

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

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Child and Adolescent Development

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Preface

The study of child and adolescent development is nothing less than the study of fascinating and vital parts of life—the years before adulthood. This book, designed for introductory courses in child and adolescent development, has a threefold purpose: (1) to introduce the beginning student to the challenge and excitement of studying the infant, the child, and the adolescent from a lifespan perspective; (2) to demonstrate a framework for considering the developing child and adolescent in relation to the significant social environments of life; and (3) to present the theories, research, and principles of child and adolescent development in such a manner as to capture something of the day-to-day reality of children's and adolescents' relationships with their families, teachers, and friends. Some of the fascination of studying child and adolescent development lies in the recognition that it deals with our own lives; that is, what we are and what may have contributed to our own development.

Child and Adolescent Development is arranged to reflect the aim of the study: to examine the qualitative and quantitative changes in human beings over time. Following the first three introductory chapters, the book is organized chronologically, examining the changes from the prenatal period through late adolescence. Chapter 1 introduces the major concepts and principles of child and adolescent development; Chapter 2 surveys more closely the main theories introduced in Chapter 1; and Chapter 3 describes the specific factors that influence the development of human beings and the methods by which we study it. Chapters 4–17 proceed chronologically: Chapters 4 and 5 review the prenatal period and birth; Chapters 6, 7, and 8 examine infancy and toddlerhood; Chapters 9, 10, and 11 focus on the preschooler; Chapters 12, 13, and 14 discuss middle childhood; and Chapters 15, 16, and 17 conclude the text's lifespan perspective with a detailed coverage of adolescence.

The book's approach throughout is to treat child and adolescent development as a process that involves the *mutual, reciprocal, and dynamic* interaction of the individual with the significant social environments of his or her life. These social environments include the family, the community/neighborhood, the peer group, and the school, as well as "significant others"—parents, siblings, friends, and teachers. We call this approach to child development the *systems or ecological perspective*. In its simplest form, the systems approach is a way to understand the holistic and interactive dimensions of child behavior and development. It provides beginning students with a useful technique for approaching the significant issues and problems of child and adolescent development by: calling attention to the mutual adaptation between the developing child and the significant contexts of life, the systems perspective does *not* ask students to rely on simplistic, overly

general, or convenient solutions, but rather it helps students to ask the right questions about child development.

A significant aspect of this book is its complete and comprehensive consideration of the role of the family throughout the lifespan. The book gives credence to the relatively new concept of the family as a system: current research on the family is presented in a way that clearly shows how the family relates to the development of the individual at each stage of childhood and adolescence. The family-systems approach allows students to examine the contributions of the family to child growth and development. Further, attention is given to the impact of alternative family forms and of working mothers on child and adolescent development.

An effort has been made to balance necessary depth with a breadth of subjects that introduce students to important and unique perspectives in child development. Many pedagogical devices and special features are included in the text to aid students in their study. For example, each chapter includes the following basic aids:

- Chapter-opening outline.
- Drawings, charts, and photographs that complement and expand on the text.
- End-of-chapter summaries that highlight major points and concepts.
- Key terms. (A complete glossary is included at the end of the book.)
- Questions for discussion or self-study.
- Suggested readings (annotated lists of selected key books).

In addition, each chapter features application boxes that focus and expand on a specific topic, theory, or issue. The application boxes and the many real-life examples used throughout the book are designed to encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and opinions and to generate group discussion.

Four full-color photo essays beautifully depict the infant, the child, and the adolescent in key social environments that contribute to development: the family, the community/neighborhood, the school, and the peer group. The photo essays enhance and complement the key theories and concepts of child and adolescent development presented in the book.

The text is accompanied by an extensive package of supplementary materials for instructors and students. The *Study Guide*, developed by Pamela E. Chibucos and Thomas R. Chibucos of Northern Illinois University, contains a full range of material to aid students in better understanding the text. Each chapter in the guide includes a list of objectives, important terms and concepts, study questions, discussion questions, self-tests, practice exercises, and suggested activities. A *Test Bank*, also prepared by Pamela E. Chibucos and Thomas R. Chibucos, contains over 2,000 test items and essay questions for each chapter, as well as two midterm and two final exams. The *Test Bank* is available in booklet form and in computerized versions for Apple II and IBM-PC. A comprehensive *Instructor's Manual*, written by Phyllis Click of Moorpark College, is also available. It contains a section of general information to aid in planning and conducting a course: included are sample syllabi, suggestions for group discussion and role playing, study projects, the use and sources of audio-visual material, and other information to assist in creating an exciting course. A second section is arranged by chapter and includes teaching goals, chapter summaries, ideas for classroom discussion, and suggested audio-visual materials. Overhead transparencies of selected text material are available from the publisher on request.

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