Child and Adolescent Development

Second Edition

Only when we fully appreciate the origins and foundations of child and adolescent behaviors will we succeed in uncovering why they do what they do. By emphasizing evolutionary viewpoints of human psychological development, this textbook explains the fundamental underpinnings of young minds and how they grow. New chapters on the biological basis and cultural context of development introduce students to dynamic new debates in the field. The integrative, topical approach incorporates the perspectives that guide today's practitioners and gives students a holistic and up-to-date understanding of development. Box features highlight key debates, Section Reviews reinforce essential points, and "Ask Yourself" questions and end-of-chapter exercises encourage engagement and extend learning, supporting and enhancing student understanding. Revised and updated throughout, this comprehensive, topical textbook uniquely integrates the central themes of modern developmental theory – developmental contextualism, sociocultural perspective, and evolutionary theory – in a strong, theoretical introduction to child and adolescent development.

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Child and Adolescent Development

An Integrated Approach

Second Edition

David F. Bjorklund
Florida Atlantic University

Carlos Hernández Blasi
Unversitat Jaume I

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Preface

In 1975 Hetherington and Parke published a bold new topical approach to the study of child development. This was an excellent beginning. The text was cutting edge, emphasized process over description, and was heralded as a crowning achievement of the then-rising field of experimental child psychology. While paying homage to this tradition, we soon came to the conclusion that this older approach often makes it difficult for students to integrate many of the new approaches and findings that have occurred in the field in the last 50 years. Times change, and so must textbooks.

In recent years, developmental scientists have made great strides in a number of areas, including an understanding of infant development; increased attention to experimental research in socioemotional development; advances in biomedical science, particularly neuroscience, genetics, and evolution; and the recognition of the important role of social context and culture in shaping development. Our field has been greatly enriched by these advances, and over the last half century child and adolescent development textbooks have faithfully presented the basic facts of development, along with the traditional theories about how development progresses – Freud and Erikson's theories of psychosexual development, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and Bandura's theory of social development – discussing new research findings and theories alongside the more traditional ones. But when presenting new research and theories to students, textbook writers have often presented as fairly as possible multiple perspectives of development as contrasting points of view. This tendency often results in an overly eclectic and atheoretical approach, telling students, essentially, "Here's the evidence, you choose which approach you think makes the most sense." The result is a book that provides students with all the facts and up-to-date accounts of development, but often leaves them without a coherent picture of what development is and how contemporary scientists actually view infants, children, adolescents, and the process of human development.

The field of developmental psychology has changed drastically over the past five decades, and the older piecemeal approach does not work to explain more modern viewpoints of the discipline. As a result, we have taken a different tack. We have organized this book using what we see as three overarching perspectives that guide today's practitioners of developmental psychology, and we use them not as contrasting and sometimes contradictory ways of looking at development, but rather as viewpoints that must be integrated in order to truly understand infants, children, and adolescents and how they develop. These three perspectives are *developmental contextualism*, a *sociocultural perspective*, and *evolutionary theory*. We also include findings from the expanding field of developmental neuroscience and integrate them with our other perspectives when possible.

A Closer Look at Developmental Contextualism

The first modern perspective that has become axiomatic in most contemporary journals, developmental contextualism, emphasizes that development should be viewed as the continuous and bidirectional interaction between an active organism and a changing environment, at all levels of organization from the molecular through the cultural. For example, at the molecular level you might ask, "What causes genes to be turned on and off?" or "What are the effects of hormones on physical and psychological development?" At the cultural level you might ask, "How do societal traditions influence the development of self-esteem?" or "How might culture interact with infant temperaments to produce adaptive or maladaptive behavior?" Questions at a more intermediate level might include, "How do children's characteristics affect their mothers' reactions to them?" and "How does mothers' behavior, in turn, affect children's emotional and intellectual development?" Development always occurs in a *context*, of which the child is a contributing part. From this viewpoint, one cannot ask "how much" of any trait – intelligence or personality, for example – is due to genetics and how much is due to environment. Rather, one must ask how biological and environmental factors interact over time to produce developmental outcomes.

A Closer Look at the Sociocultural Perspective

The second complementary modern perspective, the sociocultural perspective, recognizes the centrality of the social environment for human development. We are a social species, and human development can be properly understood only when the influences of social relations and the broader social/cultural environment are considered. How do parent–child relationships vary in different cultures, and how do these differences affect children's social,

emotional, and psychological development? How does being raised in a schooled versus nonschooled society influence how parents interact with children and the cognitive abilities that children acquire? How might a culture's names for its numbers affect how children learn arithmetic? Culture counts, and this in no way contradicts the recent discoveries about and emphasis on the biological bases of development. Biological development also occurs within a social context, which can influence the course of a child's life (how does a culture contribute and respond to pubertal changes?). Even if one were to eliminate the influence of "culture" on development by raising a child in total social isolation, it would not reveal a child's "true" nature. Development always occurs within a social context, culturally shaped and historically conditioned, although the specific details of a child's social environment can vary widely.

A Closer Look at Evolutionary Theory

The third complementary perspective, evolutionary theory, helps us to better understand "why" children and adolescents behave as they do, which we believe will help us to better understand the "hows" and the "whats" of development, as well as help us apply knowledge of child and adolescent development to everyday problems. Theodosius Dobzhansky famously said, "Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution." We make the same argument for psychology, particularly for the understanding of infants, children, and adolescents: Nothing in development makes sense except in the light of evolution.

The Benefits of Integrating These Perspectives

Together, these perspectives are more than the sum of their parts. That is, the three perspectives serve as complementary agents in modern developmental psychology and represent a dynamism and specificity that goes well beyond the old "description versus process" debates of earlier decades. These three approaches also represent three different levels of analysis.

Developmental contextual models examine the development of psychological processes over an individual's lifetime, beginning prenatally; sociocultural models also look at the immediate causes of behavior, but additionally take into account the impact of humans' 10,000-year cultural history on development; and evolutionary theory takes a truly long view of human history, examining the role that natural selection has had on shaping human development, particularly since the emergence of *Homo* as a genus, about two million years ago. By integrating these three perspectives, this book provides a truly comprehensive and realistic look at child and adolescent development, covering all the "regular" contents (following a traditional topical approach) but doing so from the vantage point of the major overarching viewpoints in the field of modern developmental psychology.

Consider, for example, the phenomenon of puberty, discussed in all child and adolescent development textbooks, usually in the chapter on physical development. We do the same, examining the role of hormones in producing secondary sexual characteristics in boys and girls, for example. We also examine historical changes in the attainment of menarche (a girl's first menstrual period) and environmental factors in modern societies that contribute to accelerated pubertal development in some girls and even the development of female secondary sexual characteristics in some boys. In addition, we look at puberty's relation to falling in love and the development of romantic relationships in adolescence (Chapter 16, *The Development of Sexuality and Gender Identity*). We also examine research based on evolutionary theory that predicts that a girl's early home environment can affect the age at which she reaches puberty and her subsequent "mating" and parenting strategies (Chapter 5, *Physical Development*). This integration of different levels of causation (biological, historical, and experiential) allows us to provide an integrated and coherent view of development.

Our integrated and science-based approach also helps us to emphasize applied issues. Most students take a child and adolescent development course because of what it can teach them about how to deal with children, sometimes as professionals (a police officer, nurse, teacher, or therapist, for example), but usually as parents (or parents-to-be). We agree with the adage that the best science is science that helps people, and this is true not only of disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and biology, but also psychology, perhaps especially developmental psychology. To this end, we have included many "applied" topics throughout this book, tying them to theory and basic research whenever we can. We have also tried to make the writing accessible to students, to provide examples and stories that make sometimes-difficult concepts clear, and to relate theory and research to the "real world."

Some of the "real-world" topics we cover involve practical advice for parents and other people who deal with typically developing children on a regular basis – for example, what do you do when babies won't sleep, how can reading to young children enhance their language and school performance, or how much autonomy/freedom should parents afford their children? Other applied topics are concerned with *atypical development*. Rather than having a separate chapter on these issues, we incorporate discussion of these topics in the appropriate content chapters, integrating some topics into text and presenting others in boxes. For example, we discuss:

- pathologies and atypical development due to chromosomal abnormalities (such as Down syndrome) in Chapter 2, *The Biological Basis of Development*;
- autism as involving difficulties in "reading others' minds" in Chapter 8, *Understanding Self and Others*;

- ADHD as it relates to executive function in Chapter 9, *Problem Solving and Memory*;
- Williams syndrome and specific language disabilities in Chapter 10, *Language Development*;
- heightened levels of anxiety and depression among children and adolescents in Chapter 12, *Emotion, Temperament, and Personality Development*;
- the consequences of children's loss of autonomy in the twenty-first century in Chapter 14, *The Family and Other Contexts of Socialization*;
- bullying in Chapter 15, *Life with Peers*, among others.

Where possible, we illustrate how a particular pathology may provide insight into what underlies typical development and vice versa (for example, autism with respect to theory of mind and how deficits in theory of mind are at the bottom of some significant developmental problems in social relations).

Finally, a developmental contextual/sociocultural/evolutionary approach to child and adolescent development inherently requires attention to diversity. One important source of information about whether a feature of childhood is universal and a likely product of evolution by natural selection, for example, is whether (and how) it is expressed in different cultures. Unfortunately, most of the scientific research in the field has focused on describing child and adolescent development in a few mostly Western countries (recently labeled as WEIRD: Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, Democratic), limiting what we can say about the universal nature of development. However, there is an increasing awareness in the field of developmental psychology of the need to correct this unbalance, and we have tried to include research evidence from a wide variety of cultures, as well as theories that take cultural diversity into consideration. In this vein, for instance, we discuss different patterns across cultures (and subcultures) of physical development, including the attainment of puberty, in Chapter 5, *Physical Development*; the development of ethnic identity for minority youth in Chapter 8, *Understanding Self and Others*; and differences in attachment patterns and their consequences in different cultures in Chapter 13, *Parent–Child Relationships: Attachment and Parenting*, among others. In most cases, we integrate discussions of cultural diversity within the text, because cross-cultural comparisons will often be central to the main arguments of a chapter. In other cases, we discuss aspects of cultural diversity as boxed features.

Organization of the Book

This text includes the core topics covered in traditional child and adolescent development texts, and like many other textbooks, ours is organized into three parts: *The Foundations of Development*; *Cognitive Development: Becoming a Problem Solver*; and *Social Development: Becoming a Social Being*.

Part I begins with an introductory chapter that provides a brief overview of the history of research in child and adolescent development, a history of childhood, core issues in the field, and a review of the basic research methodologies of child development. The second chapter examines the biological basis of development, focusing on genetics and evolutionary theory. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the role of cultural context in development and is followed by two more "biology" chapters: Chapter 4, *Prenatal Development, Birth, and the Neonate*, and Chapter 5, *Physical Development*, including a section on brain development. We also discuss relevant aspects of brain/neurological development in specific content chapters where it is most relevant and where we have found it to make most sense to students.

Part II focuses on cognitive development. Intelligence, or cognition, is essentially used to solve problems. Those problems may involve understanding the social world – getting along with other people – or understanding the physical world – comprehending the nature of objects or using tools to gain resources. Humans' problem-solving abilities are perhaps unique in the animal world in that they involve *symbolic* and *explicit* (that is, self-aware) cognition. Much cognition, however, is based on *implicit* (that is, out of conscious awareness) processes; both implicit and explicit processes develop, and we address both types of cognition throughout the chapters that comprise Part II.

Chapter 6, *Infant Cognition*, looks at infant perception and cognition, while Chapter 7 explores the development of symbolic representation, examining Jean Piaget's historically important and highly influential account of cognitive development, as well as more contemporary accounts of representational development (for example, theory theories). This is followed by Chapter 8, *Understanding Self and Others*, which looks at the development of *social cognition* – how children come to think about their own thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviors as well as those of other people. In Chapter 9, *Problem Solving and Memory*, we explore how children become self-directed thinkers through examining the development of problem solving, executive function, strategies, reasoning, and memory. Chapter 10 follows, presenting students with an overview of and providing insights into language development. Part II concludes with Chapter 11, *Intelligence and School Achievement*, in which we examine applied cognitive development – the meaning and measurement of "intelligence," the many factors that influence a child's intelligence, and the development of two important academic skills for children in schooled cultures: reading and arithmetic. We also examine the effects of schooling on intelligence, how children in traditional (nonschooled) societies acquire cultural knowledge, and principles of evolutionary educational psychology.

In Part III we explore important aspects of social development. Humans are social animals, and one can only understand human behavior and development within the social contexts in which we live. From this perspective, a significant part of becoming fully human has to do with becoming a social being.

Accordingly, we start this section with Chapter 12 focusing on emotion, temperament, and personality development. Chapter 13, *Parent–Child Relationships: Attachment and Parenting*, addresses infant–parent attachment, factors that influence the quality of children's attachments to their parents, and the determinants of parenting older children. Chapter 14, *The Family and Other Contexts of Socialization*, follows to provide a thoughtful look at the role of family, particularly parents, in child development, and also to examine three other important socializing agents in children's lives: neighborhoods, school, and media, including television and digital media. Chapter 15, *Life with Peers*, examines the development of peer relations, including peer groups and moral development, and, within this framework, the increasing importance of peers in children's lives in the development of prosocial and antisocial behavior. Chapter 16, *The Development of Sexuality and Gender Identity*, looks at the development of sexuality, gender differences, and gender identity, including gender cognition in transgender children.

Pedagogical Features

In addition to its topical organization, integrated approach, and emphasis on diversity and applications, this text offers a set of pedagogical features to keep student readers engaged and help them learn the concepts covered. In particular, this text's pedagogy is designed to support students' reading without interrupting it and to guide their study while engendering genuine understanding.

High-Interest Boxes

As in most textbooks, we use boxes to highlight interesting and important topics that we hope will capture and maintain students' attention. However, we have found that when there are too many boxes in a chapter, students are less likely to read them ("If it was really important, the authors would have put it in the main text"), and so we have reduced the number of boxes to just two per chapter. If our own experiences and those of colleagues are on target, the result should be students being more likely to view the boxes as the authors do – as topics of special interest – and thus more likely to read them.

Running Glossary Terms

Located throughout the chapters, the "running" glossary terms provide concise definitions right where they're needed, a convenient complement to the complete listing of terms and definitions collected in the full glossary at the end of the book.

Section Reviews

We have replaced the lengthy end-of-chapter summaries with *Section Reviews* following each major section within a chapter. The second edition also features *Ask Yourself . . .* questions after each Section Review, to engage students in reflection and critical thinking. Omitted from the second edition are the *Key Terms and Concepts* and *Suggested Readings* sections at the end of each chapter. Like the long chapter-ending summaries, we have found that neither students nor faculty made much use of the chapter-ending lists of terms and the suggested readings. Omitting them serves to streamline the chapters a bit without sacrificing important information.

We have kept one end-of-chapter feature from the first edition: intellectual exercises that we call *Exercises: Going Further*. These exercises provide students with the opportunity to use the knowledge they have acquired in reading each chapter in applied and creative ways, as well as to reflect on some contemporary and controversial issues linked to modern developmental science, encouraging them to do more than memorize basic facts and theories.

We have devoted much time and effort in writing the second edition of this book, attempting to describe how children and adolescents grow, as well as to provide an appreciation for the process of development. In so doing, we hope we have at least approached our goal of presenting a coherent picture of child and adolescent development that reflects the current state of the field as reflected in the research literature, and one that is accessible to diverse undergraduate audiences. By organizing material around traditional content (for example, physical, cognitive, and social development) and in terms of integrative theory (namely contextual, sociocultural, and evolutionary perspectives), we have tried to present an up-to-date account of development, matching what developmental psychologists are currently talking about. As one reviewer of the first edition of this textbook described it, this is "a new generation of text for undergraduates that speaks to the increasingly complex models that frame our understanding of human development in an accessible way." That was our intention, and we hope readers find that we have succeeded, at least in part.

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