Exploring Child Development

Chapter 1
What is the field of child development?

- Multidisciplinary field devoted to the study of the changes that occur as children grow and mature.
- Professionals from different disciplines such as: psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, biology, medicine, economics and other related fields who work together to understand the important changes that take place as children grow through childhood.
What Develops in Children?

1. **Physical development**: growth in size, strength, and muscle coordination.

   EX: holding up head, crawling, walking, riding a bike, playing sports.
What Develops?

2. Cognitive development: changes in how children perceive the world, think, remember, and communicate.

Examples:
- speech / language
- reading/ writing
- problem solving
- classification - sorting and matching
- seriation - sequencing by size, color
- number concepts
What Develops?

3. Socioemotional Development: changes in how children interact with other people, and manage their emotions.

Examples:
- temporary friendships in toddlers
- true friendships in elementary school
- adolescents struggling with intimacy
- showing empathy for others
- social play
- problem solving
Themes in Child Development

1. Nature & nurture
2. Role of neuroscience
3. Diversity & Multiculturalism
4. Positive Development & Resilience
What Drives Development?

**Nature**: the biological forces such as genetics that govern development.

Examples
- color of eyes
- height/weight
- level of intelligence
- basic personality
What Drives Development?

- **Nurture**: the environmental conditions and supports that impact development.

Examples:
- love
- support
- economic factors
- culture
- medical care
Studies show...

- intelligence, behaviors, personality, emotionality are about 40%-60% inherited (nature)

for example:

1. identical twins have same IQ scores than non identical twins b/c they have the same genes (nature)
2. adopted children having same IQ score as biological parents (nature)
Studies show...

- IQ scores for twins are more similar when they have been raised together instead of being raised apart. *(nurture)*

Examples:

1. Henry comes from a family that has a history of depression. Does that mean that Henry is likely to have depression?

2. Anna’s parents are obese. Is Anna going to be obese also?
Neuroscience - study of the brain and nervous system

- PET and fMRI scans can show the most active parts of the brain as children read and speak.
- CT scans show 3D images of brain
Diversity and Multiculturalism

- Researchers are studying how diversity enriches children's lives.
- Research being done on children that come from:
  - Racial and ethnic minorities
  - Immigrant families
  - Bilingual families
  - Divorced/single parent families
  - Gay/lesbian families
  - Adoptive families
Positive development and resilience

- Most children experience positive growth and development

  **Positive psychology**- understanding when and how children develop in positive ways

- **Resilient children**- children who rise above adversity and develop in positive ways.
Theories of Child Development

- **Theory**: an organized set of ideas about how things work.
Importance of Theories

1. summarize the facts that are currently known
2. allow predictions of future behavior and events.
   Ex: theory on children and divorce.
3. **provide guidance to parents and professionals**
4. stimulate new research and discoveries
   *Hypotheses*: specific assumption drawn from theories; test hypotheses by collecting scientific observation.
5. act as filters for identifying relevant information, observations, and relationships.
Psychodynamic Theory

• Personality development & emotional problems
• People have internal drives that are **unconscious**: hidden from our awareness.
Psychoanalytic Theories

- Structure of personality and how the conscious and unconscious parts of the self influence behavior and development.
- Freud is known as the father of psychology.
- People have 3 drives: sexual drive, survival instincts, drive for destructiveness.
- Personality was the most important part of development.
Sigmund Freud
1856-1939

The mind consists of three basic parts

- the *id* - primitive sexual and aggressive instincts inherited through evolution, completely unconscious
- the *ego* - rational thought, the self
- the *superego* - ethics, morals, conscience

constant state of conflict between the three components
Example of how id, ego, superego work when arguing with someone

id = hitting or pushing that person

superego = not polite to hit someone

ego = angry words and walk away
Freud’s 5 Stages of Psychosexual Development

• During these stages that a person develops their ego and superego in order to tame the id.
Oral Stage
Ages 0-2

- infant seeks gratification by sucking, biting, babbling
- pleasure comes from the mouth
Anal Stage
Ages 2-3

- child’s pleasure and conflict centers are in the anal area
- Bowel movements are the source of pleasure
Delayed gratification

• During anal & oral stage parents help children control oral & anal gratification
• Potty training balances anal gratification with society’s demands to be neat and clean
• Ex: waiting for food until you get home.
Erogenous Zones - pleasure sensitive zones (mouth and anus)

- receiving too much or too little stimulation can cause anxiety & fixation of child’s psychological energy to become stuck in that area.

  Ex: baby being weaned off the breast in a harsh manner. The baby become anxious and focus on oral issues. Drinking too much or getting care from others.
Phallic
Ages 3-7

• unconscious sexual desires for opposite sex parent
  Oedipal complex
• boy wants to kill his father and marry his mother.
  Electra complex
• girl realizes that she lacks a penis and becomes attached to her father.
• imagines that she will becomes pregnant by her father then becoming hostile towards mother.
• “penis envy” leads to hostility towards mother b/c she realized she doesn’t have a penis and thinks the mom cut it off.
• **Identification**: child acquires *superego* of same sex parent
• *morals, ideals, values* become the conscious of the child
Latency
Ages 7-11

• morality makes child feel guilty of having feeling for opposite sex parent
• children’s sexual feelings are repressed
• Children play w/same sex peers
• engage in pursuits not sexually threatening
Genital
Ages 11 Adult

• Puberty awakens sexual urges
Erik Erikson
1902-1994

**Psychosocial** theory - a revision of Freud’s theory which focused more on personality development through a series of conflicts - resulting in increased good judgment and good behavior

- 8 stages that represent 8 major crises
- Positive and/or negative experiences in each stage carries on to the next stage.
Basic Trust vs. Mistrust
Ages 0-1

(Positive)
- responsive caregiving= develops trust with others
- develops self-confidence

(Negative)
- inconsistent care or neglect= mistrust in caregivers and other people
Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
Ages 2-3

(Positive)
- gains independence by walking, talking, toilet training
- Feels proud to be independent
- “Me do it.”

(Negative)
- independence is stifled or punished
- develops sense of shame and doubt about abilities.
Initiative vs. Guilt
Ages 3-5

(Positive)
• Initiates activities
• Sets own goals
• Interacts w/ peers
• Designs projects

(Negative)
• Initiative is stifled child can learn guilt
• Own desires conflict with his/her parents
Industry vs. Inferiority
Ages 6-12

(Positive)
• Comparison w/peers
• Confidence & sense of hard work emerge when comparisons are favorable

(Negative)
• Unfavorable comparisons = sense of inferiority
• Feel that work & abilities do not measure up
Identity vs. Role Confusion
Adolescence

(Positive)
• central identity emerges through sexual, emotional, educational, ethnic/cultural, and vocational exploration

(Negative)
• No core identity = confused sense of self
Behavioral & Social Learning Theories

- a response to unobservable and unmeasurable concepts proposed by psychoanalytic theories
- focus is on observable conditions and behaviors
- Child is born w/a “tabula rasa”
- Best known theorists
  1. John Watson
  2. Edward Thorndike
  3. BF Skinner
  4. Albert Bandura
Ivan Pavlov
Classical Conditioning 1890s

- UCS - unconditioned stimulus (smell of food)
- UCR - unconditioned response (salivation)
- NS - neutral stimulus (bell ringing)
Ivan Pavlov

UCS ---- UCR

- UCS + NS          UCR

CS ------------ CR
John Watson

• Taught an 11 month old boy to fear a white rat.
• He would make aloud noise every time Albert reached for the rat.
• Parents should use power of classical conditioning to set children on positive paths!
BF Skinner (1904-1990)
Operant Conditioning

Learning comes through reinforcement and punishment

- **Reinforcement** - any element in the environment that **increases** the likelihood that a behavior will be repeated
- **Punishment** - any element in the environment that **decreases** the likelihood that a behavior will be repeated

Ex: girl cleans room
Father says, “What a clean room!”

- Child more likely to clean room
Albert Bandura
Social Learning

1925-

• Process where children learn by observing and imitating the behaviors of other people.

Ex: Annie’s mom smiles at a visitor so does Annie
Ex: Sam sees a superhero fighting a villain and goes to school and solves his problem by picking a fight.

Social Cognition Theory: how children think about the behaviors and actions that they observe.

• Reinforcements and punishments provide info. that can help the child decide which behavior to imitate.

Ex: Teacher says, “Thank you for putting the blocks away.” to Brandon. Nathan starts putting blocks away as well.
Cognitive Developmental Theories

• How children adjust their own understanding as they explore and learn about the world.
• a response to simplistic views of behaviorism
• focus is on how children think and how their thinking impacts their actions
• Best Known Theorists
  1. Jean Piaget
  2. Lev Vygotsky
Jean Piaget (1896-1980)

Cognitive Developmentalism
- Children actively adjust their understanding about the world as they learn about it.

A. **mental schemes**: children’s cognitive structures
B. **assimilation**: process of bringing new objects or information into a scheme that already exists in the mind.
C. **accommodation**: process of adjusting a scheme so it better fits the new experience.
example

- Henry has the **scheme** of how to grasp a small ball. He holds it in one hand.
- We give him a bigger ball to hold on to so he has to **assimilate the larger ball into his grasping scheme.** Henry drops the ball.
- Henry need to **accommodate** in order to figure out how to hold the bigger ball. With trail and error figures out to use both hands.
- Henry understands to grasp small objects with one hand and large objects with both hands.
Piaget cont.

- As children continue to gain new experiences they adapt their cognitive schemes through a continual cycle of *assimilation* and *accommodation*.
- 4 major stages from infancy to adulthood.
Lev Vygotsky
(1896-1934)

children’s thinking is influenced by language and culture

children take in speech spoken around them - it becomes private speech (often spoken out loud) - and eventually becomes inner speech, or thought.
Biological Theories

Focus on biological explanations for behavior
Konrad Lorenz
1903-1989

- **Ethology**: examines the importance of certain behaviors for survival.
- Imprinting

Ex: baby goslings attaching themselves (imprinted) to the first guardian figure they observe after hatching from eggs
• Some researchers speculate that the first hours of birth are critical in developing a bond
• Others believe that the bond between mother and child develops over time.
Systems Theories

Focus on network of systems that operate in and around the child - family, school, neighborhood, government, culture, time

1. *Ecological* systems theory
2. *Dynamic* systems theory
Uri Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory
1917-2005

Ecological Systems
• systems and interrelationships that surround a child affect development
• Children live and grow with in a context of family, society, and culture
• In order to understand the development of children, we need to understand how these systems operate in the child's life

Systems:
  microsystem
  mesosystem
  exosystem
  Macrosystem
  chronosystem
Ecosystems
Bronfenbrenner

**Microsystem**: direct relationship and interactions children have with people in their immediate environment

- Parents, siblings, peers, teachers

How will a warm and nurturing parent affect a child's development compared to a distant and cold parent?

What type of response can a child with a difficult temperament elicit from their parents?
Bronfenbrenner

**Mesosystem**: connections among home, neighborhood, school, day care and other elements in a larger social environment

- What type of effect will parental involvement in school have on the child's development and performance in school?
- Henry's classroom has 40 children and 1 teacher. How will this affect Henry's education?
Bronfenbrenner

**Exosystem**: larger social networks such as extended family, work, government, friendship networks

- Henry gets sick at school. Does his mom have vacation days to stay home from work and take care of Henry? How can this affect his social-emotional development?
- Anna is born in Sweden. Her parents can both take 480 days of maternity/paternity leave and still get paid 80% of their pay. How will this benefit the family?
Bronfenbrenner

**Macrosystem:** widest level that represents values, customs, laws, and resources of the culture at large

- **individualistic cultures** (U.S.) value independence and competition with peers
- **collectivist cultures** (Japanese & Chinese) value community and cooperation
- What are some of the positive & negative effects of both types of cultures on the development of children?
Bronfenbrenner

**Chronosystem**: how the effects of the systems and their inter-relationships among them change over time.

- Henry has twin baby sisters. Mom has to spend more time w/ the babies. How will this change affect Henry's social-emotional development?

- Annie's family moves to another city b/c they loose their home. She has to go to a after school program b/c her grandparents are no longer close to take care of her. How will this experience affect Annie's development?
Dynamic Systems Theory

- complex interaction of many variables, both internal and external, influences development

- patterns of behavior emerge and change over time
Divorce

• Boy becomes more aggressive after parent’s divorce. Why?
• Result has to do with complex interactions both in and around the child.
Theories of Development

- All offer important insights into development
- No single theory explains all development
- New theories continue to emerge through research
Research in Child Development

Scientific Method

- data gathered through observations
- hypotheses formed and tested
- conclusions drawn
Applications of Research

Parenting
Social policy
Education
Counseling
Descriptive Methods

attempt to describe behavior - under what conditions it occurs

Example - do children prefer blocks or books?

• Naturalistic observation
• Structured observation
• Interviews
• Questionnaires
• Case Studies

Often a good starting point for understanding development
Correlational Methods

- attempt to determine the strength of a relationship between two or more conditions or behaviors
- Ex: do children whose parents read to them prefer blocks or books?
- correlations are relationships/connection not causes.
Experimental Methods

- Researchers begin by randomly assigning subjects to either

  A. Experimental group: group that receives the treatment
  B. Control group: group that does not receive treatment

- Groups are as much alike in every way as possible except for the treatment.
- Not always ethical or practical to conduct experimental research
Ethics in Research with Children

- potential benefits must outweigh any known risks
- no physical or psychological harm to child
- obtain fully informed consent from both parents and minor children
- correct any negative consequence that occurs
- inform parents about any information collected that may affect child’s well being
- keep all information confidential
- consider implications (importance) of the research