Developmental risk refers to conditions, characteristics, experiences, or situations with potentially deleterious effects that lead to outcomes later in life that do not meet societal expectations. While risk is typically framed as the statistical probability of a problematic outcome in relation to the general population, the converse notion of well-being is considered in relation to the level of functioning at a given developmental stage. The contributors to this volume provide insight into developmental well-being by examining cultural and contextual perspectives and influences on development and developmental outcomes associated with various types of risk, such as those related to oppression, academic failure, problematic family and life experiences, and psychiatric conditions. Although certain outcomes may seem inevitable in cases involving harmful environments, diseases, and disorders, they are virtually all influenced by complex transactions among individuals, their families, communities, and societies.

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(continued after the index)
Cultural and Contextual Perspectives on Developmental Risk and Well-Being

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In 1970, Jean Piaget participated in a workshop that instigated vigorous discussion in higher education circles about the importance of traversing the boundaries across the disciplines. The workshop, entitled “L’interdisciplinarité – Problèmes d’enseignement et de recherche dans les universités,” was held in Nice, France, in September, and the proceedings were published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1972 as a monograph entitled *Interdisciplinarity: Problems of Teaching and Research in Universities*. This workshop and the book that resulted from it set the stage for ongoing debates about how best to view work going on at the intersection of disciplinary boundaries. Piaget’s remarks made clear that new conceptual frameworks were needed, frameworks that underscored the importance of augmenting disciplinary knowledge in order to address enduring challenges of our times. Whether to do so from multi-, trans-, or interdisciplinary bases and what precisely each of these constructs adds to disciplinary discussions has been hotly debated for the ensuing four decades. What Piaget was wrestling with in 1970 and many others have been pursuing since then are two enduring issues: the complexity of knowledge and the importance of viewing knowledge construction as a process embedded in real time. Piaget understood early on what has become more obvious now, namely the importance of going beyond disciplinary limitations both theoretically and methodologically. This insight has shaped modern thinking on knowledge and development in significant ways.

Around the same time Piaget spoke at the OECD workshop, a new society was formed. In 1970, the Jean Piaget Society (JPS) was founded and has since provided an internationally recognized forum for inquiry and advances about significant problems in the developmental sciences. The Society has had a long-standing commitment to developmental perspectives...
and has been deeply concerned with theories and conceptualizations of development and the ways developmental perspectives connect to and influence research. Since renamed The Jean Piaget Society for Knowledge and Development, the Society has organized and sponsored a book series, an annual meeting of plenary addresses and scholarly presentations, a scholarly journal (*Cognitive Development*), and a website (http://www.piaget.org). Across venues, participating scholars come from a range of disciplines, including departments of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, biology, philosophy, and education.

The Society has had a long-standing dedication to the publication of a book series that addresses core problems in the developmental sciences. For more than 30 years, Lawrence Erlbaum Press (currently Psychology Press/Taylor and Francis) published the series. Each of the volumes in the Jean Piaget Symposium Series engages well-recognized scholars on a set of themes that bring together divergent disciplinary perspectives. The series, which has included nearly 40 published volumes, has dealt with topics such as human understanding, developmental psychopathology, concept formation, and relations between learning and development.

In a time when there appears to be a proliferation of edited volumes, one can ask what makes this series thrive. The high regard for these volumes has been due to the careful way interdisciplinary thinking has shed light on enduring issues with which scholars interested in human development are grappling. To a large measure, the rigorous system of cultivation and review plays a significant role in arriving at cutting-edge thinking that goes beyond juxtaposition of new ideas. Careful attention is given to taking a theme at the center of developmental science (e.g., epigenesis of mind; culture, thought, and development; social development and social justice; developmental social cognitive neuroscience) and weaving scholarship from neighboring disciplines into discussions in ways that hold the potential to significantly shape ongoing scientific discourse.

Each of the JPS series volumes emanates from the Society’s themed annual meeting that includes plenary addresses and invited symposia, a meeting structure that itself is the outcome of a long and rigorous academic review process. Typically, several revisions are made in the proposal before it obtains approval from the full board of directors. The annual meeting organizers also serve as editors of the volume. To supplement chapters by the five or six plenary speakers, the volume editors typically invite other contributors to the volume. The editors also inform contributors about the requirements with regard to the volume’s theme and scope. Finally, the
editors engage in a thorough evaluation of each contribution, providing extensive feedback and soliciting revisions until it is of the required quality. This process ensures that extraordinary scholars will contribute to the volumes. In summary, we believe the book series has provided a distinctive intellectual contribution to the study of knowledge and development by focusing on developmental inquiry from an interdisciplinary perspective. Further information about the series can be found at http://www.piaget.org/Series/series.html.

This volume is the third in our new book series – Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Knowledge and Development: The Jean Piaget Symposium Series with Cambridge University Press. This volume continues to exemplify the strong interdisciplinary approach that has been central to all of our prior volumes. Edited by Jacob A. Burack and Louis A. Schmidt, Cultural and Contextual Perspectives on Developmental Risk and Well-Being continues the JPS series' tradition of providing a recognized forum for advancing inquiry about both enduring and emergent problems in the developmental sciences. The focus on both adaptive development and a holistic perspective on development as part of the study of development at risk provides an extremely important lens on human development. The authors in this volume also raise important questions by adopting a nuanced view of culture and context as they consider normative development. The volume not only stretches our thinking about what typical development and psychopathology look like when considered in tandem, but also provides insights into how the integration of theory and research about these important themes can translate into usable knowledge. As such, this newest volume continues to represent the goals of the series in important ways by paving the way for further interdisciplinary scholarship at the frontiers of new knowledge about human development.

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