

Chapter 1: History, Theory, and Applied Directions

Behavior modification: procedures that combine conditioning and modeling to eliminate undesirable behaviors and increase desirable responses.

Behaviorism: an approach that regards directly observable events—stimuli and responses—as the appropriate focus of study and that views the development of behavior as taking place through classical and operant conditioning.

Child development: an area of study devoted to understanding constancy and change from conception through adolescence.

Chronosystem: in ecological systems theory, temporal changes in children's environments, either externally imposed or arising from within the child, that produce new conditions affecting development.

Cognitive-Developmental Theory: Piaget's theory of development, which views children as actively constructing knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world and regards cognitive development as taking place in stages.

Collectivist Societies: societies in which people define themselves as part of a group and stress group goals over individual goals.

Contexts: unique combinations of personal and environmental circumstances that can result in different paths of development.

Continuous Development: the view that development is a process of gradually adding more of the same types of skills that were there to begin with.

Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience: an area of investigation that brings together researchers from psychology, biology, neuroscience, and medicine to study the relationship between changes in the brain and the developing child's cognitive processing and behavior patterns.

Developmental Science: an interdisciplinary field devoted to the study of all changes humans experience throughout the lifespan.

Discontinuous Development: the view that development is a process in which new ways of understanding and responding to the world emerge at specific times.

Dynamic systems perspective: a view that regards the child's mind, body, and physical and social worlds as an integrated system that guides mastery of new skills. A change in part of the system disrupts the current organism-environment relationship, leading the child to reorganize his or her behavior so the components of the system work together again but in a more complex, efficient way.

Ecological Systems Theory: Bronfenbrenner's theory, which views the child as developing within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values, laws, customs, and resources.

Ethology: An approach concerned with adaptive, or survival, value of behavior and its evolutionary history.

Evolutionary developmental psychology: An approach that seeks to understand the adaptive value of species-wide cognitive, emotional, and social competencies as those competencies change with age.

Exosystem: in ecological systems theory, social settings that do not contain children but that affect children's experiences in immediate settings- for example, parents' workplace, health and welfare services in the community, and parents' social networks.

Individualistic societies: societies in which people think of themselves as separate entities and are largely concerned with their own personal needs.

Information processing: An approach that views the human mind as a symbol-manipulating system through which information flows and that regards cognitive development as a continuous process.

Macrosystem: in ecological systems theory, cultural values, laws, customs, and resources that influence experiences and interactions at inner levels of the environment.

Maturation: a genetically determined, naturally unfolding course of growth.

Mesosystem: In ecological systems theory, connections between children's immediate settings, or Microsystems.

microsystem

Nature-nurture controversy: disagreement among theorists over whether genetic or environmental factors are more important influences.

Normative approach: an approach in which measures of behavior are taken on large numbers of individuals, age-related averages are computed to represent typical development.

Plasticity: openness to change in response to influential experiences.

Psychoanalytic Perspective: an approach to personality development introduced by Freud, which assumes that children move through a series of stages in which they confront conflicts between biological drives social expectations. How these conflicts are resolved determines the person's ability to learn, to get along with others, and to cope with anxiety.

Psychosexual Theory: Freud's theory of development, which emphasizes that how parents manage their child's sexual and aggressive drives in the first few years is crucial for healthy development.

Psychosocial theory

Public Policy: laws and government programs designed to improve current conditions.

Resilience: the ability to adapt effectively in the face of threats to development.

Sensitive period: a time that is optimal for certain capacities to emerge and in which the individual is especially responsive to environmental influences.

Social Learning Theory: A theory that emphasizes the role of modeling , otherwise known as imitation or observational learning.

Social Policy: any planned set of actions by a group, institution, or governing body directed at attaining a social goal.

Sociocultural Theory: Vygotsky's theory, in which children acquire the ways of thinking and behaving that make up a community's culture through social interaction—in particular, cooperative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society.

Stage: a qualitative change in thinking, feeling, and behaving that characterizes a specific period of development.

Theory: an orderly, integrated set of statements that describes, explains and predicts behavior.