

Chapter 1

- The study of child development begins with observing children
- Central question: What traits are relatively stable over the course of child development (and into adulthood)?
- Developmentalists are also interested in what traits tend to go together
 - Ex- children who are above average in intelligence are usually outgoing and well liked
- Central issue: the impact of different parenting styles
- Ideas for why people turn out the way they do:
 - Genes
 - Home life
 - Experiences outside the family
 - Culture
- Science is based on empirical evidence (information obtained through systematic observations and experiments)
- Study of child development uses scientific methods to describe and explain the ways in which people grow and change over time
 - Interdisciplinary enterprise: draws from education, sociology, anthropology, biology, medicine, etc as well as psychology
- Developmental scientists: experts who study development
- What Lies Ahead?
 - 5 age periods:
 - Prenatal period: conception to birth
 - Infancy: birth to around 2 years; Latin for “unable to speak”
 - Early childhood: 2 to around 6 years; AKA “preschool years”
 - Middle childhood: 6 to around 11 years
 - Puberty marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence
 - Adolescence: 11 to around 20
 - Age periods divided into domains:
 - Physical development: changes in size, shape, outward appearance, and inner physical functioning; physical capabilities; structure and function of the brain
 - Cognitive development: changes in intellectual abilities such as thinking, memory, reasoning, language, problem solving, and decision making
 - Socioemotional development: changes in feelings and motivation, temperament and personality, and relationships with others
- **Ultimately, developmentalists concerned with the “whole person”
- Why Study Development?
 - Developmental science covers the entire spectrum of human thinking, feeling, and behavior
 - 4 goals of developmental research:
 - To describe what people are like at different ages and how they change as a result of age
 - To explain what causes developmental change and the explain the origins of individual differences
 - To predict or forecast what an individual will be like at a later point in development based on past and present characteristics

- To intervene, or to use knowledge to enhance the quality of children's lives by giving parents, teachers, public policy makers, and others who influence children advice
- o On the simplest level, development is growth and change over time, but development differs from growth and change in 3 main ways:
 - Development makes an individual better adapted to the environment (ex- language enables a child to become a more active participant in the world)
 - Development proceeds from the relatively simple and global to the more complex and specific (ex- 2 words "Billy school" to longer sentences "Billy goes to school")
 - Development is relatively enduring (ex- he child will not unlearn more complex language)
- o Development: relatively enduring growth and change that makes an individual better adapted to the environment, by enhancing the individual's ability to engage in, understand, and experience more complex behavior, thinking, and emotions
- o 4 basic questions about the nature of development:
 - Which aspects of development are universal and which vary from one individual or group to the next?
 - Which aspects of development are continuous and which are not?
 - Which aspects of development are more or less fixed and difficult to change, and which are relatively malleable and easy to change?
 - What makes development happen?
- o Shared principles about which almost all developmentalists agree:
 - Development results from the constant interplay of biology and the environment (The characteristics a child develops are the result of interaction between genetic and environmental influences over time)
 - Development occurs in a multilayered context
 - Development is a dynamic, reciprocal process
 - Development is cumulative
 - Developmental trajectory: the pathway that connects the past with the present and the future
 - Development occurs throughout the lifespan
- Theories of Development
 - o Scientific theory: a set of ideas and principles based on empirical findings that explain related natural phenomena
 - o Classical Theories
 - Psychoanalytic theory: focuses on the inner self and how emotions determine the way we interpret our experiences and therefore how we act
 - Sigmund Freud; founder of psychodynamic theory
 - Believed that we are not as rational as we think and that we often don't understand the reasons for our own behavior
 - Believed that infants are born with powerful sexual and aggressive urges
 - A child's basic emotional outlook is set by age 5 or 6
 - Theory of Psychosexual Development:
 - o Divided psychosexual development into stages names for the zone of the body a child finds most arousing at a given age

- Oral
 - Anal
 - Phallic
 - (Latency)
 - Genital
- o In each stage, the child must learn to gratify his desires in socially acceptable ways
- o The key to healthy development is the emergence of the ego (rational, adaptive part of the self) in middle childhood
 - Job is to mediate between persistent sexual and aggressive urges from the id and the demands of the superego (conscience) and the demands of reality
- o Childhood conflicts remain active in the unconscious (a reservoir of secret cravings, unspeakable memories, and suppressed rage)
- Erik Erikson; follower of Freud who studied psychoanalysis (the application of psychoanalytic theory to the treatment of psychological problems)
 - Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development
 - o Differs from Freud because Erikson held that development continues over the entire lifespan, from infancy to old age; didn't believe that personality is fixed in early childhood
 - o Important that individuals find a niche (a position or activity that fits their talents and inclinations) in society
 - o Emphasized that the transition from one stage to another depends on the society and culture in which the person lives
- Psychoanalytic theory's most important contribution to how we think about development today is the idea that childhood experiences can affect adult emotions, thoughts, and behavior, sometimes in ways of which we are not consciously aware
- Learning Theory stressed the role of external influences on behavior
 - Learning theorists argue that it isn't necessary to speculate about what is going on inside the child's head to explain development OR to consider the child's wider social and cultural environment
 - The way individuals behave is a consequence of their experiences in the immediate environment
 - All behavior is learned and the basic principles of learning are the same
 - Behaviorism: pioneered by Ivan Pavlov
 - o Classical conditioning: a process of associative learning by which a subject comes to respond in a desired manner to a previously natural stimulus that has been repeatedly presented along with an unconditioned stimulus that elicits the desired response (ex- "Little Albert's" fear of white fluffy objects; J.B. Watson)
 - o Operant conditioning: a process of learning in which the likelihood of a specific behavior is increased or decreased as a result of reward or punishment that follows; people are likely to repeat behavior that has positive consequences and unlikely to repeat behavior with negative consequences (ex- B.F. Skinner)