Developmental Psychology
Childhood

Chapter 8

Lifespan Development

- The study of lifelong, often age-related, processes of change
  - Physical, cognitive moral, emotional, and social development
  - Beginning at conception and continuing through the entire life span.

Research Designs

1. Cross-sectional
   - Individuals at different ages are compared at one point in time
   - Problems:
     - The groups may have had different experiences
     - Group differences may be due to variables unrelated to development
Research Designs

2. Longitudinal
   • A group of individuals is followed over time
   • Problems:
     – Must locate subjects repeatedly
     – Changes in subjects’ environment may occur
     – Behavior may change simply due to repeated testing
     – Time-consuming and expensive

Stages of Physical Development

- Prenatal: Conception to birth
- Neonatal: Birth to 4 weeks
- Infancy: One month to 2 years
- Childhood: 2 to puberty
  - Early Childhood: 2 to 6 years
  - Late Childhood: 7 to 11 years
- Adolescence 12 to 20 years

- Adulthood: 20 years until death
  - Early Adulthood: 20 to 40 years
  - Middle Adulthood: 41 to 60 years
  - Late Adulthood: 60 + years
Stages of Prenatal Development

**Prenatal**
- Period from conception until birth
- Development begins at conception
  - **Zygote**: fertilized egg
  - ~5 days after conception, the zygote implants in the uterine wall

**Embryonic**
- 2-8 weeks. From implantation until the 49th day after conception
  - Various organ systems begin to form, heart begins to beat.
  - Embryo development proceeds:
    - **Cephalocaudal trend**: Head develops first
    - **Proximodistal trend**: Center of body develops before extremities
**Prenatal Development**

**Fetal Stage**
From the 8th week until birth
- **Differentiation**: Formation of organs and other parts of the body from the cells of the zygote
- **Placenta** forms
  - Mass of tissue attached to the uterine wall that acts as a life-support system

**Neonatal**
- Birth - 4 weeks

---

**Harmful Environment Effects**

**Teratogens**
- Substances that can produce birth defects
- Especially harmful during embryonic period
- E.g., Alcohol
- Drinking during pregnancy may result in Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

---

**Harmful Effects**
- Environmental factors can affect prenatal development
- Embryo / fetus is especially sensitive to such effects during critical periods
- Times during which rapid maturation is occurring
Chromosomal Abnormalities

- XX: Female
- XY: Male
- Turner’s Syndrome
- Klinefelter’s Syndrome
- Super Male
- Super Female
- Down’s Syndrome

Birth Complication

Placenta Previa: Placental pulls away from the uterus first

Childhood: Physical Development

- Newborn Development
  - Growth
    - Rapid physical growth
    - Walking and beginning to talk by ~18 months
    - Infancy ends ~18 months when use of abstract language begins
Milestones in Physical Development

Newborn Development

Newborns’ Reflexes
- Babinski Reflex
- Fanning toes
- Rooting Reflex
- Turning head
- Sucking Reflex
- Grasping Reflex
- Moro Reflex
- Outstretching arms and crying

Infant Perception

Fantz’s (1961) Viewing Box
- Presents two stimuli simultaneously
  - See if infant looks at one longer
  - A longer gaze indicates infant can tell the difference between the two stimuli
Infant Perception

- Infants prefer curved lines

- Infants prefer complex patterns

Infant Perception

- Infants prefer human faces

Infant Perception

The Visual Cliff (Gibson & Walk, 1960)

By 9 months, infants will not cross over the "drop"
Evolution & Newborn Preparedness

- Newborns are biologically prepared to perceive and experience the world
- However, experience is necessary for optimal brain development
- Infants actively explore the world

Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget
- Swiss psychologist (1896 – 1980)
- Devised ingenious ways to test children’s cognitive development
- Focused on **HOW** people think, not **WHAT** people think
- Emphasized biology
  - Believed development follows the same path in all social environments

Piaget’s Central Concepts

Schema
- A mental structure
- Generalization a child makes
- Guides thoughts based on prior experiences
- Initially developed from motor behaviors
Piaget's Central Concepts

**Schema**
- Developed through three processes:
  - **Accommodation**
    - New experiences modify schemata (Change or Create)
    - Example: Infant learns to chew some objects and not to suck on other objects
  - **Adaptation**
    - Process of recognizing that specific actions have specific consequences

**Assimilation**
- New information is incorporated into existing schemata (Same Schema)
- Example: Sucking schema — all new objects put into mouth

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Believed order is invariant
Believed all children go through same stages
Four stages:
  - Sensorimotor stage
  - Preoperational stage
  - Concrete operational stage
  - Formal operational stage
Sensorimotor Stage

- Birth to about age 2
- Child begins to interact with environment
- Develops memory of past events
- Develops **object permanence**
  - Realization that objects continue to exist when hidden
  - Piaget believed developed by ~ 9 months
  - Recent research shows may develop as early as 4 months

Sensorimotor Stage

- During second half of this stage, children begin to use language to represent the world
- By the end of the stage, children are thinking, walking, talking people
- The “terrible twos” represent normal development

Preoperational Stage

- Ages 2 to 7 (preschool)
- Children begin to represent the world symbolically
- Can not think abstractly (logically)
- **Egocentrism** (self-centeredness) is prominent
- At the end of the stage, **decentration** begins
  - A change from a self-oriented view to recognizing the view of others
Concrete Operational Stage

Ages 6 or 7 to 11 or 12 (Childhood)
Children understand:
• Rules and reasons
• Difference between appearance & reality
• How to think ahead
Hallmark of this stage is an understanding of conservation
• Ability to understand that changes in appearance do not alter fundamental properties of an object

Formal Operational Stage

Begins about age 12 to adulthood
Individual can:
• Think hypothetically
• Consider future possibilities
• Use deductive logic
• Engage in abstract thought
New form of egocentrism develops
Social and Emotional Development

Attachment

- A strong emotional bond a person feels toward special people in his or her life
- May hold first key to socialization
  - The process by which a person's behaviors, values, attitudes, etc., fit with what society desires

Attachment

Classic Work: Attachment in Rhesus Monkeys

- Harry Harlow (1905 – 1981)
  - Put baby monkeys in cages with two monkey-shaped wire figures
    - One was covered in soft cloth no food
    - One was bare wire with food
  - Baby monkeys spent more time on cloth-covered figure, even when it did not provide food

Attachment

John Bowlby (1907 – 1990)

- Argued that attachment evolved because it promotes survival
- Insisted early parent–child interactions are crucial for normal development
- By 7–8 months of age, strong attachment may lead to separation anxiety
  - Fear response when the caregiver leaves
  - May be stronger when caregiver is inconsistent
  - Comes and goes throughout childhood
Types of Attachment

Ainsworth:
- **Secure** attachment (~60%)
  - Distressed when caregiver leaves
  - Easily comforted
- **Avoidant** attachment (~20%)
  - Not distressed when caregiver leaves
  - Not easily comforted
- **Resistant or (Ambivalent)** attachment (~15%)
  - Seek closeness with caregiver
  - Angry when caregiver leaves
  - Ambivalent when caregiver returns

Moral Reasoning

Individuals develop **morality** beginning in childhood
- A system of learned attitudes used to evaluate right or wrong

Piaget
- Piaget found young children’s ideas about morality to be rigid and rule-bound
- Older children possess **moral relativity**
  - Recognizing that situational factors affect how things are perceived
  - Knowing people may or may not receive their just rewards or punishments
Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development

Based his theory on that of Piaget
Central concept is justice
Divided moral development into three levels, each of which has two stages

Level 1: Preconventional morality
- Decisions about right and wrong are based on avoiding punishment and obtaining benefits

Level II: Conventional Morality
- Societal rules are internalized
- Children conform to avoid the disapproval of others

Level III: Postconventional Morality
- A person moves beyond fixed rules and laws
- Judgments are based on one’s perception of societal needs
- In the advanced stage, people make judgments based on personally created moral principles

Parenting Styles
- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Permissive
- Rejecting-Neglecting
Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development

Each stage contributes to the development of a unique self.

Each stage involves a dilemma or crisis, with a potential positive or negative outcome.

Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development

- Trust vs. Mistrust
- Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt
- Initiative vs. Guilt
- Industry vs. Inferiority
- Identity vs. Role Confusion
- Intimacy vs. Isolation
- Generativity vs. Stagnation
- Integrity vs. Despair

1. Birth to 12–18 Months
   Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust
   - If needs are met, child learns world is predictable and safe
   - If needs are not met, distrust in the world develops
Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages

2. 18 months to 3 years
   Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
   - Success in tasks leads to autonomy
   - Failure leads to fears and a sense of doubt

3. 3 to 6 years
   Initiative vs. Guilt
   Sense of mastery develops if the child successfully exercises own drive
   Failure leads to dependence and regret

4. 6 to 12 years
   Industry vs. Inferiority
   - The child gains a sense of confidence
   - Failure leads to feelings of inferiority and incompetence
   - A person at any age may have unresolved conflicts that may cause anxiety and discomfort