

- Child Development
 - Study of human constancy and change
 - Part of a larger discipline, developmental science
- The study of child development is:
 - Scientific: uses scientific methods to describe and explain the ways in which people grow and change over time; a lot of experience; What is going on at each age?
 - Applied: use our understanding when interacting
 - Interdisciplinary: it has grown through the combined efforts of people from many fields, including sociology, psychology, education, social work, etc.
- Three Major Domains of Development
 - **Physical** = brain and body; body size and proportion, appearance, functioning of body systems, health, perceptual and motor capacities, changes in structure and function of the brain
 - **Cognitive** = intellectual abilities, thought processes, perceptual abilities, language
 - **Emotional and Social/Psychosocial** = emotions, personality, temperament, feelings, interpersonal skills and relationships, emotional communication, self understanding (self concept and self esteem), knowledge about others, moral reasoning, behavior
- Periods of Development
 - *The prenatal period: from conception to birth.*
 - 9-month period with the most rapid change
 - a one-celled organism is transformed into a human baby capable of adjusting to life in the surrounding world.
 - *Infancy and toddlerhood: from birth to @ 2 years:*
 - Dramatic changes in the growth and intellectual support the emergence of a wide array of language
 - Also occurring during this time is the beginnings of language; and first intimate ties to others.
 - *Early childhood: from 2 to 6 years.*
 - **Physical Domain**
 - The body becomes longer and leaner, motor skills are refined,
 - **Cognitive Domain**
 - Children become more self-controlled and self-sufficient. Make-believe play blossoms, Thought and language expand
 - **Emotional/Psychosocial Domain**
 - a sense of morality becomes evident, and children establish ties with peers.
 - *Middle childhood: from 6 to 11 years.*
 - School age
 - **Physical domain**
 - Great improvement in movement, athletic ability
 - **Cognitive domain**
 - Literacy, math skills, logic, thinking
 - **Psychosocial domain**
 - Greater understanding of self, morality, friendship
 - *Adolescence: from 11 to 18 years*

- o *Emerging adulthood: from 18 to 25 years.*
- Four Basic Issues in Development
 - o One Course of Development or many possible courses?
 - Which aspects of development are universal?
 - o Continuous or discontinuous growth?
 - Ex- characteristics
 - o Fixed or malleable?
 - Can the behavior of the child be changed?
 - o The etiology of developmental change?
 - Where does the language come from?
- One course of Dev. or many?
 - o Development has both
 - Universal features
 - Ex- kids representation of a person looks like a tadpole
 - features unique to the individual
- Stage theorists
 - o Focus on the universal features of development
 - o assume that all children follow the same sequence of development
 - o ex- kids can't think logically or abstractly as a preschooler
- Contemporary theorists
 - o Focus on the complexity of development and the contributions of multiple domains on the growing individual
 - o Including heredity and biological makeup, the settings where one grows and broader contextual and cultural factors.
- Continuous or Discontinuous Development?
 - o **If development is understood as Continuous...**
 - Quantitative vs. qualitative growth
 - Predictable
 - o **Development involves an adding on of more of the same types of skills, a gradual process.**
 - It is continuous we can predict later development (e.g., personality, behavior) from earlier behavior...
 - If development is **discontinuous**, growth occurs in stages
 - new ways of understanding and responding to the world emerge at specific times
 - Fairly sudden change versus gradually.
 - There are qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, and behaving at different points of development
- Fixed or Malleable
 - o Questions addressed:
 - What characteristics of children are fixed and difficult to change and what are relatively malleable (like clay)?
 - Do early experiences establish lifelong patterns of behavior that can't be changed by later experiences?
 - Is change possible when supported by new experiences?
 - Are certain experiences salient (of great importance) at certain points in development?

- For example, sensitive periods (ducks)
 - In the nature versus nurture debate:
 - Nature lovers (those who stress the importance of heredity) are typically fixed. If one is high or low in a characteristic this will be true in later ages as well
 - Nurture lovers assert that personality, etc. is based on the experiences of the individual.
- Etiology of Developmental Change: Nature v Nurture
 - An age old controversy over where the underlying causes of developmental change and individual characteristics stem from. Are they genetic or environmental factors?
 - Nature lovers stress the importance of genetics.
 - inborn biological givens—
 - the hereditary information from parents
 - Nurture lovers focus on the primacy of the environment on the developing child. The complex forces of the physical and social world
- A Balanced Point of View
 - Most current theoretical perspectives
 - Recognize the role of both nature and nurture, but vary in their emphasis on each
 - Modern Developmentalists' Perspective
 - Balanced point of view
 - Children grow up in distinct contexts → influence their development
 - Unique combinations of genetic and environmental circumstances
 - Different paths of change and different capacities, skills, and emotions
 - Both continuous and discontinuous changes occur
 - Development has both universal features and features unique to the individual and contexts
 - Heredity and environment
 - Inseparable
 - Both affect the developing child