

Child Development

Its Nature and Course



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Dedication

To Larry—my father and example
To Minnie—my extended family
To June—my collaborator, my partner, my wife
LAS

and

To Bob and Helen—my parents
To Cathy—my wife—and to David—my son
All crucial links in my own development
RGC

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Preface

Several years ago at a meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, the Knopf editors assembled a group of developmental psychologists to discuss the kind of textbook that was needed for the child development course. Despite the diversity of perspectives represented by the group (Urie Bronfenbrenner, Shirley Feldman, Tiffany Field, Marion Gindes, Scott Paris, and Alan Sroufe), there was notable agreement that certain key developmental ideas were not well represented in existing texts. In particular, the systematic and integrated nature of development, the mutual influences of child and context, and the way previous development influenced current development seemed not to be fully conveyed. It was felt that these ideas were well established in the field but had proven difficult to build into a textbook. Facts often are easier to present than principles, and facets of development are easier to convey than the nature of development itself.

Beyond the belief that a child development text organized around coherent principles could and should be written, the working group evolved one provocative, concrete idea—the idea of introducing a set of families to be followed throughout the book. We thought that if done right, such a device could illustrate not only the important role of context (and the systematic interplay between child and environment) but also important developmental principles such as orderliness, continuity, and lawful change. The families could provide a way of showing how various influences come together to determine both normative development and individual development. They could let us bring life to the complex facts and theories about child development.

Each of the authors had previously considered writing a text, but had always decided against it. Busy research agendas and other activities seemed preemptive. But this particular idea would not let go. We were captured by the idea of using family vignettes to create a book that not only presented the latest findings in developmental research but also was organized in a coherent way around a set of recurrent themes, a readable presentation of the complex nature of development.

Our goal was to organize the book around themes and principles of development. The major themes are the role of context, the issue of continuity versus discontinuity, the interplay of social/experiential and cognitive and/or maturational aspects of development, and the contrast between individual and normative development. The developmental principles are order, continuity, and change. These themes and principles provide a framework for the presentation of the facts and theories of developmental psychology and a means of unifying the disparate aspects of development.

FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

This orientation led to a number of features in the book. First we adopted a chronological format. This seemed to be the most suitable way to illustrate the orderly, organic, and integrated nature of development and to underscore our other themes and principles. Like other chronological texts this one has cognitive and social chapters within parts that cover developmental periods. There also are several unique chapters.

In our introductory part, there is a chapter on contexts, which not only brings together information about the various levels of influence on the developing child but sets the stage for considering the interaction of child and environment throughout the text. There is a separate two-chapter part on toddlerhood, which spans the transition from infancy to childhood, and at the end of the book, a chapter on developmental psychopathology, which focuses on abnormal behavior as developmental deviation. Prefacing the chronological parts are the family vignettes, which introduce the basic issues for each developmental period and carry themes forward from section to section. Each part concludes with an integrated part summary in which cognitive and social aspects are interwoven and in which the families and the research are brought together.

Family Vignettes

Our three stories or vignettes begin with the conception of three children, each in a different set of circumstances. One child is born into a working class family where there are two daughters and a son is strongly desired. The second child is born to a teenager, abandoned by her boyfriend and rejected by her own single mother. The third child is an unplanned but welcome addition to an inner city, extended black family. The families were created to represent moderate diversity; for example, none of the children is handicapped and none of the families is from a third world culture. With such a strategy we thought we could illustrate the subtlety as well as the dramatic influence of context and yet keep the stories maximally relevant to students.

The family stories are fictionalized; yet they are drawn from our experience studying hundreds of families longitudinally and conducting research with countless subjects from early infancy through childhood. Our black family was the result of further collaboration with Diana Slaughter and her students at Northwestern University, who created the characters, scenes, and dialogue as part of a graduate seminar entitled "Developmental Tasks of the Black Child in Urban America." In a sense our families are abstractions from real families

grappling with the range of developmental and life issues. At the same time the vignettes were written to be not only engaging but consistent with developmental research. The capacities of the children and the issues they are facing at each age are those reported in the literature. Likewise, the contextual influences on individual lives are based on research; for example, the son in one of our families reacts differently than his sisters to their parents' marital breakup, as suggested by the literature on gender differences in the impact of divorce.

As a teaching device the family vignettes serve several purposes. Reading these engaging stories, students will begin to understand major developmental issues, themes, and achievements for a given period. The stories also help make connections between developmental periods, both in normative terms and in terms of individual children.

Perhaps the major content contribution of the vignettes is to convey a systems perspective to the student. The concept of a system is hard to explain but it can be illustrated. The stories will give students a feel for the direct and indirect influence of context on children, the influences of their particular developmental histories, and the roles of the children in creating their own environments. Child, family, and larger environment adapt to each other in an ongoing process. The text chapters underscore these ideas through the more traditional research and theory presentation, but students will see the workings of systems in the families.

Once students have read the vignettes, the content chapters on research and theory will be both more understandable and more relevant to them. The research questions and methods make sense, and students can see more coherence in the total body of research. The goal is for our questions to be their questions; that is, the presentation of the families should raise the very questions contemporary researchers are pursuing.

Integrative Part Summaries

Themes and critical issues are suggested by the vignettes. Then relevant, contemporary research is organized around these themes in the social and cognitive chapters. Finally, this ma-

terial is explicitly tied together in the integrative part summaries. Major achievements of the period are summarized across domains, key themes are reviewed, and the research material is applied to the families. Not only does an integrated picture of the child emerge, in a way that students will remember, but cutting edge issues in the field also are made sensible. These themes (e.g., continuity and change, the interplay between child and environment) are introduced one at a time and are reworked throughout the book.

Developmental Psychopathology Chapter and Summary

Time constraints may prohibit some instructors from assigning this chapter, and the text plan permits this. However, the chapter was written to provide a summary and re-integration of the total text. In addition to introducing students to material on childhood disorders, we apply a developmental viewpoint to psychopathology. We refer again to our families to illustrate modern concepts such as buffers, marker variables, and developmental deviation. We discuss why these three children have forged healthy adaptations despite the challenges and issues they faced, and we discuss what might have happened if the circumstances had been different. Such an approach serves to make the complex emerging discipline of developmental psychopathology understandable. It also allows us to restate in a new way all of the major themes of the book.

In the end we hope you will find that this book gives you what you expect from a contemporary child development textbook, but also something more. When you look at theoretical coverage you will find information processing perspectives as well as Piaget; cognitive social learning theory and Bowlby's attachment theory as well as traditional learning and psychoanalytic theories. You will find traditional topics such as gender development and conservation along with newer topics such as social referencing, inner working models, scaffolding, and scripts. You will find very contemporary material on day care, stress, family conflict, and prenatal teratogens such as AIDS and cocaine. But beyond this, we hope

you will find that we have told a coherent story of the unfolding of development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people helped to make this book happen. At its inception it was a group idea, and numerous people contributed along the way. We would like to see this process continue, and we would be eager to exchange ideas with instructors and to discuss teaching from this book with the aim of improving future editions.

At this time we would like to thank Urie Bronfenbrenner, Advisory Editor for Random House, for initiating this project as part of the Alfred A. Knopf series on Human Development in Context and for often providing sustaining moral support over the years between conception and reality. We thank Tiffany Field of the University of Miami, Shirley Feldman of Stanford University, Marion Gindes of the Pennsylvania State University, and Scott Paris of the University of Michigan for their participation in the original brainstorming session that led to the concept for this book. We give special thanks to Diana Slaughter (and her students) of Northwestern University, who contributed the first draft of the Williams family and reviewed the entire manuscript. And we thank Dr. Lorraine Cole, Director of the Office of Minority Concerns of the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association, for reviewing the dialogue in the Williams family story. We also thank Stephen Ceci of Cornell University for his valuable input to the cognitive chapters; Everett and Harriet Waters of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, for their key help and support at all stages of the project; and Sherry Muret-Wagstaff, of the University of Minnesota, for her invaluable assistance with the prenatal and context chapters. Throughout the long writing process a number of reviewers assisted us with their critiques of various chapter drafts. We especially want to thank William Damon of Clark University for his thoughtful and constructive comments, and we thank as well:

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Advisor's Foreword

This is an unusual developmental text, for it accomplishes that rare, dual feat of translating science into life, and life into science. The achievement is no accident. As the authors note in their preface, their work represents the fulfillment of a dream to produce a new kind of textbook in child development—one that would illuminate contemporary knowledge in developmental science by making it manifest in human lives.

And that is exactly what this book has done. It is first and foremost an excellent textbook—solid in its science, comprehensive in its coverage, and remarkably balanced in its treatment of controversial issues. But the book's most distinctive feature is the way in which these riches are conveyed. For this textbook also tells a story—three stories, in fact. It begins with the anticipated birth of three rather different children in three rather different families, each living in three rather different everyday worlds. The authors then trace the psychological development of the three children, and also their parents, as the families move through time and space.

For those who would follow this developmental journey, an excellent guidebook is provided that describes alternative routes, and the terrain to be traversed, including its history, natural resources, areas of human settlement, the high roads and the low roads that connect them, possible detours, and the dangers and delights to be encountered along the way. It is this comprehensive guidebook, complete with handsome illustrations, that constitutes the main body of the text. It prepares the reader for what lies ahead, and periodically offers a retrospective and integrative view of the ground previously covered.

But, at any point, should we as readers begin to feel overwhelmed by the rich store of information, we need only turn a few pages to find ourselves invisible participants in the life journey itself, accompanying each family as they enter what is for them a new terrain (but for us already familiar ground). We see our three families successively, but not always successfully, coping with new challenges, arising as often from within themselves as from their surroundings. But what the family vignettes communicate most eloquently is perhaps the cardinal lesson emerging from contemporary developmental research; namely that, over time, the balance of forces affecting a child's development generally resolves in favor of psychological growth, and that a major source for this forward movement comes from the child itself—more specifically, from the dynamic nature of the child's evolving capacity to explore and exploit the resources available in its environment. The principal resources in this regard are parents and other persons committed to the child's well-being.

It is this view of development as a process of progressive interaction between an active, growing organism and its environment that constitutes the second hallmark of this somewhat unusual text. And here too, the distinctive feature represents the realization of a conscious goal. When this volume was first conceived, the aim was to produce a textbook that would reflect the significant advances taking place in research on human development. These advances are the result of a convergence in theory and research design that involves a three-fold focus: 1) a view of the child as a dynamic agent that not only responds to but actively interprets, shapes, and even creates its

own environment and development; 2) an expansion of the research process beyond the laboratory into the real-life settings, and broader social contexts, in which children live and grow; 3) a conception of development as the progressive reorganization of psychological functioning in which cognitive, emotional, and social processes are treated not as separate domains but as interrelated aspects of a complex living being in an equally complex world.

It is characteristic of the authors' balanced judgment that, in acquainting the reader with the fruits of this new scientific harvest, they do not neglect the established body of theory and

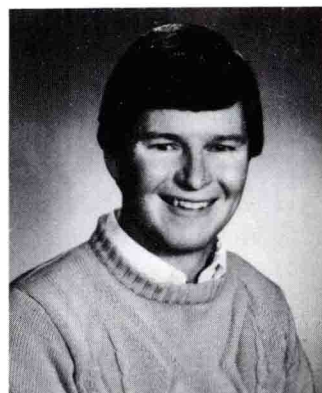
knowledge in the field. Rather, what is conveyed is a sense of slow but steady progress in the efforts of human beings to use the methods of science to understand their own development.

The result is a scientific story that matches in its scope and vitality the human story of the three families—a tale that both illumines and is illumined by the authors' coherent and comprehensive exposition of what science has learned about how we evolve as human beings.

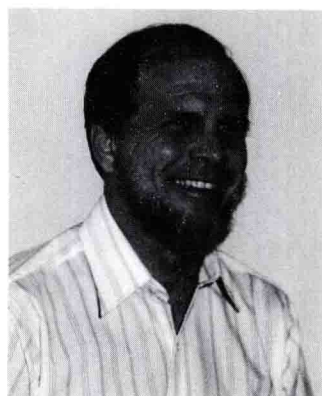
Urie Bronfenbrenner

About the Authors

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Mary E. Marshall, until she became a psychology writer in 1979, was manager of special projects at the college department of Random House. During her ten years in college publishing, she supervised the development of introductory texts such as *Psychology Today*, *Abnormal Psychology* (2d and 3d eds.), and *Understanding Psychology* (2d and 3d eds.). Marshall is a graduate with distinction of Connecticut College, Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude.

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Note to the Student

John and Dolores Williams

"Honey," said John more gently now, "you know we've been over this. We made this baby together, and together we'll see that he gets paid for. It's going to work out. You've got to take things a step at a time. Remember what I told you. Never look back; keep on steppin'. . ."

Frank and Christine Gordon

Generally, on a week night after a baseball game, Frank would head for the bedroom, leaving Christine to clean up. But tonight he hung around. "You're lookin' good, Chris-sie," he said, catching hold of her arm as she passed by. "You could get in trouble lookin' like that."

"I don't know that I want to get in trouble," Christine answered with an uneasy laugh, knowing exactly what Frank had in mind. "You know I'm not so sure about having another baby just yet. . ."

Karen Polonius

Karen felt numb as she sat in Dr. Rich's office, listening to his sympathetic voice. "As I see it, Karen, you have several choices. You can go through with the pregnancy and give up the baby for adoption. . . ." This can't be happening, Karen thought. It's got to be a mistake. . .

These extracts are taken from three continuing stories that are presented at the beginning of each part of the book following Chapters 1

and 2. The stories present three family case histories which, while fictionalized, are drawn from the authors' extensive research experience.

In Part One our families are introduced as they consider having a child. Each family lives in different circumstances and each family is unique. Throughout the book, as the three children develop from infancy to adolescence their family situations change as they go through good times and bad. You will see how changing life circumstances influence children and how individual children respond to various life challenges. By getting to know these families, by seeing in a tangible way how individuals unfold within a context, we believe that you will be able to relate your own experiences to the facts and theories of developmental psychology that will be presented in the chapters.

The family stories are used to introduce the major themes and issues that will be the focus of the text chapters in each section. They also are used as examples within the chapters to illustrate the specific points we are making. Then following the chapters, at the end of each part, we have what we call "integrative summaries." Here we specifically tie the content of the chapters to the lives of the children we are following. We think this will not only help you better remember the material you are learning but also serve to give you a more lifelike and holistic picture of the developing child. The facts and theories of child development are indeed interesting. But we think they can be more fascinating when connected to the lives of developing children.



1

The Nature of Development

THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development and Behavior
Development, Growth, and Other Changes
Normative and Individual Development

A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

The Darwinian Revolution
Evolutionary Theory and Child Development
A Viewpoint on Heredity and Environment

METHODS FOR STUDYING DEVELOPMENT

The Experiment
Observational Methods
The Natural Experiment
Observing Change over Time

This book is about child development from conception through adolescence. Like other psychology texts, it tries to explain human behavior. But here behavior is viewed from a particular perspective, the perspective of development. We believe that when behavior is viewed in context it becomes more understandable, and one important aspect of context is development. If you understand the origins of behavior, how it has emerged, and how it will manifest itself in the future, it begins to make more sense. For instance, knowing that a 1-year-old will soon acquire language makes the child's pointing and gesturing much more meaningful. The two behaviors—speaking and gesturing—are linked in the progressive development of communication.

A developmental perspective includes several ways of thinking about children. One way is to recognize that children differ fundamentally from one developmental period to the next. Older children certainly have grown bigger and stronger than younger children and have acquired greater knowledge; but development includes more than this. Three-year-olds, for instance, can communicate with language, know that they exist as separate persons, and experience pride and shame. None of these things are true for 6-month-olds. A developmental perspective also includes the idea that an older child's capacities emerge in an orderly manner from the capacities that child had earlier. For example, what 4-year-olds know about the world and how they behave are natural fore-