14

**Practice:** Video Games and Learning 15

#### Explaining Development: The Theories 16

Psychoanalytically Based Theories 16

Cognitive Theories 18

Learning Theories 23

Ethological Theories 25

Systems Theories 26

**Focus On:** Urie Bronfenbrenner 28

#### Asking Questions, Examining Answers 29

The Scientific Method 29

Designing Research Studies 30

Collecting Data 37

Reporting Research Results 38

**Policy:** Ethical Considerations 39

CHAPTER SUMMARY 40

KEY TERMS 41

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 41

**REAL**  Development 41

## Part 2 } BIOLOGICAL BEGINNINGS

### Chapter 2 Biological Foundations of Child Development 43

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** It Can Start with Cells 43

#### The Biology of Life 44

The Functions of Cells 45

DNA, RNA, and Protein 45

**WHEN CELLULAR SYSTEMS CONNECT:** PKU as an Example 47

**Research Insights:** "Turning Off" Genes 47

#### Genes and Heredity 48

Genes and Chromosomes 48

**Culture, Genetics, and Human Migration** 50

Patterns of Heredity 51

Chromosomal Disorders 56

**Parenting:** Genetic Counseling 58

#### Gene-Environment Interactions 59

Mechanisms of Interaction Between Genes and Environment 59

Research on Gene-Environment Interactions: Kinship Studies 63

#### The Physiology of Thinking and Feeling 66

The Brain and Nervous System 66

The Endocrine System and the Physiology of Stress 72

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Stress and Child Development 73

#### Children's Well-Being in Society 74

Indicators of Children's Well-Being in the United States 75

Health Care among American Children 75

**Policy:** Who Is Covered by Insurance, and How? 76

**Practice:** A Hmong Child in the American Health-Care System 77

CHAPTER SUMMARY 78

KEY TERMS 79

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 79

**REAL**  Development 79

### Chapter 3 Prenatal Development 81

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Advocating for Care of Pregnant Women 81

#### Conception 82

Gametes and Meiosis 82

Fertilization 84

#### Prenatal Growth and Development 85

The Germinal Period: 0 to 2 Weeks 85

**Policy:** The Politics of Stem Cell Research 86

The Period of the Embryo: 3 to 8 Weeks 87

The Period of the Fetus: 9 Weeks to Birth 88

The Developing Brain: A Closer Look 90

**Research Insights:** Learning Before Birth 91

## Development and the Prenatal Environment 92

Chemical Substances 92

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Alcohol and Pregnancy 95

**Focus On:** Ann Streissguth and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome 95

Maternal Disease, Illness, and Stress 97

Environmental Pollutants and Hazards 101

## Health During Pregnancy 102

Physiology of Pregnancy 102

**Culture and Pregnancy** 103

**Practice:** Recommendations for a Healthy Pregnancy 104

Complications of Pregnancy and High-Risk Pregnancies 104

A Special High-Risk Case: The Pregnant Adolescent 106

## Pregnancy and Society 108

Birth-Rate Trends 108

Access to Health Care 108

Infertility 109

**Parenting and ART:** Telling the Children 113

**Practice:** Multiple Births 114

**Parenting:** Health, Family, and Culture 114

**CHAPTER SUMMARY** 116

**KEY TERMS** 117

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS** 117

**REAL  Development** 117

## Chapter 4 Birth and the Newborn 119

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** An Unexpected Birth Experience 119

### Birth 120

What Do You Know About Childbirth? 121

Preparing for the Birth of the Baby 121

**Parenting:** Writing a Birth Plan 122

Stages of Labor 123

Childbirth and Pain 124

The Place of Childbirth: Home or Hospital? 125

**Focus On:** Pioneers in the Natural Childbirth Movement 126

**Research Insights:** Risks in Planned Cesarean Delivery 129

### At-Risk Infants: A Different Beginning 130

Prematurity and Birth Weight 130

Causes and Treatments of Prematurity 131

Prematurity and Developmental Outcomes 131

Low Birth Weight in the Developing World 132

A Different Beginning for Parents, Too 132

**Research Insights:** The Long-Term Risks of Prematurity 133

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Early Intervention for At-Risk Newborns 134

**Focus On:** Heidelise Als 134

Neonatal Mortality 135

**Policy:** The Fourth Millennium Development Goals 137

### The Newborn 138

A Dramatic Transition 138

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** Newborn Reflexes and Behavioral States 139

The Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale 141

Sensory Capacities and the Social Newborn 142

## The Developmental Tasks of the Newborn Period 147

The Parent-Infant Bond 147

Breast-Feeding: A Developmental Issue 147

**Practice:** The UNICEF/WHO Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative 148

## Developmental Tasks Facing the Newborn 149

**Research Insights:** Effects of Breast-Feeding on Intelligence 150

**Culture and Crying** 151

**CHAPTER SUMMARY** 152

**KEY TERMS** 152

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS** 153

**REAL  Development** 153

## Part 3 } INFANCY

### Chapter 5 Physical Development and Health in Infancy and Toddlerhood 155

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Beating the Odds 155

A Framework for Children's Health and Physical Development 156

Biology of Health: Physical, Motor, and Perceptual Development 158

New Directions in Infant Motor Research 159

**What Happens in the Brain?** Beginning to Walk 160

Physical Development: How Babies Grow into Toddlers 162

Motor Development: From Sitting to Jumping 163

**Research Insights:** Climbing Stairs 165

Theories of Motor Development 166

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Dynamic Systems Theory 169

Sensory and Perceptual Development: Taking in the World 169

### The Developing Brain: Biology of Health 172

An Exuberant Burst of Synapse Formation 173

**Focus On:** Santiago Ramon y Cajal and Wilder Penfield, Pioneers in Brain Research 173

**Research Insights:** Mirror Neurons 175

Pruning: Refining the Brain Through Experience 176

### Foundations of Health: Nutrition and Health 177

Nutrition for Infants and Toddlers 177

Nutritional Problems 178

**Policy:** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) 179

### Capacities for Health: Caregivers, Environment, and Community 182

The Physical Environment 182




The Caregiving Environment 183

**Culture and Sleeping Arrangements** 184

**Parenting:** Products for Infants 185  
**Practice:** Infant and Toddler Child-Care Settings 186  
 Motor Development in Different Cultural Environments 187

**Disruptions in Health: Neuromotor Disabilities 189**  
 Cerebral Palsy 189  
 Muscular Dystrophy 190  
 Down Syndrome 190  
**Policy:** Early Intervention 191

**CHAPTER SUMMARY 193**  
**KEY TERMS 194**  
**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 194**

**REAL    Development 195**

## Chapter 6 Cognitive Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood 197

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Does Infant Stimulation Matter? 197

**Theories of Cognitive Development 198**  
 Piaget's Sensorimotor Stage 199  
 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Perspective 203

**Culture and Fatherhood 205**  
 Other Theories 205  
 Information-Processing Approaches 206

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** The Basis for Cognitive Gains 210

**Research Methods 211**  
 Visual Preference Procedures 212  
 Object Exploration Approaches 214  
**Practice:** Making Sense of Media Reports 214  
 Studies of Infant Imitation 215  
 Neuroimaging Techniques 215  
 Standardized Tests of Infant Cognitive Development 216

**The Beginnings of Language 217**  
 The Language Areas of the Brain 217  
 Theories of Language Development 218


**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** The Interactionist Approach 219  
 Acquiring Language: From Speech Perception to First Words 219  
 The Role of Experience in Language Development 221  
**Parenting:** Wireless Parents 223

**Research Insights:** The Video Deficit 223  
 Raising a Bilingual Child 224

**Infant and Toddler Education 225**  
**Policy:** Disparities in Cognitive Development in the First Years of Life 225

**Focus On:** James J. Heckman, Nobel Prize Winner in Economics 225  
 High-Quality Programs for Infants and Toddlers 226

**CHAPTER SUMMARY 227**  
**KEY TERMS 228**  
**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 229**

**REAL    Development 229**

## Chapter 7 Psychosocial Development in Infancy and Toddlerhood 231

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** The Infant Mental Health Professional 231

**Theories of Psychosocial Development 232**  
 Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory 232  
 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory 233  
 Bowlby's Attachment Theory 233

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** The Transactional Model 234

**The Importance of Attachment 235**  
 How Does Attachment Develop? 235  
 Measuring Attachment 236  
 Cultural Differences in Attachment 238  
 Long-Term Effects of Early Attachment 239  
**Policy:** Maternal Employment During the First Year and How It Affects Attachment 240  
 The Effects of Early Adverse Experiences 241

**Emotional Development 243**  
**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** The Limbic System 243  
 Emotion: The Language of Babies 245  
 Expressing Emotion 245  
 Transitions in Emotional Development in the First Years 247  
 Emotional Regulation 248  
 Social Competence 250  
 Autism Spectrum Disorder 252  
**Parenting:** Red Flags for Autism Spectrum Disorder 252

**The Emerging Sense of Self 253**  
 Erikson, Stern, and the Sense of Self 253  
 Self-Recognition and Self-Concept 254  
 Empathy 255  
 Are Babies Capable of Moral Acts? 256

**Research Insights:** The Beginnings of Moral Development 256

**Environment, Temperament, and Psychosocial Development 257**  
 Cultural Differences in Parenting Practices During Infancy 257

**Focus On:** Marian Wright Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund 258

**Culture and School Readiness 259**  
 Fathers and Their Infants 259  
 The Role of Siblings and Peers 261  
 The Changing Role of Grandparents 262  
**Practice:** The Enduring Effects of Early Child Care 262  
 The Role of Temperament 264  
**Parenting:** Goodness of Fit 266

**CHAPTER SUMMARY 267**  
**KEY TERMS 268**  
**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 268**

**REAL    Development 269**

**MILESTONES IN INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD 270**

## Part 4 } EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Chapter 8 Physical Development and Health in Early Childhood 273

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Soap 273

#### Biology of Health: Physical Growth and Development 274

Growth and Size 274

Brain Development 276

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** Stress 279

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** National Well-Being and Young Brains 280

Motor Development 281

**Focus On:** Jack P. Shonkoff, MD, and the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University 281

#### Foundations of Health: Health Promotion 287

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention 287

**Practice:** Well-Child Visits and Developmental Screening 288

Nutrition, Food Allergies, and Malnutrition 289

**Policy:** Food Insecurity and Food Deserts 293

Immunizations and Vaccines 294

**Research Insights:** Lessons from the Autism–Vaccine Controversy 296

Promoting Dental Health 297

**Policy:** Dental Health and Fluoride 297

#### Capacity for Health: Caregivers, Community, and Child Safety 298

**Parenting:** Health Literacy 298

Kids, Germs, and Early Child Care 299

Safety at Home and in the Community 301

#### Common Disruptions in Health 305

Asthma 305

**Culture and Medical Beliefs** 307

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** An Ecological Perspective on Asthma Management 308

Ear Infections: Otitis Media 308

**CHAPTER SUMMARY** 309

**KEY TERMS** 310

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS** 310

**REAL  Development** 311

### Chapter 9 Cognitive Development in Early Childhood 313

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** The Harlem Children’s Zone 313

#### Piaget’s Theory and Preoperational Thought 315

Advances and Limitations in Preoperational Thought 315

Criticisms of Piaget’s Theory 319

**Practice:** Implications of Piaget’s Theory for Preschool Classrooms 319

#### Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory 320

Features of Vygotsky’s Theory 320

Criticisms of Vygotsky’s Theory 322

**Focus On:** Barbara Rogoff 323

**Practice:** Implications of Vygotsky’s Theory for Preschool Classrooms 323

#### Information Processing Theory 324

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** The Role of Executive Function 325

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** A Growth Spurt in Executive Function 326

Combining Theories: Neo-Piagetian Approaches 330

Criticisms of Information Processing Theory 330

**Practice:** Implications of Information Processing Theory for Preschool Classrooms 330

**Research Insights:** Can We Teach Executive Function Skills to Young Children? 331

#### Language Development 332

Vocabulary Growth 332

Grammar Usage 334

Rules of Conversation 336

Speaking Two Languages 336

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Language Delays 338

#### School Readiness 338

Emergent Reading 339

**What Happens in the Brain?** Beginning to Read 340

**Parenting:** Helping Preschool Children Become Readers 342

Emergent Writing 342

Emergent Number Concepts 344

**Culture and Learning Numbers** 345

Preschool Education 347

**Research Insights:** Young Children and Board Games 347

**Policy:** P.L. 104-193: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act 348

**CHAPTER SUMMARY** 352

**KEY TERMS** 352

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS** 353

**REAL  Development** 353

### Chapter 10 Psychosocial Development in Early Childhood 355

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Being a Voice for a Child 355

#### Emotional Development 356

Psychosocial Theory 356

Recognizing Emotions 357

Emotional Regulation 357

**Culture and Showing Pride and Shame** 358

#### The Development of a Sense of Self 360

Self-Concept 360

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** Self-Representation and the Brain 361

Gender-Role Development 361

## Relationships with Peers 367

Play 367

**Practice:** How Can Preschool Teachers Support Play? 369

Friendships 369

**Policy:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 372

Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviors 373

**Focus On:** Albert Bandura 376

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Developing a Theory of Mind 377

**Research Insights:** Do Children with Autism Lack  
a Theory of Mind? 379

## Moral Development 379

Right and Wrong 380

Distributive Justice 382

## Parenting Practices 383

Parenting Styles 384

**Parenting:** Spanking as a Form of Discipline 386

Maltreatment of Children 387

**Policy:** The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment  
Act (CAPTA) 388

**Research Insights:** The Effects of Extreme Emotional Neglect 391

CHAPTER SUMMARY 392

KEY TERMS 392

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 393

REAL  Development 393

MILESTONES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD 394

## Part 5 } MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

### Chapter 11 Physical Development and Health in Middle Childhood 397

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** School Health 397

#### Biology of Health: Physical Growth and Development 398

Growth and Size 398

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** Middle Childhood 401

Motor Development in Middle Childhood 404

**Research Insights:** Degrees of Freedom 405

#### Foundations of Health: Health Promotion 408

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention 408

Nutrition 411

**Culture and Body Weight** 413

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Why the Incidence of  
Overweight and Obesity Has Increased 414

**Policy:** Reducing and Preventing Childhood Obesity 416

**Parenting:** Family Mealtime 416

Physical Activity 417

**Focus On:** Michelle Obama and Let's Move! 419

### Capacity for Health: Caregivers and Community 419

Safety from Unintentional Injuries 420

Sports 422

School Health 424

**Practice:** The Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP)  
Model 425

### Common Disruptions in Health 427

Chronic Conditions in Childhood 427

CHAPTER SUMMARY 431

KEY TERMS 432

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 432

REAL  Development 433

## Chapter 12 Cognitive Development in Middle Childhood 435

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Be a Buddy 435

### Piaget's Theory and Concrete Operational Thought 436

Accomplishments of the Concrete Operational Period 437

**Practice:** Helping Children Develop Their Cognitive Skills  
in the Classroom 439

Criticisms of Piaget's Theory 440

### Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory 440

Development in Middle Childhood 441

**Practice:** Vygotsky in the Classroom 442

Criticisms of Vygotsky's Theory 443

### Information Processing 444

Attention 444

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** Attention 447

Memory 448

**Research Insights:** Children with Problems with Attention 449

**Focus On:** Eric Kandel 452

**Practice:** Teaching Effective Memory Strategies 456

Criticisms of Information Processing Theory 457

### Intelligence and Thinking 457

The Search for Intelligence 458

**Culture and Views on Intelligence** 458

Binet, Wechsler, and Intelligence Testing 459

A Theory of Multiple Intelligences 461

The Triarchic Theory of Intelligence 462

### The Development of Language, Literacy, and Mathematical Skills 463

Language Development 463

**Policy:** English Language Learners 465

Literacy Skills 467

Mathematical Skills 468

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Mathematical Skills and  
Executive Functioning 469

**Parenting:** Parental Engagement in Children's Schooling 470



CHAPTER SUMMARY 471

KEY TERMS 472

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 472

REAL    Development 473

## Chapter 13 Psychosocial Development in Middle Childhood 475

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Service Learning 475

### Emotional Development 476

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory 477

Antisocial Behavior 477

**Research Insights:** Do Violent Video Games Promote

Aggression? 478

Prosocial Behavior 479

Emotional Regulation 480

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Coping with Stress 481

### Relating to One's Self 482

The I-Self and the Me-Self 482

The Developing Sense of Self 482

Gender Development 484

Self-Esteem 484

**Parenting:** Building Self-Esteem 486

### Relating to Others 487

**THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:** The Social Brain 487

**Focus On:** Antonio Damasio 489

Understanding Others 489

**What Happens in the Brain?** Emotional Self-Regulation in Middle Childhood 490

Interacting with Peers 494

Interacting with Parents 496

**Parenting:** Supporting Children's Well-Being

After Divorce 499

Interacting with Siblings 500

Interacting at School 502

**Policy:** Anti-Bullying Legislation 504

### Moral Development 505

Cognitive-Developmental Theory: Piaget and Kohlberg 505

Telling the Truth 506

Distributive Justice 507

**Culture and Children's Evaluations of Truths and Lies** 508

**Practice:** Making Moral Principles Meaningful 508

CHAPTER SUMMARY 510

KEY TERMS 511

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 511

REAL    Development 511

**MILESTONES IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD** 512

## Part 6 } ADOLESCENCE

### Chapter 14 Physical Development and Health in Adolescence 515

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Youth Advocating for Youth 515

#### Biology of Health: Physical Growth and Development 516

**Focus On:** G. Stanley Hall 516

Puberty 517

The Timing of Puberty 520

Hormones, Emotions, and Behavior 521

**Culture and Menarche** 522

Brain Development 524

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** Adolescent Brain Development 526

#### Foundations of Health: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention 526

**Research Insights:** Survey Data 527

Nutrition and Physical Activity 527

Sleep and Stress 531

Adolescent Health Behaviors: Injury, Sexual Activity, and Substance Use 532

**Policy:** Cervical Cancer, Human Papillomavirus, and a Vaccine 537

Health Education and Prevention: Focus on Sex and Alcohol 539

**Parenting:** The Role of Parents in Adolescent Sexual Behavior 540

Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programs 541

#### Capacity for Health: Caregivers, Community, and Safety 542

Motor Vehicle Safety 542

Access to Health Care for Adolescents 543

**What Happens in the Brain?** Having a Conversation While Driving a Car 544

Safety: Sports and Injury 546

**Practice:** Treating Concussions in Adolescents 547

**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:** An Uneven Playing Field 548

#### Common Disruptions in Health: Managing Chronic Illness 549

CHAPTER SUMMARY 551

KEY TERMS 552

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS 552


REAL    Development 553

### Chapter 15 Cognitive Development in Adolescence 555

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:** Teen-to-Teen Tutors 555

#### Piaget and Formal Operations 556

Cognitive Changes in the Formal Operational Period 556

Adolescent Egocentrism	560
Contributions and Criticisms of Piaget's Theory	561
<b>Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Adolescent Mind</b>	<b>562</b>
Acquiring Academic Language	562
<b>Practice:</b> Peer Tutoring	563
Contributions of Vygotsky's Theory	564
<b>Information Processing in the Adolescent Years</b>	<b>565</b>
Cognitive Changes in Processing	565
Changes in Metacognition	567
Decision Making	568
Contributions of the Information Processing Approach	570
<b>The Developing Brain: The Brain and Adolescent Cognition</b>	<b>571</b>
Changes in the Prefrontal Cortex	571
Synaptic Pruning and Increased Myelination	572
<b>WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:</b> The Effects of Experience	573
<b>Learning and Schooling</b>	<b>574</b>
Sex Differences in Math and Verbal Skills	574
Academic Motivation	576
<b>Research Insights:</b> Can Knowledge About Income Difference Motivate Students?	578
<b>Research Insights:</b> Can You Grow Your Intelligence?	579
<b>Focus On:</b> Claude Steele	580
<b>Parenting:</b> Promoting School Achievement	580
School Transitions	580
School Completion	582
<b>Policy:</b> The No Child Left Behind Act and High School Completion	583
<b>WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:</b> School Completion	583
<b>Culture and Learning Models</b>	<b>585</b>
School and Work	586
<b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>	<b>587</b>
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	<b>588</b>
<b>CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS</b>	<b>588</b>
<b>REAL  Development</b>	<b>589</b>

## Chapter 16 Psychosocial Development in Adolescence 591

<b>MAKING A DIFFERENCE:</b> Peer Court	591
<b>The Development of the Self: Identity</b>	<b>592</b>
Erikson's Theory	592
Marcia's Patterns of Identity Status	593
<b>WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:</b> Identity Achievement and Cognitive Skills	594
Ethnic and Racial Identity	594
<b>Focus On:</b> Janet E. Helms	596
<b>Culture and the Immigrant Paradox</b>	<b>597</b>
Sexual Identity	598
<b>Relating to Others</b>	<b>599</b>
Adolescent–Parent Relationships	599
<b>Parenting:</b> Psychological Control	602
Adolescent–Peer Relationships	603
<b>Moral Development</b>	<b>608</b>
Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning	608
Criticisms of Kohlberg's Theory	610
<b>THE DEVELOPING BRAIN:</b> Moral Judgments	611
Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior	613
<b>Research Insights:</b> Impulsivity and Reward Seeking	614
<b>Policy:</b> Trying Juveniles as Adults	617
<b>Risk and Resilience</b>	<b>618</b>
Adolescent Depression	618
<b>WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT:</b> Risk Factors for Depression	618
<b>Research Insights:</b> Treatment for Adolescents with Depression	620
Adolescent Eating Disorders	621
<b>Practice:</b> Positive Youth Development	623
<b>CHAPTER SUMMARY</b>	<b>625</b>
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	<b>626</b>
<b>CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS</b>	<b>626</b>
<b>REAL  Development</b>	<b>627</b>
<b>MILESTONES IN ADOLESCENCE</b>	<b>628</b>

# Preface

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When the four of us came together as authors to write *The Development of Children and Adolescents*, we shared a deep personal conviction about the importance of understanding development in our contemporary world. At the same time, we brought four quite different perspectives to the task. Our backgrounds encompassed research, clinical practice, and teaching, and our specialties ranged from the prenatal period through adolescence, and included the vital intersection of development and health. We believed that this breadth of perspective would enable us to create a unique offering in the field.

As we wrote the book, we had several key goals in mind. We intended our book primarily for students pursuing careers in psychology, education, health, and human services, as well as for those taking a child development course because they expect to be parents someday. First and foremost, we wanted to help these students understand how children develop, from conception through adolescence. We especially wanted them to appreciate the dynamic and integrative nature of this development. We also wanted to enable them to apply what they learn in their lives, both professional and personal. We brought these goals to life in the three major themes running through this book.

## THEMES OF THE BOOK

Three major themes shape the organization of *The Development of Children and Adolescents*: understanding the concepts, integrating the concepts, and applying the concepts.

### Understanding the Concepts

To help students *understand* the fundamental concepts, we present research that supports the state of today's knowledge about children's development. In addition, our book uses some special features to guide learning.

**A Focus on Research.** As students begin the absorbing task of following children's developmental journey, they will encounter a great deal of research data. This research is at the core of developmental psychology, and students need to understand its importance. To help them do this, we have made sure that the many studies highlighted in our text have been carefully selected, clearly explained, and directly applied to practical situations. Our examples include both classic and current research studies, and we believe students will find them both interesting and enlightening.

In addition, new research and remarkable brain imaging studies have broadened our knowledge of children's brain development. Therefore, based on current insights gained from the neurosciences, we include an exciting and accessible teaching tool that graphically illustrates what happens in children's brains when they perform such common behaviors as reading and walking. This feature, *What Happens in the Brain*, relies on the most recent scholarly information and includes clear descriptions of the central brain mechanisms involved.

**A Guided Learning Approach.** To foster understanding, we take a guided learning approach within each chapter. Following an opening narrative (called *Making a Difference*) that focuses on improving children's lives, we pose *Key Questions* to guide readers through the chapter. These questions are keyed to the major sections in the chapter and to the end-of-chapter summary. *Check Your Progress* questions at the end of each major section give students the opportunity to review their understanding of the section contents; and *Critical Thinking* questions at the end of each chapter encourage students to reflect on issues discussed in the chapter.

### Integrating the Concepts

Understanding individual concepts is important, of course, but to truly appreciate how children develop, students need to *integrate* these concepts. Our approach to the relationship between nature and nurture, between maturation and learning, is holistic. We assume a complex, dynamic relationship between the changing individual child and the ever-changing environment—each transforming and being transformed by the other.

**A Systems Approach to Development.** In describing how child and environment interact, we assume that each aspect of development—physical, cognitive, and psychosocial—is dynamically related to the others. Learning to walk or learning to go up or down stairs, for example, is a landmark motor milestone in children's lives, but it is important, too, because it transforms their sense of competence and sense of self. These motor milestones give infants a new sense of satisfaction and a growing awareness of themselves as independent and autonomous beings.

The developmental systems approach that we follow in the book is necessarily multidisciplinary. Therefore, in integrating concepts, we touch on a number of diverse areas. Because biology is an essential part of understanding child behavior, we discuss the biological underpinnings of development in Chapter 2 and in sections throughout the book labeled *The Developing Brain*, as well as in the *What Happens in the Brain* features mentioned earlier. We highlight cultural influences on development in special *Culture and . . .* features and through integrate coverage of this topic throughout the text. Developmental science inevitably produces results related to the promotion of healthy child and family development. For that reason, we discuss various aspects of national policy concerning children, and advocacy for children in our opening features, titled *Making a Difference*, and our *Policy* sections, described further below.

**Children's Health—A Key Developmental Issue.** Worthy of special note is our emphasis on the critical intersection of health and children's cognitive and psychosocial development. Normative development has its foundations in the biology of good health, and we cannot take health for granted. Consistent with our systems approach, we emphasize the roles of families and communities in promoting children's health. For example, we address how lack of access to prenatal and well-child care, and lack of health-related services in the community or at school, can undermine children's ability to grow and develop normally.

Given the increased incidence of chronic illness among children, we help future child professionals and parents to understand how medications, disease processes, and nutrition affect learning and behavior. We also suggest ways to promote children's health and safety at home, at school, and in their communities.

## Applying the Concepts

Today's students need to *apply* what they have learned to their chosen occupations—education, psychology, nursing and other health-care fields, child care, behavioral pediatrics, and social work, among others. Furthermore, many will become parents. To emphasize the relationship between research and theory on the one hand, and application on the other, we have integrated applications throughout the chapters that focus on three themes—Parenting, Policy, and Practice. This unique feature highlights our efforts to offer readers not only pertinent theories and research but also examples of how these ideas affect the daily lives of children.

**P**arenting A child's parents, of course, play a central role in the child's development. Children thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love, nurturance, and security. In our book, parenting is presented as a dynamic process influenced by the parents' child-rearing goals and practices, and shaped by the powerful influence of the child and by the social and cultural context in which development takes place. Our *Parenting* sections discuss many issues

parents face—from writing a birth plan, to encouraging their young children to become readers, to dealing with sexual behavior in their teenagers—and offer research-based ideas about how best to face these issues.

**P**olicy Students who become teachers, health-care providers, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and other service providers will quickly find themselves immersed in decision making related to public policy. Their understanding of key laws and other public policies will affect how they do their jobs. We therefore introduce in each chapter a critical piece of federal legislation, such as the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, or some other policy issue, such as public health concerns about childhood obesity. Our *Policy* sections serve as another reminder to students that child development occurs within a broad context with many influences—one of them at the level of policy making.

**P**ractice An important feature of our book is the emphasis that we place on practice in settings such as education and health, as well as at home. In our *Practice* sections, we discuss, for example, how teachers can use the ideas of theorists like Piaget and Vygotsky to promote learning in their classrooms and explain what kinds of education work best for English-language learners. *Practice* sections in several chapters deal with preschool child-care environments; we also discuss such diverse topics as baby-friendly hospitals, developmental screening, and treatment of concussions in children and adolescents.

## Chapter-by-Chapter Coverage

*The Development of Children and Adolescents* is divided into 6 parts and 16 chapters. Part One comprises an introductory chapter, and Part Two deals with “biological beginnings,” including the biological foundations of child development, prenatal development, and birth and the newborn. Parts Three through Six describe, in turn, physical development and health, cognitive development, and psychosocial development in each of four age periods, presented chronologically: infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. The chronological approach encourages students to recognize how the different domains of development are related to each other within each age period, as well as to appreciate how development builds and changes throughout these periods.

A summary of the chapter contents follows.

### Chapter 1: A CHILD'S JOURNEY

The book's introductory chapter examines what development is, how it differs from change, and what kinds of issues the study of development involves. It presents a brief glimpse of a child's development at home and in the community, and touches on the relationship between children and technology. After explaining the major theories currently influencing the study of children's development, the chapter describes the research methods psychologists use to study development and the ethics of such research.

### Chapter 2: BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 2 reviews the essential biology of life to underscore how molecules and cells form the building blocks of development. It

examines how genes and the environment interact over the course of development, discusses the implications of the brain and nervous system for child development, and introduces some health-care issues that will be revisited throughout the book. The chapter emphasizes a key theme: that nature and nurture work together, from “neurons to neighborhoods.”

### Chapter 3: PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 3 describes conception and normal fetal development in the womb. The chapter also discusses agents outside the womb that can affect a child's development for a lifetime. It covers women's health during pregnancy, and begins several discussions on health, parenting, and culture that will continue throughout the book. As part of these discussions, the chapter delves into the science and policy of fertility, infertility, and reproductive assistance.

### Chapter 4: BIRTH AND THE NEWBORN

Chapter 4 begins by describing childbirth, including its life-changing effects on parents. It goes on to discuss the effects of birth complications, such as prematurity and low birth weight, on future development, and addresses the question of what can be done to prevent infant mortality. The chapter then focuses on the remarkable capacities of the newborn and the newborn's ability to engage caregivers. Finally, it discusses the emergence of the parent-infant bond and the developmental challenges facing the infant as the newborn period comes to an end.

## **Chapter 5: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH IN INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD**

Chapter 5 introduces the framework for the book's chapters on physical development and health. The framework, developed by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, underscores the vital relationship between health and development. The chapter goes on to examine physical, motor, and perceptual development in infancy and toddlerhood. It explains why these first years are so critical for health and development. It also discusses what happens when physical abilities are compromised, and stresses the importance of early intervention.

## **Chapter 6: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD**

Chapter 6 focuses on the remarkable cognitive abilities of infants and toddlers. It begins by examining various theories of early cognitive development. It then reviews the ingenious research methods and technological advances that allow today's scientists to study cognitive development in infants and toddlers in ways that once could scarcely have been imagined. The chapter also discusses how language emerges and develops in the first years of life. It ends with a review of educational programs specifically designed for infants and toddlers.

## **Chapter 7: PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN INFANCY AND TODDLERHOOD**

In describing psychosocial development in infants and toddlers, Chapter 7 starts by looking at how the major theories of psychosocial development view these early years. Next, the chapter discusses the lifelong importance of infants' attachment relationships with caregivers. It also explains how changes in the brain affect psychosocial development, and how emotional and social growth are interwoven. The chapter goes on to address the developing sense of self. It concludes by analyzing how caregivers, on the one hand, and the child's own temperament, on the other, play vital roles in early psychosocial development.

## **Chapter 8: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Chapter 8 opens with a discussion of physical growth, brain development, and motor development during early childhood. It then describes various ways of promoting health in young children. Because young children's immune systems are immature, making them vulnerable to infection, immunization is one aspect of health promotion, along with nutrition and dental health. After discussing these issues, the chapter reviews the role of caregivers and community resources in keeping children healthy and safe. It concludes with coverage of asthma and ear infections—two of the most common health disruptions in young children.

## **Chapter 9: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Chapter 9 covers children's cognitive growth during the early childhood years. It begins with two contrasting views of how young children develop cognitively: those of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. It next discusses the central aspects of language development during this period and then examines developments in cognitive processes,

especially those related to executive function, such as paying attention. These processes serve as a foundation for school readiness skills. Finally, the chapter looks at the role of preschool programs in influencing children's cognitive development and school readiness.

## **Chapter 10: PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Erik Erikson's view of the psychosocial tasks of early childhood opens Chapter 10. The chapter goes on to discuss two important aspects of emotional development—recognizing and regulating emotions. It also examines how young children gradually acquire a sense of self. Next, in describing children's relationships with peers, the chapter covers play, prosocial and antisocial behaviors, and theory of mind. It then explores how children begin to make moral judgments. Finally, it examines parenting practices and their importance during early childhood.

## **Chapter 11: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

Chapter 11 reviews the physical changes of middle childhood and discusses their implications for school readiness, physical fitness, and participation in sports. The chapter also notes various problems that can arise for many children during this period: poor nutrition, obesity, illness, and the unrelenting pressure to succeed, which can lead to emotional stress and physical injuries. The chapter goes on to discuss the role of school health services in improving and maintaining children's health. It ends with a review of the potential effects of disease and treatment on learning and behavior.

## **Chapter 12: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

Chapter 12 opens its examination of how children develop cognitively in the middle-childhood years by revisiting the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Next, it turns to information processing theory, focusing on recent research into attention and memory. It continues by considering the meaning of intelligence, the role of IQ tests, and different perspectives on what it means to be intelligent. It ends by discussing language development, including the need for many children to learn a second language, and the school-related skills of literacy and mathematics acquired during middle childhood.

## **Chapter 13: PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD**

The middle-childhood years are significant and exciting times in psychosocial development. To explain why, Chapter 13 first covers emotional development, discussing how children are increasingly aware of their emotions and increasingly able to regulate them as they move through this period. Children's greater understanding of their emotions is related to their understanding of themselves, and the chapter next describes growth in self-understanding during middle childhood. It goes on to explore the development of friendships and the social cognition necessary to understand the perspectives of others—an important skill in children's expanding social world. Finally, the chapter considers moral development and how children of this age think about and reason through moral dilemmas.



## **Chapter 14: PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH IN ADOLESCENCE**

Chapter 14 examines various physical aspects of puberty and growth, including brain development in adolescence. It then covers several topics important in adolescent health, including nutrition and physical activity, sleep and stress, and such health behaviors as sexual activity and substance use. Motor vehicle safety, access to health care, and sports injuries are also important health issues in adolescence, and the chapter examines these areas before concluding with a discussion of managing a chronic illness—diabetes—during the teen years.

## **Chapter 15: COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE**

A discussion of Piaget's theory opens Chapter 15, which covers cognitive development in adolescence. The chapter also examines in some detail the more recent perspectives provided by the information processing theorists, as well as the sociocultural perspective

of Vygotsky. Next, the chapter examines changes in the adolescent brain that relate to cognitive development. Finally, because cognitive development during adolescence is closely related to educational experiences, it considers the role of schooling during the adolescent years.

## **Chapter 16: PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE**

Chapter 16 considers the major psychosocial changes occurring during adolescence—a time of enormous psychosocial change. It begins with the central question of identity development. It then turns to ways in which adolescents relate to others who are important in their lives, including parents and peers. Adolescents often face situations that involve moral decisions, and the chapter next discusses this important aspect of adolescents' lives. The final section considers one of the most frequent risk factors of the adolescent period: the risk of developing mental health difficulties, including major depressive disorder and eating disorders. It also examines the role of resilience in protecting against risk factors.



# Pedagogical Features

To achieve the objectives we have just described, and to help students engage in meaningful learning, we include the following pedagogical features in our book:

## Chapter-Opening Vignettes

Chapter-opening vignettes, entitled *Making a Difference*, describe how a particular individual or organization has worked to improve the status of children in our society in a way that reflects the content of the chapter.



## Chapter 9

### Cognitive Development in Early Childhood

**MAKING A difference**

**The Harlem Children's Zone**

Geoffrey Canada became an activist for children because of his own experiences growing up in the South Bronx in New York. He knows firsthand the struggles of children and families living in poverty. His father left the family after his mother had given birth to four sons. His mother often had trouble finding work, and she sometimes lacked enough money to feed and clothe Geoffrey and his brothers. But he recalls that despite these struggles, his mother took the time to emphasize the importance of getting an education, encouraging her boys to read and taking them to museums. "My mother was famous for finding out when things were free" (Quoted in Tough, 2008, p. 101). His first-grade teacher introduced him to books that told stories through rhymes, and many years later, at a talk he gave at Syracuse University, Geoffrey emphasized that "poetry saved my life" (Stevens, 2004). As early as age 9, he decided he wanted to help children like himself who live in the inner city.

Now a public advocate, Geoffrey Canada has established the Harlem Children's Zone, a 60-block area that offers a range of educational, social, medical, and support programs to families, wrapping children in a safety net of supportive programs. These programs include a preschool program, a family support center, classes for new parents, an after-school program, and a charter school. He reflects that his motivation "is all based on a personal understanding of what these kids go through and what the rest of the world doesn't see" (quoted in Tough, 2008, p. 123).

The Harlem Gems, the preschool program in the Harlem Children's Zone, has elements similar to other preschools in its strong support of children's psychosocial development, but it differs in substantial ways as well. It is a full-day program, has a low teacher-child ratio, and operates 11 months of the year. Although the activities are similar to those in any preschool, including imaginative play, music, and block-building, it differs in its emphasis on language. Because studies indicate that children from the lowest socioeconomic group enter school with little knowledge about letter names and letter-sound associations and a limited range of vocabulary, Canada worked with teachers to develop a preschool program that introduces language skills in all activities, essentially making the classroom a verbal "hothouse." In addition, the staff at the Harlem Children's Zone encourages parents to read to their preschool-aged children every night.

**CHAPTER OUTLINE**

- Making a Difference**  
The Harlem Children's Zone
- Piaget's Theory and Preoperational Thought**  
Advances and Limitations in Preoperational Thought  
Criticisms of Piaget's Theory  
Practice: Implications of Piaget's Theory for Preschool Classrooms
- Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory**  
Features of Vygotsky's Theory  
Criticisms of Vygotsky's Theory  
Focus On: Barbara Rogoff
- Practice: Implications of Vygotsky's Theory for Preschool Classrooms**
- Information Processing Theory**  
**WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT** The Role of Executive Function
- THE DEVELOPING BRAIN** A Growth Spurt in Executive Function  
Combining Theories: Neo-Piagetian Approaches  
Criticisms of Information Processing Theory  
Practice: Implications of Information Processing Theory for Preschool Classrooms
- Research Insights: Can We Teach Executive Function Skills to Young Children?**
- Language Development**  
Vocabulary Growth  
Grammar Usage  
Rules of Conversation  
Speaking Two Languages
- WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT** Language Delays
- School Readiness**  
Pre-Reading  
What Happens in the Brain  
Beginning to Read
- Parenting: Helping Preschool Children Become Readers**  
Emergent Writing
- Culture and Learning Numbers**  
Early Number Concepts  
Preschool Education  
Research Insights: Young Children and Board Games
- Policy: The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act**

## [KEY QUESTIONS] for READING CHAPTER 9

1. What are the characteristics of children's thinking during the preoperational stage, according to Piaget?
2. In what ways do others assist children in learning, according to Vygotsky?
3. What are examples of executive function displayed in early childhood?
4. What changes occur in children's language development during early childhood?
5. What are some important skills that help prepare children for formal schooling?

### ✓ CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. According to Piaget, what are three limitations to children's thinking in the preoperational stage?
2. Give an example of how children's egocentrism might affect their communication with other children or adults.
3. Suppose you hear a 3-year-old girl say "It's a rose, it's not a flower." In what way would her thinking be typical of children in the preoperational stage?

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### Piaget's Theory and Preoperational Thought

[ KEY QUESTION ] 1. What are the characteristics of children's thinking during the preoperational stage, according to Piaget?

- Piaget emphasized that during early childhood, children are preoperational (that is, prelogical) and are not yet able to reason with logical mental operations. As a result, they tend to provide human qualities to inanimate objects (animism), have difficulty considering perspective on one, rather than two, sides of an object.
- Piaget determined that children in the preoperational stage are egocentric, that is, they have a difficult time understanding the perspective of others.

Children improve in their executive functioning during early childhood, especially in their ability to focus and shift attention, to purposefully remember, to inhibit responses, and to show cognitive flexibility.

### Language Development

[ KEY QUESTION ] 4. What changes occur in children's language development during early childhood?

- Children's vocabulary growth increases rapidly through a process called fast mapping.

## CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. **Piaget's Theory.** What do you consider to be the most important criticism of Piaget's theory and why?
2. **Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory.** Do you think it is possible for classroom teachers to instruct all children in a classroom based on knowledge of each child's ZPD? Why or why not?
3. **Information Processing Theory.** What are some predictions you would make about the different behaviors you might see in children on a playground based on whether they had strong or weak response inhibition skills?
4. **Language Development.** Do you think that all children should learn to speak more than one language? Discuss your response, using research.
5. **School Readiness.** Why do you think that learning to say the alphabet is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of learning to read?
6. **Cultural Perspectives.** Vygotsky proposed that culture affects the tools children learn to become full participants in society. Consider how the tools necessary to learn in American society today might differ from those of a different cultural group, such as a nomadic society. How might the process of learning those tools be in some ways similar, and in other ways different in these different cultural groups?

## Guided Learning

Chapter-opening **Key Questions** highlight the most important material for students to consider while reading each section. We return to these questions throughout the chapter as a guided review for readers in our **Check Your Progress** features, which help students assess their understanding of key topics and concepts. We also connect the questions to the main headings under **Chapter Summary**, which provides an integrated review of the chapter. At the end of each chapter, we pose a set of **Critical Thinking** questions to challenge readers to think more deeply about topics discussed in the chapter.

**Everyday Stories** appear in each section of every chapter. These stories present interesting real-world examples of the concepts and topics being covered. **What if...?** questions ask students to think about how they would respond to various scenarios, and help them to deepen and apply their understanding of developmental concepts. Instructors also may find these questions useful in initiating class discussions.

**DRAWING A STAR WITH SELF-TALK** Isabella is working on drawing a star for a picture she is making of the night sky. Her friend has shown her a way of making a five-pointed star, and she is trying to remember and follow the directions the friend gave her. As she draws the star, she says out loud, "You start here. Then it goes down to here, then up to here, then over to here, then down, then up. And you're done!" Repeating these directions to herself out loud has helped her remember how to draw the star in the way her friend taught her. Eventually she will be able to make this kind of drawing without saying the directions out loud, but she still may say them to herself silently.

Everyday stories

### what if...?

Suppose you are a day-care provider at a neighborhood center. You notice that Ben, who is usually upbeat, seems quite gloomy and distracted today, and then you see that he has a burn on his arm. When you ask him about the burn, he covers it up by pulling his shirt sleeve down, and then he runs away from you. You are concerned about him but don't want to make him uncomfortable in the classroom. What would you do?



## Parenting, Policy, and Practice

*Parenting, Policy, and Practice* applications are integrated throughout each chapter. These highlight knowledge that will help students both as parents and in their chosen occupations, such as education, health care, child care, psychology, and social work, among others.

### Implications of Piaget's Theory for Preschool Classrooms

#### **P**ractice

Piaget's emphasis on children's construction of knowledge has many implications for educational settings. You can see from the following suggestions that this orientation often involves providing young children with opportunities to learn by engaging in activities.

1. Children learn best by being engaged in an activity, not by simply being told information or being asked to memorize information. For example, encourage children to discover what happens when they blend primary colors in their painting rather than telling them that "blue and yellow make green."

### Helping Preschool Children Become Readers

#### **P**arenting

Even if parents are not strong readers themselves, they can promote preliteracy skills in their preschool children. Parents can integrate many of these tasks into their daily routines with their children. Epstein (2002) lists 12 ways in which parents can help young children become readers:

1. Have daily conversations with children. This can involve looking at family pictures together and discussing them, as well as playing word games like, "I'm thinking of something in the refrigerator that begins with the sound 'm'."
2. Keep lots of printed and written materials in the home.

### The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

#### **P**olicy

In 1975, federal legislation was enacted to ensure that the more than 6 million children with disabilities in the United States would receive the education they needed from birth to early adulthood. The law, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), has been revised several times since it was first enacted in 1975 as Public Law 94-142. The law currently has three major provisions, which apply to individuals from ages 3 to 21:

1. *Children with disabilities are entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education.* The interpretation of what "appropriate" means is usually made at the district and

## WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT

### Developing a Theory of Mind

Communicating well with others requires children to understand that others may think differently than they do and have a different perception of a situation. This type of thinking requires a "theory of mind." **Theory of mind** is a term used to refer to children's understanding of the mental states (that is, the "minds") of themselves and of others (Lager-Flusberg, 1999). Theory of mind is an aspect of social cognition, because it in-

**When Systems Connect** discussions, integrated throughout the text, highlight coverage of developmental systems theory. Similarly, special headings identify **The Developing Brain** discussions, which explain how new findings in brain development add to our understanding of children's behavior.



## THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

**A Growth Spurt in Executive Function.** Adele Diamond (2001) proposes that a growth spurt occurs in executive function from ages 3 to 6, making the early childhood period a critical time for changes in this area of functioning. As we mentioned in Chapter 8, studies in neuroscience indicate that much of this growth occurs in the prefrontal cortex, as stronger networks are created between this area of the brain and other regions of the cortex in which language, mathematical, and spatial skills are represented (see Figure 9.7).



## Culture and Learning Numbers

Many studies have found that children in East Asian countries tend to outperform children in North America on assessments of mathematics skills (Göbel, Shaki, & Fischer, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006). Although there are many reasons for this difference, one involves the way that math ideas are represented by language. For example, in Chinese the term for a triangle is “sao jiao xing” which means “three corner shape.” Although in English the word “triangle” describes the meaning of the shape, which has three angles, to a young child this is a complex term because the child needs to understand that “tri” means “three” and needs to know

Language	Number 1	Number 10	Number 11
Japanese	ichi	juu	juu-ichi
Korean	ii	ship	ship ii
Chinese	yi	shi	shi-yi



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## Culture

Discussions of culture appear throughout the chapters. In addition, a *Culture and . . .* feature in each chapter highlights both cross-cultural and multicultural examples, such as *Culture and Medical Beliefs*, *Culture and Learning Numbers*, and *Culture and Showing Pride and Shame*.

### Focus On: Barbara Rogoff

In referring to cultural processes I want to draw attention to the configurations of routine ways of doing things in any community's approach to living. I focus on people's participation in their communities' cultural practices and traditions, rather than equating culture with the nationality or ethnicity of individuals. (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3)

Barbara Rogoff contributes to our understanding of child development by recognizing the importance of everyday routines and showing us how children's participation in those activities is shaped by culture. Inspired by the work of Lev Vygotsky, she has studied how children are guided by older children and adults in the communities in which they live. For example, young girls in a Mayan community in Guatemala often learn various tasks from their mothers and older siblings.

Rogoff's work draws on examples from many cultural groups and shows how we make assumptions about what is “normal” from experiences within our culture. For example, she describes how views of praising a child differ in different cultural groups. We may think that praising a child by saying “good job” or “good for you” is a normal part of good parenting. In some cultures, however, such praise is avoided because it is seen as making chil-



Rose Carrington

**Focus On** features spotlight important individuals in child development, such as Albert Bandura, Eric Kandel, and Barbara Rogoff. **Research Insights** features highlight a pertinent research study, such as a study examining the question *Do Violent Video Games Promote Aggression?* or the question *Can You Grow Your Intelligence?*

### Research Insights: Do Children with Autism Lack a Theory of Mind?

As we noted in Chapter 7, autism spectrum disorders are developmental disorders marked by severe deficits in social interaction, communication, and imagination, as well as repetitive and restricted patterns of interests and behaviors (DSM-5, 2013; Volkmar, Lord, Baily, Schultz, & Klin, 2004). Children with autism fail to orient to social stimuli when they are young and have difficulties with social reciprocity and communication skills (Tager-Flusberg, 2010). Current estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012) indicate that approximately 1 in 88 children in the United States have been diagnosed with the disorder. This is an estimated 350% increase in the last 10 years, and the

difficulties with false-belief tasks (Peterson, Wellman, & Liu, 2005). Researchers conclude that children with autism most likely process these types of tasks in a different way than do typically developing children and that such differences also lead to the social aloofness seen in children with autism (Peterson et al., 2005).

One type of current neuropsychological research is focusing on specific neurons, called *mirror neurons* because they react when an individual observes an action as well as produces one. (You may recall that we discussed mirror neurons in Chapter 4.) Some studies have found that the mirror neurons in specific brain regions (e.g., the medial prefrontal

## Real Development

Wiley's *Real Development* provides the basis for an active learning project at the end of each chapter. The activities focus on developing and assessing higher-order thinking skills. Students will be asked to analyze, critically evaluate, synthesize, and reflect on the information presented.

## REAL Development

### Psychosocial Development in Early Childhood

In the accompanying Real Development activity, you are interested in learning more about the development of peer interactions. A developmental psychologist at your university, Dr. Jones, has researched extensively on different types of play. You will read about different types of play described below and then use these descriptions to help Dr. Jones identify different forms of play in Adeline's pre-school classroom.



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**WileyPLUS** Go to WileyPLUS to complete the *Real Development* activity.





# What Happens in the Brain?

## Beginning to Read

**T**hink about learning to read. It is different from learning to talk, as it requires explicit instruction as well as much practice. Thus, studying children as they learn to read provides a unique opportunity for researchers to learn more about the influence of experience on the developing brain. When we learn to read, at the most elementary level—the level of the beginning reader—we translate a set of written letters into a meaningful word. This may seem like a simple task, but it's actually very complex. Moving from looking at a series of symbols to understanding a word requires transmitting nerve impulses over a specific brain pathway.

Here's a simplified sketch of some key things that must happen for a young child to look at, for example, the letters C-A-T and end up thinking of a furry little animal with whiskers and a long tail.

• First, the child perceives the written letters as light rays entering her eyes. The rays are changed to electrical nerve impulses, which travel to the visual cortex. The visual cortex is in the occipital lobe and recognizes previously learned simple visual patterns like lines.

- The impulses travel from the visual cortex to the Visual Word Form area located in the left occipital-temporal cortex in the middle region called the fusiform gyrus. This region is involved in translating the simplistic pattern of the written word into recognizable previously learned words.
- Then the impulses travel to the angular gyrus, which matches the visual word with the sounds of the word.
- Next, the impulses move to Wernicke's area, responsible for language comprehension. This area processes the word as if it has been heard.
- If the word C-A-T were part of a sentence, like "The cat sat," then the impulses would also travel to Broca's area, which is involved in processing syntax, such as word order and grammar.

In beginning readers, this pathway becomes stronger with practice, and the pathway becomes more focused in the left hemisphere of the brain. As reading becomes more complex—for example, as young readers must remember the words they've already read and decode unknown words—many other areas of the brain also come into play.

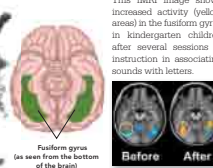
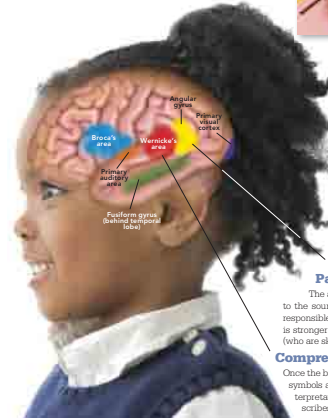


## Recognizing Visual Patterns

Nerve impulses representing visual patterns travel from the primary visual cortex to the visual word form area of the fusiform gyrus. If this area hasn't learned the visual patterns of our alphabet, it won't recognize them. Children generally need explicit training to learn letter patterns—which explains why we see so many letter shapes and activities in preschool.



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Fusiform gyrus (as seen from the bottom of the brain)

This fMRI image shows increased activity (yellow areas) in the fusiform gyrus in kindergarten children after several sessions of instruction in associating sounds with letters.

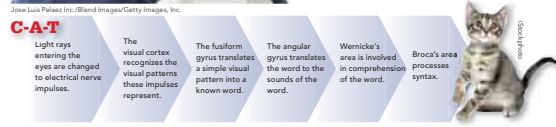
Bruce D. McClelland, "Educational Neuroscience: The Early Years" *PNAS*, Vol. 107, no. 18, pages 8049-8050.

## Linking Visual Patterns with Sound Patterns

The angular gyrus translates the visual pattern of the word to the sounds of the word when spoken. The angular gyrus is responsible for phonological processing. Activity in this area is stronger in children (who are learning to read) than in adults (who are skilled readers).

## Comprehending Meaning

Once the brain has made the connection between the alphabetic symbols and the word sounds, Wernicke's area provides an interpretation of the sound pattern—the familiar word that describes a furry little animal.



## What Happens in the Brain

*What Happens in the Brain* is a key teaching feature that helps bring neuroscience directly into the lives of readers. Visual and accessible two-page layouts appear throughout the book illustrating what happens in children's brains when they are performing everyday activities, such as reading or walking. These layouts provide students with up-to-date, understandable information about the neural mechanisms at work in the child's developing brain.

## Milestones

Milestones at the ends of Parts Three, Four, Five, and Six summarize important accomplishments in the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial domains for each period of development.

## in Early Childhood

### 2 years

- Physical**
- Climbs easily onto chairs, out of cribs, up ladders
  - Walks upstairs two feet at a time
  - Takes off shoes and socks, pulls up pants
  - Holds crayon with thumb and all fingers, scribbles
  - Uses spoon to feed self



### Psychosocial

- Labels self according to gender
- Shows interest in activities of peers
- Engages in parallel play



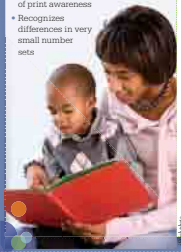
### Cognitive

- Often attributes animate qualities to inanimate objects
- Tends to focus attention on one characteristic of an object or task while neglecting to focus on others
- Can sort objects into categories
- Uses overregularizations when talking
- Uses speech to guide problem solving, usually by talking out loud
- Uses invented spelling
- Associates small numbers like 3 and 4 with specific quantities



### 3-4 years

- Physical**
- Walks upstairs alternating feet
  - Kicks, throws, and catches ball, but inefficiently
  - Pedals riding toys
  - Uses safety scissors and fork
  - Can fasten simple snaps, large buttons, and zippers
  - Builds block towers
  - Copies line and circle, draws "tadpole" people



### Psychosocial

- Uses concrete details when describing self
- Identifies emotions as "happy" or "sad"
- Has strong sense of gender stereotypes
- Uses theory of mind to understand "false beliefs" of another person
- Engages in sociodramatic play
- Sense of fairness is based on own needs or desires
- Engages in associative play



### 5-6 years

- Physical**
- Walks downstairs alternating feet
  - Throws by rotating torso
  - Catches ball with hands, but still inefficiently
  - Skips and gallops; runs gracefully
  - Ties shoelaces; gets dressed and undressed
  - Uses knife to spread and cut soft food
  - Copies triangles, letters, numbers, and words
  - Associates small numbers like 2 or more with objects
  - Builds a five block bridge



- Psychosocial**
- Shifts attention in tasks involving a rule change
  - Shows increasing ability to control impulsive behavior
  - Can show empathy and sympathy to peers
  - Engages in cooperative play
  - Uses one object to substitute for another in play (symbolic play)
  - Differentiates moral and conventional transgressions
  - Obeyes rules to get rewards and avoid punishments



- Cognitive**
- Begins to take into account the visual perspective of the listener
  - Increasingly uses adjectives with nouns
  - Produces grammatically correct statements even if model is incorrect
  - Improves in selectively attending to tasks



# Teaching and Learning

## Environment: Learn More at [www.wileyplus.com](http://www.wileyplus.com)

### Wiley's Real Development

#### REAL Development

Child development does not happen in isolation. It happens in larger familial, interpersonal and cultural contexts. Capturing these powerful dynamics in a child development course was a challenge—until now.

Wiley's *Real Development* is an innovative multimedia product that uses authentic video capturing moments from four real families, allowing students to view the pivotal stages of child development within larger interpersonal and cultural contexts. In each *Real Development* activity, created by Nicole C. DiDonato of Montclair State University and Christine J. Hatchard of Monmouth University, students analyze and evaluate concepts—demonstrated in a variety of naturalistic and professional settings—through assessment activities grounded in real-world applications. Through this active engagement with visual media, pictures and artifacts, students will gain a deeper understanding of developmental theories and concepts.

*Real Development* also includes a filterable topic-based library with dozens of selections by Shawn Guling of Southeast Missouri State University. It includes observational footage and interviews with children and professionals to help further illustrate key concepts central to the understanding of child development in today's world. The result is an authentic media experience that prompts students to apply and interact with the course material in ways that will be meaningful in their personal and professional lives.

### WileyPLUS with ORION

*WileyPLUS* is a research-based online environment for effective teaching and learning. From multiple study paths, to self-assessment, to a wealth of interactive resources—including the complete online textbook—*WileyPLUS* gives you everything you need to personalize the teaching and learning experience while giving your students more value for their money. Students achieve concept mastery in a rich environment that is available 24/7. Instructors personalize and manage their course more effectively with assessment, assignments, grade tracking, and more.

*WileyPLUS* is now equipped with an adaptive learning module called ORION. Based on cognitive science, *WileyPLUS* with ORION, provides students with a personal, adaptive learning experience so they can build their proficiency on topics and use their study time most effectively. *WileyPLUS* with ORION helps students learn by learning about them.

### WileyPLUS with ORION is great as:

- an adaptive **pre-lecture tool** that assesses your students' conceptual knowledge so they to come to class better prepared,
- a **personalized study guide** that helps students understand both strengths and areas where they need to invest more time, especially in preparation for quizzes and exams.

Unique to ORION, students **begin** by taking a quick **diagnostic** for any chapter. This will determine each student's baseline proficiency on each topic in the chapter. Students see their individual diagnostic report to help them understand where they need to do additional work.

### What do students receive with WileyPLUS?

- A **digital version** of the complete textbook with integrated media and quizzes.
- **Real Development** Students are able to complete activities based on viewing these authentic videos. Each activity is assignable and gradable. Students can view the videos and complete the activities in class or at home.
- The **ORION** adaptive learning module that maximizes students' study time.
- **Additional Videos.** Excerpts selected from a variety of sources illustrate particular concepts, bringing the topics to life in engaging ways. The videos focus on topics ranging from types of and places for childbirth, language development, school readiness, intelligence and thinking, adolescent sexual health, autism, and others.
- **Practice Exams.** These learning features give students a way to test themselves on course material before exams. Each practice exam contains fill-in-the-blank, application, and multiple-choice questions that provide immediate feedback. Each question is also linked to a learning objective within the book to aid students in concept mastery.
- **Flashcards.** This interactive module gives students the opportunity to easily test their knowledge of vocabulary terms.
- **Web Resources.** Annotated web links put useful electronic resources for psychology into the context of your Developmental Psychology course.



## What do instructors receive with *WileyPLUS*?

Pre-created teaching materials and assessments help instructors optimize their time:

- A wealth of brief **video segments** perfect for classroom use.
- The **Instructor's Manual**, prepared by Eugene Geist of Ohio University is designed to help instructors maximize student learning. It presents teaching suggestions for each chapter of the text, including lecture starters, lecture extensions, classroom discussions and activities, out of the classroom assignments, Internet and print resources, and more!
- Every chapter contains a **Lecture PowerPoint presentation**, prepared by Lee Ann Jolley of Tennessee Tech University and Janette Kopp of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, with a combination of key concepts, figures and tables, and examples from the textbook.
- **Media Enriched PowerPoint presentations**, available in *WileyPLUS*, contain embedded links to multimedia

sources and can be easily modified according to your needs.

- The **Test Bank**, prepared by Betsye Robinette of Indiana Wesleyan University, is available in a word document format or through Respondus or Diploma. The questions are available to instructors to create and print multiple versions of the same test by scrambling the order of all questions found in the Word version of the test bank. This allows users to customize exams by altering or adding new problems. The test bank has over 100 multiple choice, true-false, text-entry, and essay questions per chapter. Each question has been linked to a specific, student learning outcome, and the correct answer provided with section references to its source in the text.

**Gradebook:** *WileyPLUS* provides instant access to reports on trends in class performance, student use of course materials, and progress toward learning objectives, helping inform decisions and drive classroom discussions.

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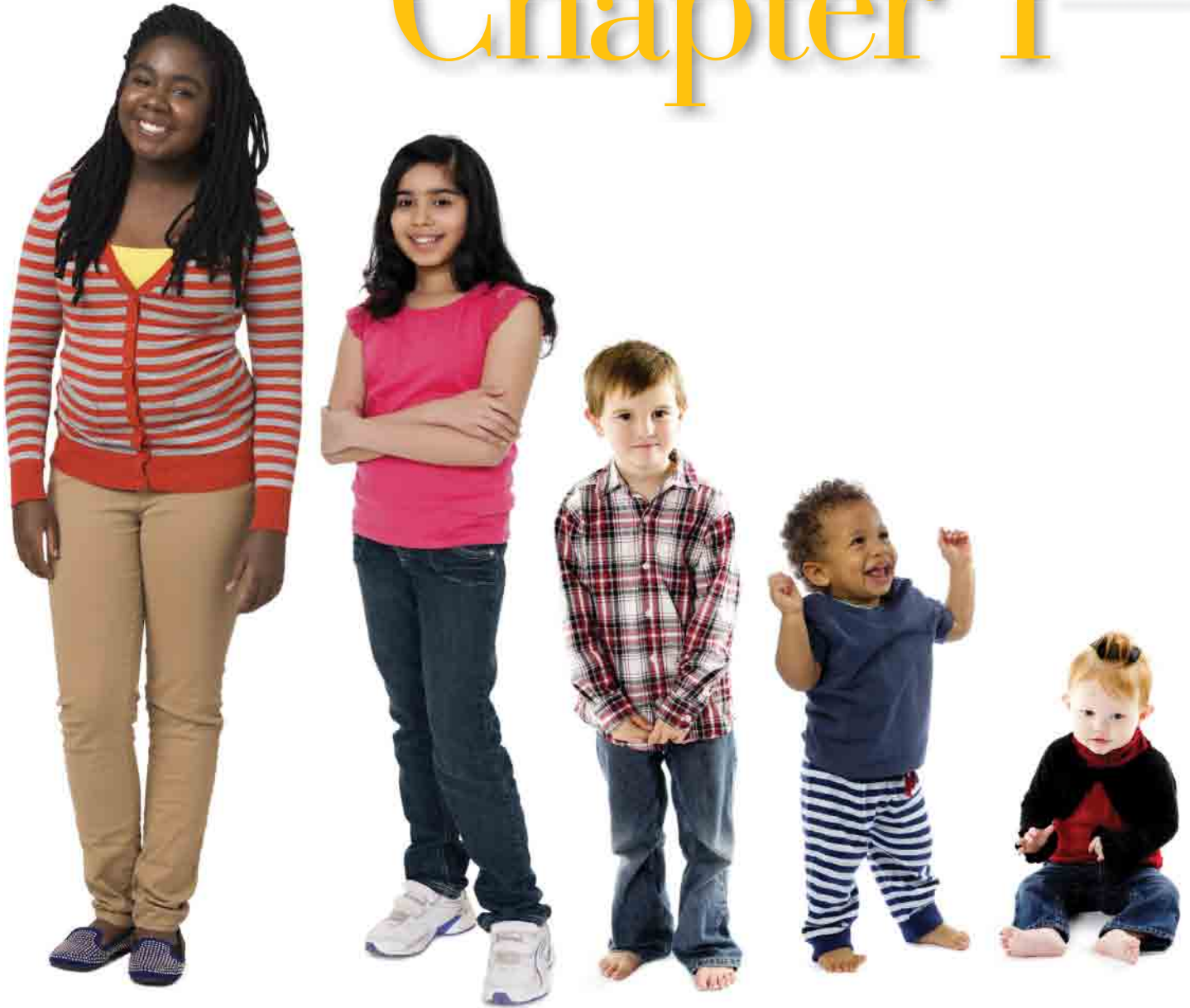
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The Development  
of Children  
and Adolescents

# Chapter 1



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# A Child's Journey

MAKING A

**difference**

## All Children Have Birthdays

Two young sisters, Makayla and Joy, are celebrating their birthdays in grand style. The girls join their friends in getting their faces painted with fanciful designs, collecting treats from a birthday piñata, playing games for prizes, and feasting on cupcakes and candy. What's different about Makayla and Joy's birthday party is that it's taking place in a homeless shelter.

Most children look forward to celebrating their birthdays. For many children, a birthday is a time to have a party where friends and family pay lots of attention to them and give them gifts—a day to feel really special. But children living in homeless shelters, like Makayla and Joy, seldom have the chance for such an experience. Their parents or guardians generally do not have the funds for a party, and most shelters do not have a big enough budget or staff to sponsor parties for children. A birthday for these children is just another day.



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## CHAPTER OUTLINE

### Making a Difference

*All Children Have Birthdays*

### Children and Their Development

What Is Development?

The Study of Development

#### WHEN SYSTEMS CONNECT

Developmental Domains

Developmental Epochs: Is Age the Answer?

Issues in Development

### A Child's Journey in the 21st Century

Research Insights: Are Today's Children More Imaginative?

#### Parenting: Children in the Home

Children and Their Cultural Communities

Children in a Technological World

#### Culture and Parents' Views on Children's Disabilities

#### Practice: Video Games and Learning

### Explaining Development: The Theories

Psychoanalytically Based Theories

Cognitive Theories

Learning Theories

Ethological Theories

Systems Theories

Focus On: Urie Bronfenbrenner

### Asking Questions, Examining Answers

The Scientific Method

Designing Research Studies

Collecting Data

Reporting Research Results

#### Policy: Ethical Considerations

Chapter Summary

To three women volunteering in homeless shelters in Massachusetts, this situation looked like a problem that needed solving. In 2002, these three volunteers—Lisa Vasiloff, Karen Yahara, and Carol Zwanger—formed Birthday Wishes, Inc., to hold birthday parties for children living in shelters. Today, the organization serves more than 165 shelters and other, similar living facilities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. (You can find out more about this organization at [www.birthdaywishes.org](http://www.birthdaywishes.org).)

Volunteers working with Birthday Wishes plan each party based on the child's choice of a theme. They supply materials for craft projects and other activities like games and musical entertainment, along with goodie bags for all the children, a cake that fits the party theme, and a special gift. In planning, the volunteers pay attention to the family's cultural traditions concerning birthday celebrations, as described by the child's parents. Knowledge of child development also helps, because parties for 2-year-olds must be different from parties for 10-year-olds.

Sometimes all it takes is a simple observation—like the lack of birthday parties—to find an important way to make a difference for children. Throughout this book, we will be introducing different ways in which students, parents, teachers, health-care professionals, and others have made a difference in the lives of children. You may find that you, too, can make a difference.

## [KEY QUESTIONS] *for* READING CHAPTER 1

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1. What are some of the key issues in understanding development?
  2. How has modern society affected child development and its study?
  3. How would you describe the major theories of child development?
  4. What specific research methods do psychologists use to learn about children's development?
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**IN THIS CHAPTER,** you will embark on learning about an exciting field, one that is relevant to the everyday lives of most people: child development. Many of us study child development because we want to improve the lives of children, like the volunteers in our chapter-opening feature. As you will see, however, there are many different ideas about how children develop and what helps them develop optimally. We begin this chapter by examining what development is, how it differs from change, and what kinds of issues the study of development involves. Then, to introduce some significant influences on a child's life, we present a brief glimpse of a child's development at home and in the community. We also discuss the relationship between children and technology. Next, we describe the major theories currently influencing the study of children's development. From there we turn to the research methods psychologists use to study development. We conclude with a summary of guidelines for ethical practices in conducting research with children.

## Children and Their Development

[ KEY QUESTION ] 1. What are some of the key issues in understanding development?

How thoughts about children and childhood have changed over time! More than a hundred years ago, William James, a famous American psychologist, described the newborn's world as "one great blooming, buzzing confusion" (1890, p. 488). James, in other words, felt that infants come into the world helpless and unable to make any sense at all of what is going on around them. Contrast that view with those of the noted pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton (1973), who designed a way to assess the capabilities of newborn infants (Brazelton & Nugent, 1995). According to Brazelton, the newborn—far from simply reacting to a "blooming, buzzing confusion"—behaves in a way that is complex and competent. Most psychologists today, informed by genetic research, neuroscientific evidence, and sophisticated environmental studies, agree with Brazelton.

Still, there is no doubt that the competent newborns Brazelton writes about develop rapidly into ever more competent toddlers, then children, then adolescents as they journey through childhood and into adulthood. How this occurs leads us to the definition of development that will guide our work.

## What Is Development?

If we are going to consider how children develop, we need to start by defining what development is. To do that, we need to think about the relationship between development and change. Ask yourself these two questions: Does development mean change? Does change mean development? The answer to the first question is yes, and the answer to the second is no.

That said, the answers to these questions aren't as contradictory as they may first seem. In answering yes to the first question, we agree with most psychologists who study child development that development is about change (Overton, 2006). Such psychologists are concerned with changes in size, behavior, thinking, and personality during any age period. Thus, development, in a general sense, refers to change (Lerner, 2010; Rutter & Rutter, 1993).

In no way, however, does this mean that development and change are the same thing. Many changes in children have nothing to do with development. A young girl may be grumpy, complaining that her cereal is not sweet. Her father adds fruit to the cereal, and the child is now happy. The change in the child's mood has little to do with development. Clearly, development involves a very specific kind of change.

For change to be developmental, it must be *systematic*, it must be *organized*, and it must have a *successive* character (Lerner, 2002; Lerner, 2010; Overton, 2006; Rutter & Rutter, 1993; Travers & Travers, 2008). For example, most very young children walk with assistance, usually by holding the hands of a brother, sister, or parent, before they can walk on their own. By the time these children enter school just a few years later, they are not only walking but also running, hopping, and skipping with ease. Changes like this are developmental because they are *systematic*; that is, they occur in an orderly and predictable way. Walking with assistance occurs before walking independently, and walking independently occurs before skipping. Such changes are *organized* in that many systems work together in a specific way to support a child's first attempts at walking, including brain organization and muscle strength, which you will read about in Chapter 5. Finally, changes are *successive* in that those occurring at a later time have been influenced by those that occurred at an earlier time, as the ability to skip is influenced by the ability to walk and hop.

## The Study of Development

**Development**, then, is change that is systematic, organized, and successive in character. As we discuss children's development throughout this book, we will often cite the work of developmental psychologists. **Developmental psychology** is a field concerned with describing and understanding how people grow and change systematically over their lifetimes. In studying development, psychologists focus on *what* developmental changes are, *how* they occur, *how* they are maintained, and *how* the course of development varies among individuals (Rutter & Rutter, 1993). Next, we look at a few of the basic issues that arise in the study of development.



## Developmental Domains

Developmental psychologists typically divide their analyses into three general domains: physical, cognitive, and psychosocial. The **physical domain** relates to patterns of change in children's biology and health, including sensory abilities and motor skills.



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Young infants are fascinated by patterns and movement. Psychologists today know that newborns are capable of far more than people once believed.

**Development** Change that is systematic, organized, and successive in character.

**Developmental psychology** The field of psychology concerned with describing and understanding how people grow and change over their lifetimes.

**Physical domain** An area of development that involves patterns of change in children's biology and health, including sensory abilities and motor skills.

**Cognitive domain** An area of development that involves patterns of change in children's intellectual abilities, including reasoning, learning, attention, memory, and language skills.

**Psychosocial domain** An area of development that involves patterns of change in children's personalities as well as their social and emotional skills, including relationships with others and the ability to regulate their own emotions.

**Table 1.1** Examples of Elements of Developmental Domains

Physical	Cognitive	Psychosocial
Genetics	Language acquisition	Attachment
Brain development	Information processing	Temperament
Pregnancy and birth	Problem solving	Emotions
Physical growth	Memory	Self-regulation
Health	Perception	Relationships with peers

The **cognitive domain** involves patterns of change in children's intellectual abilities, including reasoning, learning, attention, memory, and language skills. The **psychosocial domain** relates to patterns of change in children's personalities, as well as their social and emotional skills, including relationships with others and their ability to regulate their own emotions.

Table 1.1 lists selected elements from each domain. Of course, simply listing these elements tells us little about development. We must consider how the various elements interact. For example, genetic damage (in the physical domain) may negatively affect various ways of reasoning (in the cognitive domain), and immature reasoning may lead to poor relationships with peers (in the psychosocial domain) (Chang et al., 2010; Travers & Travers, 2008). The interactions among these domains, though generally complex and multidirectional, illustrate that aspects of children's development seldom occur in isolation but instead are part of a developmental system (Lerner, Easterbrooks, & Mistry, 2013). As you will see, we pay a great deal of attention to such system connections throughout this book.

## Developmental Epochs: Is Age the Answer?

We can also use a framework based on age to organize information about development. The childhood and adolescent years are typically divided into the age periods, often called epochs, listed in Table 1.2: the prenatal period, infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. These periods make up the organizational frame of this book.

Age is useful as a general standard to assess a child's developmental status; but age by itself says little about the specific *causes* of a child's behavior (Rutter, 2006). As you continue to read this book, remember these important points:

- *Age by itself tells us about expected biological maturation*, but actual maturation varies from one individual to the next. For example, two children of the same age may differ widely in their skills.
- *Different aspects of development proceed at different rates*. For example, intellectual and physical development may follow quite divergent developmental paths, and a child may be more advanced in one area than in another.
- *Age alone reveals little about the underlying mechanisms of development*. For example, knowing a child is 9 years old and a skilled reader does not tell us how that child developed that skill.






## Issues in Development

As developmental psychologists observe children's development, they speculate about the forces that produce it and conduct experiments in search of explanations. In this process, they are guided by certain questions. Two of these questions—or issues—have remained important over the history of developmental psychology:

1. What is the relationship between nature and nurture?
2. Does development proceed in a continuous or discontinuous manner?

There are good reasons why these issues have guided, puzzled, and frustrated psychologists as long as they have.

**Table 1.2** Developmental Epochs

Period	Characteristics
Prenatal	<p data-bbox="513 205 756 415">During the prenatal period—the nine months from conception until birth—the developing organism grows from a single cell to a fetus ready to be born.</p>  <p data-bbox="1032 237 1079 401"><i>Nestle/Petit Format/ Science Source</i></p>
Infancy and toddlerhood (0–2 years)	<p data-bbox="513 443 792 684">From birth to about 2 years is the period of most rapid growth. Remarkable physical and cognitive changes occur—for example, walking and talking—and the nature of a child’s personality becomes apparent.</p>  <p data-bbox="1032 527 1079 747"><i>Hilary Helton/Photolibrary/ Getty Images</i></p>
Early childhood (2–6 years)	<p data-bbox="513 779 735 1146">During the years from 2 to about 6, children’s bodies continue to change, language develops at a staggering rate, children’s thinking edges into the symbolic world, and their personalities begin to shape the nature of their developing relationships.</p>  <p data-bbox="1032 905 1079 1150"><i>JGI/Jamie Grill/Blend Images/ Getty Images, Inc.</i></p>
Middle childhood (6–12 years)	<p data-bbox="513 1188 1079 1482">The years from 6 to 12 comprise a period of exciting change. Children’s talents in all phases of development begin to flourish. Their bodies become more coordinated, they become more involved in the symbolic world especially after they begin school, and their relationships expand briskly as their environment continues to broaden.</p>  <p data-bbox="1032 1188 1079 1346"><i>Photo.Aho/Sigrid Olsson/Getty Images</i></p>
Adolescence (12–18 or 19 years)	<p data-bbox="513 1503 781 1883">The years from 12 to 18 or 19 are a period of rapid growth, when children begin to leave the comfortable surroundings of childhood and prepare to enter the world of adults. Bodies change; sexual maturity beckons; and society’s expectations for children mount as they prepare mentally, physically, and emotionally for adulthood.</p>  <p data-bbox="1057 1503 1079 1843"><i>Lisa Peikau/First Light/Getty Images, Inc.</i></p>



**Nature** The biological factors, including genes, that contribute to development.

**Nurture** The environmental factors and experiences that contribute to development.

**Continuity** The idea that development is a slow and steady process.

**Discontinuity** The view that development is characterized by abrupt changes in behavior; often associated with stage theories of development.

**Stage theories** Theories proposing that development proceeds in a discontinuous manner; each stage is qualitatively different from the ones that precede and follow it.

**NATURE AND NURTURE.** In learning about child development, you will see that a complex relationship exists between **nature**, which includes biological factors, such as the genes we inherit from our parents, and **nurture**, which includes environmental factors and experience. For a long time, there were arguments about whether nature or nurture is more important in children's development. We can trace the roots of the nature-nurture debate in Western philosophy and in more modern science (Dobbs, 2007; Meaney, 2010; Price, 2009; Sameroff, 2010). The prevailing view has changed from period to period. During the middle of the 20th century, for example, behaviorists strongly argued that environment is dominant. The prominent behaviorist B. F. Skinner (1953, 1983) believed that it is the *consequences of behavior* that shape learning and development. (You will read more about the behaviorists later in this chapter.)

Today, most psychologists reject any separation of nature and nurture to explain development. They prefer to focus on the interaction between these two critical forces (Diamond, 2009; Lenroot & Giedd, 2011; Lerner, 2010). Nevertheless, some psychologists still give relatively more emphasis to either nature or nurture. For example, Elizabeth Spelke (de Hevia & Spelke, 2010; Spelke, Gilmore, & McCarthy, 2011; Spelke & Kinzler, 2007) has argued that babies are born with a certain amount of innate knowledge, called *core knowledge*, a view that emphasizes the role of nature. In contrast, Betty Hart and Todd Risley (1995) believe that young children's vocabulary growth relates to the ways in which parents interact with them, a view that focuses more on the role of nurture.

## what if...?



Your cousin and your uncle are watching your sister, Elena, practice playing basketball. Your uncle says, "See how great Elena's aim is? That shows she has inherited my genes for good eye-hand coordination, which will make her a successful basketball player!" Your cousin points out that Elena spends hours every weekend practicing basketball and watching others play it and that is why she is so good at it. You listen to their conversation and claim, "You're both right." What might you say to them to explain how they both could be right?

**CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY.** The issue of continuity versus discontinuity concerns *how* developmental changes occur. **Continuity** in development means that developmental change occurs smoothly, gradually, and predictably over time. A basic question about continuity is: Are you the same person now as you were in infancy or early childhood? Those who hold that development is continuous would say that you are. Maybe you were a shy toddler and you are still shy today. In contrast, **discontinuity** means that development is marked by periods of relative quiet and periods of rapid change. The idea that development is discontinuous is often associated with **stage theories**, such as that of Piaget, which we discuss later in this chapter. Stage theories are based on the idea that development proceeds through a series of distinct stages over time, with each stage qualitatively different from the last.

**CONTINUITY VERSUS DISCONTINUITY** An illustration of the difference between continuity and discontinuity can be seen in Figure 1.1. An often-used example of continuous development is the growth of an evergreen tree, which offers few surprises or major transformations. It begins as a small shoot and gradually adds branches. Although it becomes taller and more branches develop, its overall configuration does not dramatically change. The mature tree very closely resembles the immature one. In contrast, consider the change in configuration that occurs when a tadpole turns into a frog. The adult frog bears little resemblance to the tadpole. The transformation from tadpole to frog is an example of discontinuous development.

Everyday stories



**Continuous Development**—A sapling grows bigger and adds branches.



**Discontinuous Development**—An adult frog seems like an entirely different animal from a tadpole.

**FIGURE 1.1 An Example of Continuity and Discontinuity** Continuity in development means that change occurs smoothly, gradually, and predictably over time, as when a sapling grows to a mature tree. In contrast, discontinuity means that development is marked by periods of relative quiet and periods of rapid change, as when a tadpole turns into a frog.

It is not always easy to distinguish continuity and discontinuity in children's development, however. What may appear to be discontinuous—such as an infant's apparently sudden ability to roll over—actually occurs because of a series of small gains in motor skill acquisition (Dacey, Travers, & Fiore, 2009; Lerner, 2002). Nevertheless, the theories of development that we discuss later in this chapter differ somewhat in the extent to which they focus on development as a continuous or discontinuous process.

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✓ **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Explain the differences between development and change.
  2. Describe several reasons why knowing a child's age is not sufficient to understand that child's development.
  3. What is the nature-nurture debate?
  4. Explain the difference between continuity and discontinuity in development.
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## A Child's Journey in the 21st Century

**[ KEY QUESTION ] 2.** How has modern society affected child development and its study?

The journey that children commence in the 21st century is a complicated one. Changes in family structure, society, and technology affect development in many ways (Bass, & Warehime, 2011; Thompson, 2012; Wooldridge & Shapka, 2012). The Research Insights feature gives an example of one way children have changed over the years. At the same time, new ideas, experimental methods, and knowledge from the neurosciences have altered the way developmental psychologists study and describe development. To understand how children develop in the midst of change, we must pay particular attention to the contexts in which children live and learn. We will do so throughout this book. At this point, we look briefly at three important contexts of development in the 21st century: home, culture, and technology.