Handbooks of Developmental Psychology

The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of

CHILDHOOD SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Second Edition

Edited by **Peter K. Smith & Craig H. Hart**

WILEY Blackwell

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The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Social Development

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Introduction by the Editors

Peter K. Smith and Craig H. Hart

This is the second edition of this handbook, which has proved to be a successful volume in a successful series. In editing this second edition, we have sought to maintain the strengths of the first edition, update and further strengthen the breadth of coverage, and provide an advanced text that will be useful to many individual researchers, as well as an indispensable library resource. Many features are in common with the first edition, but there are some distinctive new features that we mention below.

This volume is part of a series, and there are companion volumes on infancy, cognitive development in childhood, and adolescence. Thus, the age range covered in this volume is broadly from postinfancy (around 3 years) up to adolescence. It does not include material on infancy, or adolescence and beyond, except in so far as it might be necessary for understanding or contextualizing the theories, methods, and findings of the research in childhood. Of course, a wide age range remains, from preschool (3 to 5 years), to early school (5 to 7 years), through to later elementary or middle school (8 to 11 years). Also, the chapters focus on social development. This includes several chapters in the social cognition area, which is covered in Part VIII.

We asked for chapters at a certain level. Thus this handbook is not meant for beginners in the area. Those who have not studied child development previously will be better served by one of the many introductory texts available. The brief we gave to authors was to give a clear and succinct account of work in their area, which would be suitable for anyone wishing to go beyond basic textbook coverage. This would include advanced undergraduates in psychology and behavioral sciences, and postgraduates taking taught master's degrees or pursuing independent research. It will also include teaching staff and researchers who wish for an authoritative update outside their immediate teaching or research area. The book should also be useful for those professionals outside academic life – for example, educators, social workers, counselors, and probation officers – who have had training in the behavioral sciences and retain an active interest in the implications of research for their professional practice.

As in the first edition, we attempted to get – and feel we have succeeded in getting – a good geographical coverage of contributors. Much of the work in our domain does come from North America, and it is appropriate that about half our contributors come from the United States. However, it is also appropriate that we have contributors from Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Turkey, Taiwan, India, and Australia. This reflects the increasingly international community of child development researchers. As we forecast in the introduction to the first edition, it is a broader spread than we had then, in 2001.

Regardless of their origin, we asked our contributors to be not only clear and succinct but also interesting and, where appropriate, challenging. In our letters of invitation we asked authors to "provide authoritative reviews of focused areas in social development, which both summarize existing knowledge, and highlight areas of debate and growing points in the discipline." We worked with authors, sometimes intensively, to try to ensure that this was achieved.

For this new edition, although we retained some contributors from the first edition, over half are new contributors. In all cases we pointed out that this new edition was being designed to capture emerging trends in the study of childhood social development as well as to provide updated insights on traditional topics covered in the first edition. We have some extra chapters: 34 compared to 30 in the first edition. We have broadened Part II on different disciplinary views, including the history of childhood and new perspectives from neuroscience. There is also a new chapter on culture and acculturation, and two new chapters on intervening in social development, including one from the perspective of developing countries. Part III includes a new chapter on environmental psychology in relation to social development. There are also other changes (e.g., we decided that rather than have separate chapters on pretend play and rough-and-tumble play, one integrated chapter was sufficient and perhaps preferable).

We have nine parts in this new handbook. The first part is a single chapter, providing a historical overview of psychological research in social development. The second part (six chapters) covers different disciplinary perspectives. The third part (four chapters) is on ecological contexts for social development. The fourth part (five chapters) is on contextual factors such as temperament, child care experience, parental and peer influences compared, sex, and ethnicity. The fifth part (three chapters) is on the family context. The sixth part (four chapters) is on the peer group context. The seventh part (four chapters) covers play, cooperation and competition, aggression, and bullying. Part VIII (four chapters) covers areas broadly in social cognition. Finally, Part IX (three chapters) covers interventions, and children with disabilities, in relation to social development. In short part introductions, we highlight particular areas of debate or contrasting perspectives among the chapters.

We have enjoyed working with the authors, and with our publishers, now transmuted from Blackwell to Wiley-Blackwell. We hope that you will also enjoy the end product, and find it a useful and rewarding resource, whether for study, teaching, research, or professional practice.

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PART I

Historical Overview

This part of the handbook has only one chapter, but it is a chapter that sets the scene for the rest of the book. W. Andrew Collins is in an excellent position to do this. He has worked for many years at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota, which was one of the pioneering sites of study of young children in North America. Much valuable work was done from the 1920s onward, including Mildred Parten's famous work on social participation in preschool children (Parten, 1932), which was based on her doctoral thesis at the institute.

Collins outlines what are now seen as three main eras in the study of childhood development. The emergent era (around 1890–1919) marks the beginning of systematic interest in children's social development, including baby diaries and some empirical studies. The middle period (around 1920–1946) saw a great increase in research, including the founding of child study centers and institutes (as at Minnesota, discussed above); normative descriptions of child behaviors; the development of observational, experimental, and questionnaire methodologies; and theoretical influences from behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and symbolic interactionism. The modern era (from around 1947 to the present) has seen the more structuralist approaches of Jean Piaget and Kohlberg, and a general consensus around the scientific nature of child development, moving beyond descriptive studies to testing various theoretical approaches in different domains.

The "modern era" is now over 60 years in duration, and it is likely that future historians of the period will, looking back, subdivide it into further periods. Many of the changes in approaches and methodologies are summarized by Collins in this chapter. Researchers in recent decades have developed more sophisticated quantitative approaches (such as multilevel analyses and structural equation modeling). In other areas, there has been increased interest in qualitative methodologies, and more participation or involvement of young people in research. And in recent years, it is clear that advances in behavior

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genetics (see Chapter 2) and neuropsychology (Chapter 3) are impacting our understanding of social development. These will take forward our discipline in new and potentially exciting ways; and it is easy to ignore the past and how we got to where we are. But the past may still exert a strong influence on the parameters of our present thinking, and we may learn something too from the successes and failures of our predecessors.

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