

An Introduction to **Child Development**

Thomas Keenan, Subhadra Evans & Kevin Crowley

3rd
Edition

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An Introduction to **Child Development**

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This book is dedicated to Holly who has taught me more about children than
I'll ever discover on my own.

Thomas Keenan

To Kaia and Bodhi, sparks of splendour and masters of mischief. Thank you
for being patient and for sharing your stickers with me.

Subhadra Evans

To Amy and Ioan who ~~continue to provide me~~ with the most practical
of ~~introductions to child development~~.

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Guided Tour

LEARNING AIMS

This feature provides an overview of the content covered in the chapter and outlines what you will learn in the course of reading it.



Key Concepts in orange

Words appearing in **orange** throughout the text indicate key concepts that you should understand, remember and be able to explain after reading the chapters.



Point for Reflection boxes: these are designed to help you stop and think about what you have been reading and consider the subject matter more deeply.

Research Example boxes

These boxes focus on specific pieces of research: from landmark studies to cutting-edge journal articles or experiments. These place the subject matter in real-life contexts, and demonstrate the diversity and rigour of the kinds of research being pursued in this field.

Chapter Summary

The chapter summary reviews the main concepts and issues covered in the chapter to reinforce the key learning aims.

Glossary

Located at the end of each chapter, this allows you to look up important terms and concepts introduced in the chapter quickly and easily.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

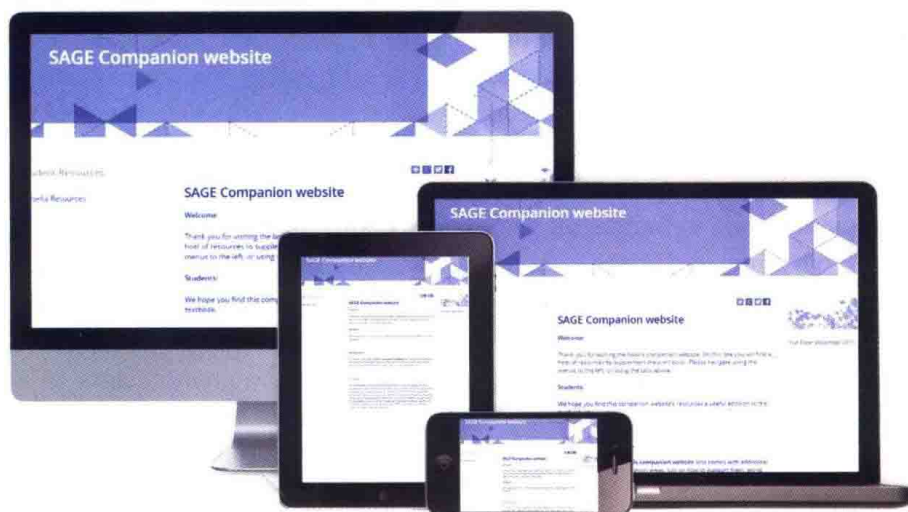
These multiple-choice questions help you to check your understanding of the chapter contents and revise for exams.

Suggested Reading



This feature contains a brief outline of key books, reports and additional articles which you may find helpful if you wish to learn more about a particular topic.

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- A **flashcard glossary**, which features terms from the book, as an ideal tool to help you get to grips with key concepts, terms and revise for exams.
- **Author-selected videos**, to give you deeper insight into select concepts, building on context to foster understanding and facilitate learning.

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- **Testbanks**, containing questions related to the key concepts in each chapter can be downloaded and used in class, as homework or exams.

Preface

Background

Developmental psychology is a vibrant and rapidly growing field of psychology that seems, with each passing year, to become more and more exciting, comprehensive and, ultimately, more challenging. And this excitement, this challenge, is not something that is only felt by developmental psychologists themselves! The findings of developmental psychology continue to fascinate the media, to inform educators and assist in the creation of sound educational policy, to aid in the development of government policy that is designed to maximize population health and well-being, and to help parents in their attempts to better understand, raise, and interact with their own children. Students of developmental psychology today will find themselves faced with a growing body of information, most of which they can never hope to truly master due to the ever widening scope of the field. In large part, this is because of the nature of the study of developmental psychology as a field of scientific inquiry. As David Buss (1995) has pointed out, developmental psychology can be thought of as an approach that one takes to some field within psychology. That is, a developmental psychologist is fundamentally interested in understanding change across the life span in some domain of development such as thinking and reasoning, emotion, personality, social understanding, or language. As a consequence, most developmental psychologists end up specializing within a given area of development after their undergraduate and postgraduate training. This specialization reduces the burden somewhat, but it is still the case that many developmental psychologists feel a strong need to keep abreast of theoretical and methodological innovations in the field as a whole in addition to their own areas of specialization, especially as an awareness of these innovations tends, in many cases, to lead to important developments within a given domain of inquiry.

Developmental Psychology Today

The rapid growth of developmental psychology is readily observed in the large number of textbooks devoted to laying out the fields of developmental psychology and child development and by the number of courses in university undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and college diploma offerings that focus on the growth and development of children from infancy through to old age. Typical courses in developmental psychology found in many psychology programmes will include titles such as: *An Introduction to Developmental Psychology*, *Child Development*, *Adolescent Development*, *Adult Development*, *The Psychology of Aging*, *Life-span Development*, *Research Methods in Developmental Psychology*, *The Psychology of the Family*, and so on.

In addition to these courses, there are a large number of societies devoted to supporting and distributing research on child development and developmental psychology. Most countries have their own societies to support developmental psychology. In the UK, the British Psychological Society established the Developmental Psychology Section in 1980 (see www.bps.org.uk/dps). In the USA, developmental psychology is represented within the American Psychological Association as Division 7 (see www.apa.org/about/division/div7.html) and child development is represented more specifically by The Society for Research in Child Development (see www.srkd.org), which lists some 5,500 members from around the world. In Canada, there is a developmental section of the Canadian Psychological Association (see www.cpa.ca/sections/developmental), in Australia, the Australasian Human Development Association (www.ahda.org), and in Europe, there is the European Association for Developmental Psychology (www.eadp.info). These societies work to support, develop and disseminate research on developmental psychology and organize conferences and workshops that support these activities.

There are a large number of international journals that support the dissemination of research related to developmental psychology and child development. There are too many journals supporting developmental research to provide a full list here, but a sampling of some of the top journals (and journals which you may find useful in your own studies on child development) include: *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Human Development*, *The British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *Developmental Review*, *Developmental Science*, *Applied Developmental Science*, *The European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *The Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, *The Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, and *Developmental Psychopathology*. Remember, this list is just a small sample of some of the journals available, and developmental research is regularly published in other major journals, such as *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Review*, and *Psychological Science*.

Individuals with a background in developmental psychology or child development will work within a variety of professional fields. Many of those interested in child development will also go on to become researchers in the field, working in universities as academics or in centres devoted to research on child development, such as the National Institutes of Mental Health (www.nimh.org) in the USA. Others with a background in child development will often choose to work more directly with children, entering fields such as teaching, early childhood education, and paediatric nursing, or will become social workers or clinical psychologists who may work with children facing difficulties.

The Structure of the Text

One of our goals in writing this book was to provide you with a brief but comprehensive survey of some of the key issues and findings in the field of child development. The text is divided into five sections, with each section containing a number of chapters. Section I, *Introduction, Theories and Methods*, is made up of three chapters. Chapter 1 is intended to provide you with a background to the study of child development by locating the field as a branch within the study of developmental

psychology, by highlighting the principles which guide the study of development from a life-span approach, and then by introducing you to some important concepts and key issues within the contemporary study of child development. Chapter 2 surveys a number of theories, both those which are historically significant and modern theoretical developments that are relevant to the study of child development. Chapter 3 addresses the issues surrounding how developmental psychologists actually go about the business of conducting research on children's development.

Section II, *The Biological Foundations of Development*, examines children's physical growth and motor development as well as the nature of interactions between genes and the environment and the implications for development (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5, 'The Developing Brain', we describe the development of the brain and central nervous system and how the brain's development is critical to understanding child development. Section III is entitled *The Development of Perception, Cognition and Language*, and contains four chapters addressing each of these topics. Chapter 6 focuses on perceptual development, particularly the rapid development of our senses. We see that infants are born with a remarkable and rapidly developing ability to make sense of their world over the first few months of life. Chapter 7 addresses theories of cognitive development while Chapter 8 looks at the development of specific cognitive processes such as memory, attention and problem solving. Section 3 concludes with Chapter 9, 'The Development of Language and Communication', in which we cover various theories of language development and the growth of communicative abilities throughout infancy and childhood.

Section IV, *Emotional, Social and Moral Development*, contains chapters on emotional development (Chapter 10), social development (Chapter 11) and moral development (Chapter 12). In Chapter 10 we study emotional development, looking at the course of emotional development, emotional control, the development of an attachment to caregivers and, finally, the concept of temperament. In Chapter 11, the concept of social development is introduced. Chapter 11 explores the growth of social relations, the nature and functions of play, how conceptions of friendship change with age, the importance of peer acceptance, and the role of an understanding of minds in social behaviour. Finally, in Chapter 12, the study of moral development is taken up through an examination of key theories of moral development and moral reasoning, the development of empathy, prosocial behaviour and distributive justice, and the development of aggressive behaviour.

In Section V, *Applied Human Development*, we examine the nature of psychopathology in childhood in Chapter 13, 'Developmental Psychopathology'. This chapter examines the unique approach to psychopathology taken by developmentalists and explores some of the more common disorders of childhood, including anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder. The chapter also looks at the factors that place some children at greater risk of developing psychopathology, as well as factors that promote resilience in the face of adversity.

How to Use This Book

As you move through the book, you should notice that throughout the chapters some words appear in orange type. These words indicate key concepts that you should understand, remember and be

able to describe. A useful method to enhance your ability to remember the meaning of these terms is to think through the definition carefully and then re-cast it in your own words. It can also prove very helpful to associate new terms with examples from the text that you can illustrate the meaning in a more concrete fashion. Within each chapter there are text boxes that focus on a specific piece of research. We have chosen these examples to illustrate the diversity and rigour of the kinds of research being pursued in the field of child development. Each chapter also has a number of reflection points. These are questions encouraging you to ‘stop and think’ about what you have been reading. Some of the questions will encourage you to think about your own personal experiences in relation to the subject matter being covered. Other questions will ask you to consider how material in previous chapters might also be useful in understanding the current chapter. We have also included one or two images in each chapter to reinforce some of the salient points being made about development. Each chapter also contains a glossary – a list of these important concepts – which should allow you to look up terms quickly and easily. Each chapter ends with a brief multiple choice test that will allow you to quickly test your memory for the material you have just read. Finally, each chapter ends with some suggestions for further reading, articles or chapters that you may find helpful if you wish to learn more about a given topic.

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