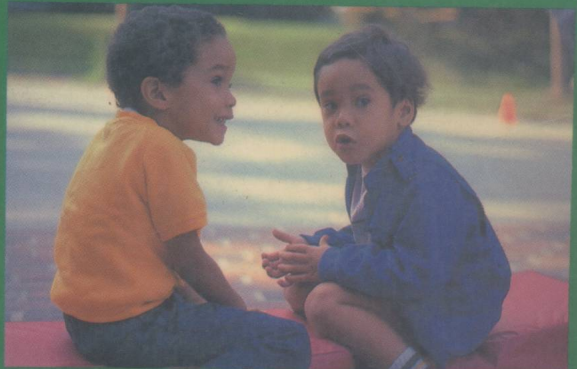
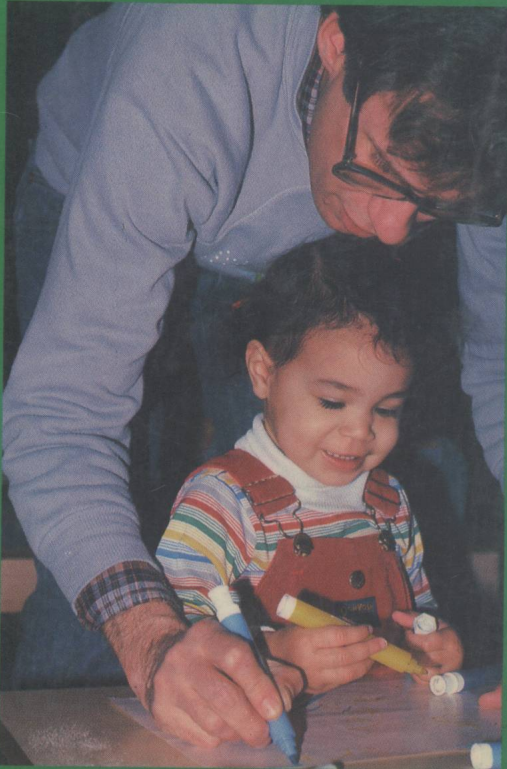


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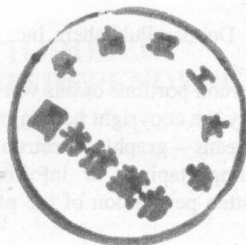
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Understanding Child Development

FOR ADULTS WHO WORK WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Second Edition

ROSALIND CHARLESWORTH
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY



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Albany, New York 12212

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Printed in the United States of America
Published simultaneously in Canada
by Nelson Canada,
a division of International Thomson Limited

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Charlesworth, Rosalind.

Understanding child development.

Includes index.

1. Child development. I. Title.

HQ767.9.C436 1987 305.2'33 86-31910

ISBN 0-8273-2786-2 (soft)

ISBN 0-8273-2787-0 (instructor's guide)

Preface

Understanding Child Development: For Adults Who Work With Young Children is designed for teachers in training and teachers in service whose major interest is the prekindergarten and kindergarten child. It is also a valuable tool for social service workers, special educators, parents, and others who require a practical understanding of the young child. For students, it introduces the uniqueness of the young child as distinguished from the older child and shows how to work with young children in a way that corresponds with the child's developmental level. For teachers in service, the text offers an opportunity to evaluate their views of the young child and compare them with the views presented in the text. For all adults who work with young children, the book presents a picture of the child in the context of family, school, and culture.

The young child and the means for studying his growth and development are introduced first in the text. Next, the child's development prior to reaching preschool age is described. The prekindergarten and kindergarten child is then described in depth: physical and motor growth and development, ways of learning, and cognitive and affective growth and development. Throughout, the adult role in growth and development is stressed. Both teachers and parents have critical roles. Social and cultural factors that influence the child's development are described. For the purpose of clarity only, in some places "she" is used for the adult, and "he" for the child.

Play, technology, and special needs are discussed as areas of concern in the life of the young child. Finally, the concept of the whole child is presented and the young child is considered in relation to the next step in development, that of middle childhood.

The text contains many examples. The unit approach begins with behavioral objectives and presents the material in a logical progression. The suggested activities offer practical learning applications that enhance individual experiences and add to the excitement in the classroom when shared with other students.

Work with young children is a thriving activity today. Those who work with young children agree that development and education are inseparable at this age. In this text, developmental concepts are placed in a practical perspective. Theory, research, and practice are mixed in a no-nonsense fashion that applies to everyday interaction with young children.

Dr. Rosalind Charlesworth is a member of the faculty of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge. She has taught developmental courses to students in home economics, education, and behavioral sciences. Her career history includes experience in teaching young children in laboratory, public school, and day-care settings and in research in social and cognitive development. This text originally grew out of several years of experience in teaching child development courses for adults who planned to work with preschool children. It has expanded with further experience teaching both preservice and graduate-level students who work with young children.

The author wishes to express her appreciation to the following individuals and early childhood education and development centers:

Jeanne Machado, who reviewed the manuscript in detail and offered numerous valuable suggestions that have been incorporated in the final text.

The staff at Delmar Publishers Inc.

The children and teachers who were photographed in the following early childhood centers: Plan-Do-Talk Day Care Center, Bowling Green, Ohio and Child Development Center, Bowling Green State University, Ohio.

Karen Geizer, Steve Hanson, Alan Pike, John Singer, Pam Singer, and Jack Lasek, who did the photography.

The following students at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, the University of Houston at Clear Lake City, and Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, who provided many examples from their application projects: Pattie Guidry, Gay Koenig, Jill Ochenschlager, Jill Evans, Donna Wendt, Tammy Overmeyer, Jill Flaughner, Kathleen Roberts, Sue Heestand, Beth Leatherman, Elizabeth M. Schumm, Nancy Miller, K. Weber, Adrienne Rossoni, Susan Rollins, Carol Roach, Kristine Reed, Kathy Kayle, Bede Hurley, Linda Boone, Ruthie Johnson, and Carolyn Nattress.

Those Louisiana teachers whose students provided writing and/or drawing samples: Joan Benedict, Cleator Moore, Robyn Planchard, and Lois Rector.

And last, but not least, my daughter Kate for her tolerance and patience during the writing of this second edition.

DEDICATION

To Edith M. Dowley, Ruth Updegraff, Shirley G. Moore, Willard W. Hartup and Ada D. Stephens, who nurtured my professional development, and to my daughter Kate, who has provided a rich source of developmental information and inspiration.

Section I

THE YOUNG CHILD

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Unit 1

Developmental and Learning Theories

OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the student will be able to:

- Define the term *theory* and identify developmental and learning theories, including the normative views.
- Recognize definitions of the cognitive, affective, and physical/motor developmental and learning areas.
- Name eight important theorist/researchers.
- Identify some practical applications of theory.
- Describe cautions that should be used when applying theory to the lower-class and/or minority group child.

The study of children has been a subject of great interest during the twentieth century. Scholars have gathered information about and from children and have used this information to formulate ideas about how children grow and develop. Most scholars are researchers who mainly gather information. Some scholars are researchers and theorists. Theorist/researchers go beyond their data to develop broad ideas that attempt to explain how children learn and grow. These ideas are called *theories*. A theory is designed to show one plan or set of rules that explains, describes, or predicts what happens and what will happen when children grow and learn. Several popular theories are described in this unit.

TYPES OF THEORIES

Some theorists focus on growth, some on how learning takes place, and some on both. The term *growth* usually refers to some kind of sequence of change that takes place over time and is controlled for the most part by an inherited timetable. For example, the child learns to turn his head before his trunk. *Learning* refers to behavioral changes that come about due to influences from the environment. The child in the United States learns English as a first language; the child in Germany learns German. *Developmental theories* usually explain changes in the child due to interaction between growth and learning. Growth is explained as a series of

2 The Young Child

steps or stages the child goes through on the way to becoming an adult. Each child develops in a manner similar to every other child. For example, infants explore objects by sight, taste, touch, sound, and smell before they learn that these objects still exist when out of sight. As another example, when children's growth permits, they learn to stand or talk or read if environmental conditions are right. Theories emphasizing change that originates in the environment through learning are called *behaviorist theories*. For example, if children hear language, imitate it, and are rewarded for making sounds, they will learn to talk. Behaviorist theories explain how the child learns regardless of his age or stage. Some learning-oriented theories explain what is happening in the mind. Others look only at behavior that can be seen.

The *maturational or normative* view is another way of looking at development. *Norms* tell us what most children do at a certain age. The normative/maturational point of view stresses certain *norms*, such as the time when most children can sit up, crawl, walk, talk, count to ten, or play cooperatively with other children. Other norms tell us the average size, shape, weight, or height of a child at a specific age. Further, norms can suggest typical behavior characteristics, such as the fact that toddlers are naturally negative because they try so hard to be independent. Theories and norms are related in that theories may try to explain why norms occur as they do.

Theories can differ regarding the specific part of growth and learning they try to explain and describe. For purposes of study, child growth is usually divided into three areas: cognitive, affective, and physical/motor.

Cognitive growth centers on the mind and how the mind works as the child grows and learns, Figure 1-1.

Jenny, age fourteen months, points to her pet cat and says, "Ki Ki." Jenny is learning to speak and has learned the concept *cat* ("Ki Ki").

Pete, age three, wants a cup. He tries but can't reach. He pulls the kitchen stool over, climbs up and gets the cup. Pete has solved a problem.

Lai, age five, is given a plate of cookies and told to give the same number of cookies to each child in her class. She goes from one child to another, giving each child one cookie at a time. Lai understands that by using the idea of one-to-one correspondence you can divide a group of things into groups of equal size.

Affective growth centers on the self-concept and the development of social, emotional, and personality characteristics, Figure 1-2.

Mrs. Smith holds Tony, age one month, in her arms, rocking him and softly singing a lullaby. Mrs. Smith is helping Tony achieve the attachment necessary as the basis for later independence.

John, age four, almost always smiles and looks happy. Other children like him and want to play with him. He is always kind to other children and tries to find a place for them in his play activities.



Figure 1-1 This young child has developed to a cognitive level where it is possible to think through a solution to a problem before acting.



Figure 1-2 Emotional support from a warm, concerned adult helps the child develop in the affective area.

John has a positive self-concept and has developed well in the affective area.

Patty, age five, takes whatever she wants and hits children who try to defend their property. She has not yet learned positive means of interacting with others.

Physical growth has to do with development of the body and its parts, Figure 1-3.

John, age four, weighs 36.6 lb (16.6 kg) and is 3.4 ft (104 cm) tall. This is average for his age.

Kerry, age two-and-a-half, weighs 35.5 lb (16.1 kg) and her height is 2.95 ft (90 cm). She is below average in height and above in weight. She appears short and chubby.

Motor growth refers to the development of skill in the use of the body and its parts, Figure 1-4.



Figure 1-3 The preschool child has reached a stage of physical/motor development where she can participate in and enjoy complex activities such as dancing or creative movement.

Pete, age three, does well at lunch. He eats his soup with a spoon and spills very little and easily pours milk from a pitcher.

Patty, almost age five, hasn't yet learned to skip, can hop on one foot only three times without losing her balance, and can't walk a straight line.

Childhood development theories explain basic processes that determine how and what children learn. Some theorists feel that people learn in much the same way, whatever their age. Others feel that learning is done in a different way as the person grows through different stages.

Some theorists whose ideas have been very influential are Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, B. F. Skinner, Robert R. Sears, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow. The normative/maturational view of Arnold Gesell has also added a great deal to our knowledge of



Figure 1-4 The kindergartener is nearing the time when motor control is such that skills can be used to play simple group games such as “Simon Says” or “Duck, Duck, Goose.” (From Mayesky, *Creative Activities for Young Children*, third ed., © 1985 by Delmar Publishers Inc.)

child development. Figure 1-5 outlines the areas that these men attempt to explain through theory development and/or research.

Each theorist is interested mainly in one area of development and/or learning. Skinner is the exception. His theory offers an explanation for any learned behavior, whether cognitive, affective, or physical/motor. Sears is known for his work on social learning; Piaget for his work on the development of logical thought; and Freud and Erikson for their theories of social and personality development. Rogers focuses on the development and organization of the self-concept; Maslow on the hierarchical nature of human needs; and Gesell on the development of norms of growth and development and their practical applications for child rearing and teaching.

Several of these theorist/researchers view growth and learning as proceeding in an orderly fashion from birth to adulthood. Figure 1-6 shows the stages associated with these theorists. The masses of data gathered by Gesell indicate that physical and motor growth develop at a continuous, rapid rate that levels off at about six years of age. According to Piaget, the young

child proceeds through two periods of cognitive development from birth to about age seven. In the affective area Sears, Freud, and Erikson each look at different aspects of development. Sears focuses on needs and motivation. He considers needs such as dependency, aggression, and sex role identification. Parallel with Piaget, Sears has identified two stages that children pass through during early childhood. Erikson was one of Freud's students. Therefore it is not surprising that the structure of their early childhood stages into three steps is the same. However, while Freud's stages focus on the child's psychosexual interests, Erikson's focus on the psychosocial side.

Maslow and Rogers are neither strictly learning nor strictly developmental theorists. Their ideas focus on the process of achieving a positive self-concept. Love from parents and positive interaction with peers help the child move towards adult self-actualization. The self-actualized adult is one whose basic needs for survival, security, belonging, and esteem are fulfilled. The adult is then able to fulfill intellectual and aesthetic needs and become a fully functioning person.

Tries to Explain Changes In:	Type of Theory	
	Developmental: Growth and Learning Interact	Behaviorist: Learning is the Main Determiner of Behavior
Cognitive Area -language -concepts -problem solving -intellectual needs	Cognitive-Developmental (Jean Piaget) Normative/Maturational (Arnold Gesell) Self-Actualization (Abraham Maslow) Example: A rich environment with freedom for discovery will allow for intelligent adaptation.	Behaviorist (B.F. Skinner) Examples: Learning to speak. Learning red, blue, and yellow are colors.
Affective Area -aggression -dependency -cooperation -fears -self-concept -affective needs -motivation	Psychosexual (Sigmund Freud) Psychosocial (Erik Erikson) Self-Concept (Carl Rogers) Self-Actualization (Abraham Maslow) Examples: Through play the young child learns the benefits of cooperation. Dependency must develop first in order for the child to later become independent.	Behaviorist (B.F. Skinner; Robert R. Sears) Examples: Learning to hug and not to hit. Learning to help others.
Physical/Motor Area -body size and growth rate -motor skills (creeping, walking, grasping, etc.)	Normative/Maturational (Arnold Gesell) Example: The head and thus the brain has the fastest growth rate during early childhood, therefore neurological growth is rapid and determines cognitive and motor growth.	Behaviorist (B.F. Skinner) Examples: Complex skills such as riding a bicycle or skating and physically related behavior such as eating nutritious food.

Figure 1-5 Theories of child development and learning. On the left side are the three major areas of development. The headings across the top indicate the two types of theories: developmental and behaviorist.

THEORY APPLICATION

To clarify the ideas of these important theorists, a brief example of an application of each theory follows.

Application 1: Piaget

A teacher of young children wants to know if preschool children really need to role play. From reading Piaget, the teacher finds that

Age	Areas				
	Physical Motor	Affective			Cognitive
	(Gesell)	Needs/Motivation (R.R. Sears)	Social/Personality (Erikson)	Personality (Freud)	(Piaget)
Birth 16 mo	The body develops rapidly from head to toe (lifts head, then shoulders, then sits up) and from the center out (reaches, then grasps).	Phase I: Early Learning Based on Innate Needs Food, comfort, personal contact	Crisis I: Trust versus Mistrust The relationship with the caretaker during feeding is central.	Oral Stage: The mouth is the source of pleasure; feeding and teething are central.	The Sensori-motor Period The child's sensory (hearing, tasting, touching, seeing, smelling) and motor skills develop and are the means for learning.
18 mo to two yr		Phase II: Secondary Behavioral Systems Based on Family-Centered Learning Dependency, aggression, sex role learning	Crisis II: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt The child strives for independence.	Anal Stage: Bowel movements are the source of pleasure. Toilet training is critical area.	The Preoperational Period Language and cognitive development are rapid as learning takes place through imitation, play, and other self-initiated activities.
three yr			Crisis III: Initiative versus Guilt The child plans and carries out activities and learns society's boundaries.	Phallic Stage: Sex role identification and conscience development are critical.	
six yr	By age six, the rate of development levels off.				

Figure 1-6 Stages of development from birth to age six

Piaget feels that dramatic play is essential to cognitive development. Through pretending to be someone else and through the use of objects for purposes other than their original intent (such as sand used to make a pie), children have their first symbolic experiences, Figure 1-7. These experiences are the basis for the more abstract symbol learning children do when they learn to use letters, numbers, and words as symbols.

Application 2: Erikson

A preschool teacher wonders how much freedom four- and five-year-olds need to work

on their own. From Erikson, the teacher finds that the child must learn to take initiative where appropriate but at the same time, learn the rules for the kinds of behaviors that are not allowed. The teacher realizes that a delicate balance must be found between being too permissive and too restrictive.

Application 3: Freud

Mrs. Ramirez, a day-care mother, is concerned that two-year-old Tasha is not responding to toilet training. Mrs. Ramirez talks to a Freudian-trained psychologist at the Health Center. The psychologist explains to Mrs.



Figure 1-7 Pretending that sand is “food” is one experience that reflects the child’s first use of symbols.

Ramirez that toileting is a very significant activity for a child Tasha’s age and should be handled gently and patiently.

Application 4: Maslow

Mr. Ogden, a kindergarten teacher, is concerned that the breakfast program at his school may not be funded next year. A good breakfast, he feels, is necessary not only for health reasons but also to give the child the security of knowing his basic needs will be met in a predictable fashion. The child who is concerned about where his next meal is coming from will not be able to concentrate on the social and cognitive needs that his school program is designed to fulfill.

Application 5: Rogers

The local early childhood education professional group is contacting state legislators to gain their support to lower the adult/infant ratio in child care centers in the state. This group of educators supports its stand with the ideas of several experts, including Carl Rogers. According to Rogers, children must be loved and feel secure in order to grow into loving adults. This

love and security comes through their relationships with their caregivers. Infants, especially, need a great deal of individual attention, and a low adult/infant ratio helps fulfill this need.

Application 6: Skinner

A day-care provider is worried about a very aggressive child she has in her home each day. She seeks help from a psychologist who suggests a Skinnerian approach. The day-care mother observes the child carefully each day for a week. She keeps a count of each time the child hurts another child or breaks a toy. She also notes each incident in which he does something that is not aggressive. The next week, she makes a point of giving him attention whenever he does anything positive and ignores his bad behavior unless he is hurting someone, in which case he is sent to a “time out” chair until he cools down. After three weeks, she again counts incidents of his aggressive behaviors and his positive behaviors. She finds that the positive behaviors have increased and the negative behaviors have decreased.

Application 7: Sears

A day-care director thinks that preschool children should be given plenty of TLC (tender loving care). Some of the teachers at the center disagree; they feel preschoolers should be more independent. The director consults someone who is familiar with the work of Robert R. Sears. His research indicates that the preschooler is still dependent on adults for physical and verbal attention. This dependence is important as a basis for later independence. It is not until school age that there is a sharp shift in dependency needs.

Application 8: Gesell

A mother is concerned about her three-and-a-half-year-old daughter’s behavior. Her daughter’s teacher reads to her from a book by Gesell and his coworkers:

Something unexpected and confusing seems to happen to the smooth, conforming three-year-old as he turns three-and-a-half. Where did all this turbulence and trouble come from? Why is there such opposition, so much refusal to obey or even to try? (Gesell et al., 1974, p. 191)

The mother reads on and is relieved to find her child is a normal, if negative, three-and-a-half-year-old girl.

CAUTIONS REGARDING THEORY

It is important to keep in mind that the major theories of development and learning were devised by white, middle-class theorists observing, for the most part, white, middle-class children. Some people feel that these theories must be used cautiously with minority and lower-class children. John Dill (1976) suggests, for example, that a special developmental theory must be devised for inner-city children that emphasizes the important aspects of their environment. He feels that the existing developmental theories can be used but with care.

It is essential that those who work with young children and their families consider each point of view about the child in relation to that child's social group. The social class environ-

ment of minority children, for example, is not always one that will help them achieve their potential (McAdoo, 1978). The research on lower-class and minority group children has focused mainly on self-concept, language development, and intelligence test performance with an emphasis on their weak points in these areas (Dill, 1976). Little has been done to pinpoint the strengths that have enabled these groups to cope with life and its many challenges.

SUMMARY

Both developmental- and behavior-oriented theories attempt to explain what happens as children grow and learn mentally, socially, and physically. The normative/maturational view gives descriptive information regarding what the "average" child does in all these areas. Each type of approach to explaining early development can be applied to everyday work with children. More details regarding the views of these theorist/researchers and their application to everyday practice are included in the units to come. Ideally child development and early childhood education should work hand in hand as one (Elkind, 1981). This text is designed to demonstrate how this goal can be achieved.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Go to the library. Find an article in the journal *Young Children* that describes a way to apply the theory of Piaget, Skinner, or Gesell to work with young children. Discuss the article in class, giving your evaluation of it.
2. Go to a curriculum resource center and interview the director. Ask the director if there are any theory-based materials at the center. If so, examine them. Share a list of the materials and an evaluation of them with a small group of fellow students.
3. Observe in a class for three-, four-, and/or five-year-olds for one hour. List behaviors, activities, and interactions observed under the most appropriate of the three categories shown in this chart.

Cognitive	Affective	Physical/Motor

- a. Are there more cognitive, affective, or physical/motor items on the list?
 - b. Was there any category for which no behavior was observed?
 - c. Compare your list with the lists of other students in the class.
4. Interview three teachers of preschool children. Find out if they make any applications of the theories of Piaget, Skinner, Freud, Maslow, Rogers, Sears, Erikson, or Gesell to their teaching. Ask the following questions.
 - a. Are you influenced by Piaget, Skinner, Sears, Erikson, Gesell, Freud, Maslow, or Rogers?
 - b. Tell me about what you do. Which activities are most important to you? How much freedom should children have?
 Compare your results with those of other students in the class. Determine which areas are emphasized most strongly.

REVIEW

- A. Explain what a theory is.
- B. Select the correct answers to the following.
 1. Theories that explain changes in the child as an interaction between growth and learning are called
 - a. learning theories.
 - b. growth theories.
 - c. developmental theories.
 - d. perceptual theories.