

FOURTH EDITION

# *Understanding* CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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# ***Understanding Children and Adolescents***

FOURTH EDITION

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*We dedicate this book, with love, to our children  
Adam, Chris, Scott, and Holly, who make understanding children  
and adolescents both interesting and delightfully fun.*

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# ***An Introduction to***

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## **Understanding Children and Adolescents**

We first undertook the task of authoring a development textbook because we experienced difficulty finding a book to use in our child and adolescent development classes. Some development books were not organized to suit our course. Others did not include the complete range of topics we thought important, or their presentation of material made children seem fragmented and remote. In still others, the writing was not as clear or as interesting as we wanted it to be. To make these books work for our students, we modified their organization or coverage to achieve the necessary coherence, compensated for the fragmented impressions the books conveyed, and provided additional illustrations and examples to achieve adequate coverage and make the material come alive. At last we resolved to write a book, one that would solve the problems we had encountered over the years. The success of the first three editions suggested that the book addressed not only our needs, but the needs of many other teachers. We think this fourth edition continues to do the same.

### ***Aims***

A primary aim in this edition, as in previous editions, has been to present a balance of theory, research findings, and applications, and to integrate all of these aspects of development by presenting a picture of the whole child situated in realistic, everyday contexts. *Understanding Children and Adolescents* is written primarily for students who will be living and working with children and adolescents, as teachers, parents, child-care providers, nurses, counselors, administrators of programs, and practitioners in a variety of other settings. Students who intend to pursue these types of work need comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information about children's development. They also need to understand the uses and implications of this information. Thus, the emphasis throughout this book is not only on current knowledge and theory, but on the working applications of this knowledge and theory.

*Understanding Children and Adolescents* invites students to engage deeply with the text. As a result, students read in such a way that they think, learn, and remember. Each chapter and many major topics are introduced with a vignette in which the essence of the information or issue about to be presented is captured in true-to-life situations involving children or adolescents and adults. Think-about-it paragraphs also occur throughout chapters. These pose questions intended to spark students' thinking.

Perhaps the most important goal in writing *Understanding Children and Adolescents* has been to convey our feelings about children. First, children are not miniature adults but individuals who have different ways of thinking and learning about the world. Second, children need considerable attention and care. These ideas are emphasized in the introduction to the book, entitled **Prologue: Why Study Children?** We encourage students to read this introduction to gain a preliminary orientation to the book.

### ***Organization and Content***

We think that students should be able to see children as whole human beings. This wholeness can be conveyed by presenting information about all aspects of development for each period of childhood. Therefore, *Understanding Children and Adolescents* is

organized chronologically, introducing students to children as they grow, learn, and change, from earliest infancy to the threshold of adulthood. The book begins with the foundations for the study of child development (Part One)—theories of child development, and the biology of genetics, prenatal development, and birth. The remaining parts of the book cover four chronological epochs of childhood. Part Two addresses the development of the child between birth and age 3—infancy and toddlerhood. Parts Three, Four, and Five cover the development of the preschool child (age 3 to 6), the school-age child (age 6 to 12), and the adolescent (age 13 to 19), respectively.

Within this chronological framework, material on the different domains of development is presented topically. Parts Two through Five contain four chapters each, covering physical development, cognitive development, the development of language and communication, and social and emotional development.

*Understanding Children and Adolescents* provides comprehensive, in-depth coverage of a range of topics and issues in child development, always with an emphasis on the application of knowledge. Many topics discussed in previous editions continue to receive thorough coverage in the fourth edition. Included are such topics as the effects on the developing fetus of prenatal exposure to alcohol, cocaine, and other teratogens; advances in prenatal assessment tools and treatments for infertility; theories of infant and maternal attachment; information about the effects of temperament on socialization; differences found across cultures in children's motor development; knowledge about infant language, visual perception, and cognition; information about the development of cognitive abilities in preschool children, and the development of metacognitive abilities in school-age children; socialization processes and the learning of prosocial behavior; psychological effects of early and late maturing on adolescent girls and boys; concerns about alcohol and other drug use by adolescents; questions about bias in intelligence testing; and many, many more.

### **Special Features**

Because the special features that distinguished the first three editions of *Understanding Children and Adolescents* from other textbooks have proven very successful, we have retained these in this edition, while also introducing some improvements. Primary among the useful and unique features in the first three editions were the vignettes included in each chapter and the **Knowledge in Action** boxes and the **Research Close-Ups**. We have retained the vignettes in this edition. We have added think-about-it paragraphs to spark students' thinking. You and your students will find five types of **Knowledge in Action** boxes: Education, Special Education, Health/Safety, Policy, and Parenting. **Knowledge in Action** boxes include topics such as:

*The Human Genome Project*  
*Cross-Cultural Differences in Infant Crying and Carrying*  
*Detecting Hearing Problems in Infants*  
*The WIC Program*  
*Making Playgrounds Safe*  
*Children's Strategies for Retelling Stories*  
*Signs, Symptoms, and Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*  
*Young Children's Drawings*  
*Explaining Cross-Cultural Differences in Mathematics Achievement*  
*Eating Disorders in Adolescence: Anorexia and Bulimia*

This edition also retains the **Research Close-Up** boxes. These make it possible for instructors to select for assignment only research topics that are of interest to them and their students. **Research Close-Ups** include such topics as:

*Childbirth Practices around the World*  
*Prenatal Assessment Techniques*  
*Effects of Motor Development on Other Areas of Development*  
*Infants' Knowledge about the World: Reactions to Impossible Events*  
*Storybook Reading and Children's Vocabulary Development*  
*Children and Violence*  
*The Games Children Have Played: A Look around the World*  
*Socialization of Gender Roles in Different Cultures*  
*The Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy*

## **Other Changes in This Edition**

Of course, the entire book has been carefully reviewed, revised and updated. We have incorporated the latest research on important topics, new information on emerging issues, and material reflecting current thinking in the field. We also have strengthened in this edition information about child development across cultures. Cross-cultural information is included in discussions of topics such as physical, language, and social development in infants; the play of school-age children; the socialization of gender roles in preschool and school-age children; and academic achievement in school-age children. This information is not only integrated into discussions of many topics covered in the text, it is highlighted in several **Knowledge in Action** and **Research Close-Up** boxes.

Finally, this fourth edition of *Understanding Children and Adolescents* continues a trend toward more reliance on the systems approach found in the second and third editions. The systems approach is explained in Chapter 1, *Theories of Child Development and Methods of Studying Children*, and is used as a framework for discussing numerous topics throughout the book.

## **Learning Aids**

Because the learning aids incorporated in the first three editions of *Understanding Children and Adolescents* have proven useful in helping students understand, organize, and remember material, we have retained them in the fourth edition. These learning aids include:

- A vignette to open each chapter and many main sections within each chapter. The vignette shows how a principle or issue to be discussed in the chapter translates into children's words, behavior, or beliefs; or how the principle or issue affects the adults in the child's world.
- Think-about-it paragraphs following the vignettes elsewhere throughout a chapter. Questions are posed to the student in the think-about-it paragraphs.
- A chapter outline on the chapter's opening page. This outline, coupled with the brief introduction of topics following the vignettes, gives the student a clear picture of what the chapter contains.
- Key terms appearing in bold type throughout each chapter. The terms are also listed in a glossary, with page numbers, at the end of the chapter, which provides for review.
- A detailed list of the chapter's key points in a summary at the end of each chapter.
- Annotated suggestions for further reading at the end of every chapter. These extend the boundaries of the material for the student. New titles have been added to these listings for the fourth edition.

- Numerous tables, charts, drawings, and photographs to provide graphic illustrations of the principles of child development. The captions inform and teach rather than simply label and identify.

### ***Ancillary Package***

A complete package of supplemental support material is available for *Understanding Children and Adolescents* to enhance both teaching and learning and to facilitate the application of knowledge to practical situations.

### ***Supplements for Instructors***

The **Instructor's Manual**, written by two of the co-authors, Peggy Forsyth and Al Forsyth of Millersville University, includes chapter summaries, learning objectives, and supplemental instructor's activities which include course activities using the Study Guide, student projects and activities, and topics for small-group discussions. Also included are questions for thought, debate, and discussion; demonstration topics for the instructor to present in the classroom, and suggestions for additional lecture topics. The Instructor's Manual also lists audiovisual resources that can be used in conjunction with the text, and free or inexpensive materials that can be obtained via the Internet or toll-free numbers.

The **Test Bank**, written by author Judy Schickedanz of Boston University and Molly Collins, a graduate student at Boston University, supplies over 2000 multiple-choice questions, as well as a selection of short-answer and essay questions. New to this edition of the Test Bank are practical problem-solving questions in which the student is given problem scenarios and is asked to evaluate them by applying the information from the text. The multiple-choice questions vary in difficulty and have been labeled easy, medium, or challenging. Key point rubrics are provided for the essay questions.

**Computerized Testing:** Allyn and Bacon Test Manager is an integrated suite of testing and assessment tools for Windows and Macintosh. You can use Test Manager to create professional-looking exams in just minutes by selecting from the existing database of questions, editing questions, or writing your own. Course management features include a class roster, gradebook, and item analysis. Test Manager also has everything you need to create and administer online tests.

The **Allyn and Bacon Interactive Video for Child Development, 2001 Edition** contains video clips which illustrate topics in each chapter and are tied to the text by a narrator who introduces the clips for each chapter and also provides a conclusion after the clips have been viewed. Critical Thinking Questions appear on the screen following related clips. A Video User's Guide accompanies each video and provides additional resources for instructors, such as page references to the text and additional lecture ideas. Contact your local Allyn and Bacon sales representative for information on other available videos, including the **Revised Films for the Humanities and Sciences Child Development Videotape**.

A set of 100 overhead transparency acetates was created specially for this text.

### ***Supplements for Students***

The **SQ4R Guide to *Understanding Children and Adolescents***: Each chapter of this study guide is clearly organized in the SQ4R method of study, a proven strategy for improving academic performance. Students are provided with a **Survey** of the chapter, which is followed by the **Question** section, which uses the same learning objectives as outlined in the Instructor's Manual; the questions ask students to describe,

explain, define, and apply concepts. Students **Read** the chapter and answer questions. Next comes the **Reflect** and Self-Reference section, which provides four to six exercises to help students use examples from their own lives to better understand and remember the information in the text. Students **Recite** by writing about four to six projects, all of which are more fully explained in the Instructor's Manual; at least two of the projects for each chapter have a worksheet for ease of completing the project. The **Review** section provides a review of the learning objectives and a practice multiple-choice and essay quiz.

**Practice Tests:** This manual of self-tests with answers provided helps students prepare for quizzes and exams. Available in value packs with the text.

**Web Site:** The Companion Website with Online Practice Tests, which can be accessed at [www.abacon.com/schickedanz](http://www.abacon.com/schickedanz), offers a wide range of resources to both the instructors and students. Students will find learning objectives, practice tests, and links to stable URLs with brief descriptions of what will be found at each site, who the author is, and how it is relevant to the chapter material.

Also available in value packs with the text is an **Internet Guide for Child Development, 2000 Edition**, which identifies the most current URLs related to the study of child development. This easy-to-read guide helps point students in the right direction when looking at the tremendous array of information on the Internet as it relates to child development.

## Acknowledgments

Many people have contributed to the development of the fourth edition of *Understanding Children and Adolescents*. Foremost among these are the co-authors from the third edition, David Schickedanz, Peggy Forsyth, and Alfred Forsyth. The book's authors consist of two husband-wife teams. This special circumstance allows close collaboration among the authors, a bonus for all concerned.

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We also would like to thank the many students who have taken our child development classes over the years. We found that images of our students consistently came to mind when we were writing the textbook and preparing the ancillaries. It is for them that we undertook the writing of the first edition of the book. They continue to motivate us, and to provide essential feedback.

Finally, we would like to thank our children for their patience and understanding. Preparing a textbook involves considerable work, often produced under a tight schedule. Good humor and support from family members are absolutely essential to getting the job done. Peggy and Al Forsyth extend their thanks to Chris, Scott, and Holly. Judy and David Schickedanz extend their thanks to Adam.

# PROLOGUE

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## ***Why Study Children?***

As you read about children in the pages that follow, you may think of a child you know—a niece or nephew, a young cousin, even your own child if you are already a parent. Or, calling on your memories and the stories told to you by your parents, you may think of yourself when you were a child. You might know this child—even the child you once were—quite well or not so well. You might have daily contact with children or never see them at all.

No matter what your experience with children, you have one thing in common with all other adults: You will never again directly experience the “magic time” of childhood. Once we become adults, we can no longer see the world through children’s eyes. We trade that vision for a more rational understanding of how things work, an understanding that allows us to function competently in the world.

When we were children, we were guided and cared for by our families and teachers. Now the responsibility for guiding the next generation of children to healthy adulthood passes to us. And even though we were once children ourselves, we do not understand many of the things children say and do. They charm and bewilder us. Their minds do not work the same way ours do. Even when we think we have explained things to them, we often discover that they have their own beliefs:

- . . . that after people die, they can “get alive” again
- . . . that when you tire of having baby brothers around, you can return them to the hospital where they were “boughted”
- . . . that blankets and stuffed bears can have their own thoughts and feelings
- . . . that dreams are “made by the night” when the lights go out
- . . . that children can be the secret but true reason for their parents’ divorce

When we hear ideas such as these, we realize how profoundly different children’s experience of the world can be from ours. We also realize that to provide conditions suitable for their growth, we must increase our understanding of them. Knowledge and understanding of children are what this book is designed to provide.

## ***Our Approach to the Study of Children***

Of course, children are not like cars on an assembly line, to be analyzed and put together piece by piece. They are whole people, living in the world, bringing themselves completely to their experiences. But this very complexity makes it difficult, at first, for the student to understand children. This is why we begin the study of child development by considering its different aspects separately. In this book, the study of children is divided into various domains—physical, cognitive, language and communication, social-emotional. Although it is convenient to treat the various aspects of development this way, we must not lose sight of the fact that children function as whole people.

We approach the study of children chronologically by organizing our material in “age-stages,” from infancy to adolescence. Because we can see changes that set children apart at any point in time from their earlier and later selves, we discuss how children at one age-stage differ from children at another age-stage. But development is



also continuous in many ways, the accumulation of experiences that makes a child what she is today and what she will become tomorrow. Any single behavior or characteristic must, therefore, be considered as both a result of previous developments and a predictor of subsequent developments.

We also look at the many factors that interact to make children what they are, not the least of which are the unique characteristics that each one brings into the world. But a child's uniqueness is shaped by the many contexts in which the child lives—family, school, community, country, world. Each context leaves its mark and must be taken into account. Today we are more aware than ever of the complex reciprocal interactions between the child and her environment. The threads of a child's life are woven from all these elements into a fabric not easily—or even appropriately—taken apart for closer analysis.

This complexity in human development means that there are limits to our knowledge. Although we have theories, research studies, and a vast amount of information about child development, some questions have not been answered

definitely in ways that help us know how to act. There are many questions that cannot even be studied experimentally. For example, children who watch a great deal of television tend to be poor readers. Does heavy television viewing *cause* low reading achievement? We cannot be sure. To find out, we would need to enlist large numbers of children and ask them to watch many hours of television every day for a fairly long period of time—perhaps five hours a day for a year. Very few parents would allow their children to participate in such a study, and a researcher proposing such an experiment, while believing that it would be harmful, would be acting unethically. Left with naturally occurring groups of children in real situations, we do not know whether low reading achievement is caused by the television viewing or whether some third factor causes both the low achievement and the heavy TV use. We also do not know if turning off the television would improve reading achievement or have no effect. Our knowledge is incomplete.

## ***Making Connections: The Practical Aspects of Understanding Children***

Even when research has provided clear-cut information about issues in child development, there is sometimes a gap between research and the everyday world of parents and teachers. Some of our daily interactions with children raise questions that either have not been investigated or have not been answered in ways that are useful to the practitioner. The connection between scientific information and the everyday situation sometimes seems to be missing.

*Understanding Children and Adolescents* helps to make these connections. From the huge body of information about children and adolescents—most of it important and relevant in one way or another—we have selected material that we judged to be



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