

The Young Child

Development from Prebirth Through Age Eight



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To those who helped us with our "roots and wings"...

Our parents

Wilson LaMar and Lelah Knisely Knecht H. B. and Neutie L. Brous Joseph Eston and Josephine Clark Bell

Our spouses

Clifford M. Black
J. Wesley Puckett
Candace K. Bell

Our children

Jonathan Andrew Black
John Wesley Puckett, Jr.
Dan William Puckett
Paula Puckett Jeffers
Daniel Eston Bell
Caitlin Jean Bell

And last but not least, our mentors

Martha L. King
Velma E. Schmidt
Marion Wilson Brous
Joe L. Frost

Preface



The earliest growth and development, that which occurs from conception through the eighth year, is dynamic. The progression from an energetic cell mass to a child of infinite characteristics and abilities at age eight is a story of such complexity and magnitude that few, if any, authors fully capture its totality.

We recognize the first eight years as being critical to later development and have attempted to present a "whole child" perspective and emphasize that understanding the development of infants and young children is a prerequisite to becoming a competent early childhood professional. In this context, we bridge theory and practice by juxtaposing research and theories of early growth and development with the role of the adult in facilitating this development.

In this text, the development of young children is presented from an ecological perspective, addressing the young child in the global context of family, school, community, and society. Major theories are interrelated with all aspects of development including physical/motor, psychosocial, cognition, language, and literacy. The long-term benefits of developmentally appropriate practice in the early years are presented. To further help the reader make the association between theory and practice, ongoing vignettes about two children appear throughout the chapters. A unique feature of this text is the interfacing of adult and professional development in the context of the developing child. Ethical responsibility in promoting developmentally appropriate practice and the role of advocacy are emphasized.

Organization of the Text

The text is divided into seven parts. Part One, An Overview of Early Childhood Development, outlines historical viewpoints and the evolution of the study of early childhood. Current theories of early childhood development and discussions of the importance of this information to the developing professional are also presented. Early and classical research in the fields of child development



and early education are described, as are various approaches and resources for studying young children.

Part Two, The Child's Life Begins, discusses the family before birth, with attention to educational, sociocultural, and economic antecedents to parenting. Prenatal development is described with emphasis on health, nutrition, and medical supervision of pregnancy. Childbirth and the family dynamics of the newborn are described.

Parts Three, Four, Five, and Six trace physical/motor, psychosocial, and cognitive/language/literacy development during infancy, ages 1 through 3, 4 through 5, and 6 through 8, respectively. This organization facilitates either chronological or topical discussion and study.

Part Seven, A Brief Look Beyond the Early Years, provides a brief overview of child development beyond the early years and projects the effects of early development upon later development. The last portion of this section focuses primarily on the developing professional's self-understanding, adult developmental patterns, and professional development, including dimensions of responsibility, developmentally appropriate practice, ethical behavior, interpersonal relationships, advocacy, and continuing study.

At the end of each chapter the reader will find Review Strategies/Activities which include relevant, hands-on suggestions. In addition, annotated bibliographies of timely topics are provided.

Angela and Jeremy

Two young children, Angela and Jeremy, are waiting in print to greet the reader. These two individuals are composites of many children we have known and will illustrate the uniqueness of growth and development in young children and their families. The readers are introduced to Angela and Jeremy at the moment of their births in Part Two.

Acknowledgments

The inspiration for this text is derived from the children, parents, teachers, and researchers who, over the years, have engendered our interest in the remarkable development of young children. Philosophical support for the text comes from the efforts and accomplishments of professional organizations that work to promote the well-being of children and the adults who nurture their development and learning. The contributions of these groups are acknowledged throughout this text.

We are grateful to many college and university students, in particular those who field-tested the text: Tanya Crossen, Brenda Smoot, Denise Bolin, Sharon Rothberg, Karen Anderson, Paula Layton, Teresa Martin, Paige Fletcher, Melody Kramer, Denise Butler, Christi Bisoni-Lais, Sue Jenkins, Tana Hansen, Stephanie Wheeler, Pam Beckemeyer, and Vanessa Sullivan. Special thanks to doctoral student Deborah Diffily for preliminary editing of the manuscript.

We also wish to thank the late Marion Wilson Brous, M.D., for serving as pediatric consultant, and Cathy Cowan, Ph.D., for suggesting resources from the field of psychology. We wish to acknowledge Rebecca Althous, R.N., M.S., of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Genetic Screening and Counseling Service for comments and suggestions on genetics and prenatal development. Appreciation is also extended to Sue Gainer, Child Care Dallas; Irene Rodriguez, Ph.D., Laredo State University; the late Velma Schmidt, Ed.D., University of North Texas, for critique of the manuscript for ethnic and cultural integrity. Gratitude is also expressed to Sandra Terrell, Ph.D., University of North Texas, for sharing expertise in speech production; Sharon Naylor, Ph.D., for her contributions regarding professional development; and Juane Heflin, Ph.D., for sharing her knowledge of the field of special education.

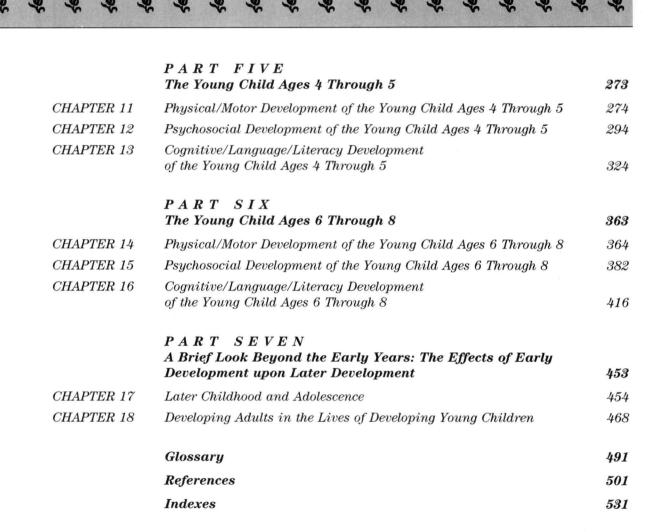
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Janet Black Margaret Puckett Michael Bell

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