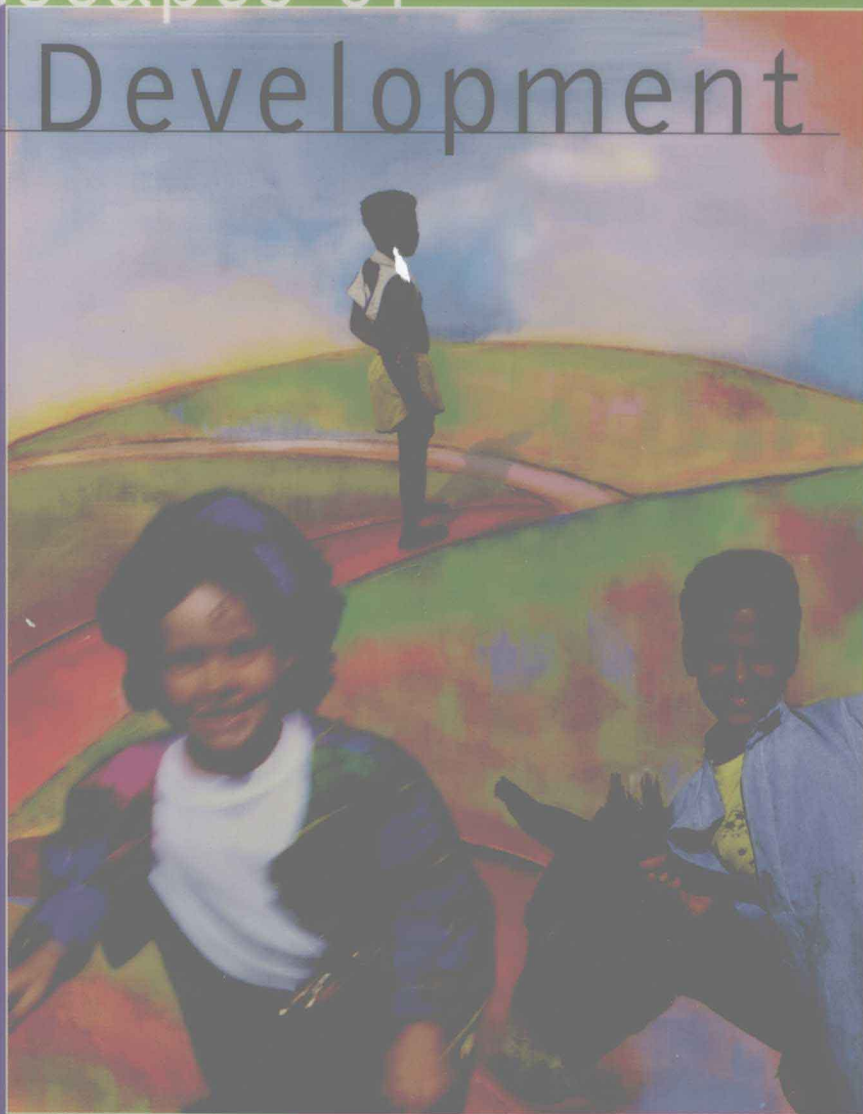


Landscapes of Development

An Anthology
of Readings



Laura E. Berk



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An Anthology of Readings

LAURA E. BERK

Illinois State University



Wadsworth Publishing Company

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Preface

In preparing this anthology of readings in child development, my goal is to expand students' knowledge of current, high-interest topics in a way not possible in a general textbook. As I planned the book's contents and invited authors to participate, its overall theme—increasingly prominent in contemporary theory and research—quickly took shape. Together, the contributions highlight the impact of diverse contexts on children's development. Each author places special emphasis on social and cultural influences. Children's relationships with parents, caregivers, teachers, peers, and (indirectly but no less important) government officials and advocates in the wider world are regarded as crucial for safeguarding their well-being. At the same time, the role of biological processes in development is given substantial attention, through such topics as prenatal and birth complications, genetic counseling, sleep, temperament, attention deficits, pubertal maturation, and adolescent depression.

In addition, all selections in this book explore the vital link between theory, research, and applications. Each contribution considers research-based practices aimed at supporting and furthering development. Many parts of the text discuss the current condition of children and families and show how theory and research have sparked successful interventions. In this way, the volume makes child development knowledge relevant for its readers.

Finally, all entries have been selected for both their depth of coverage and readability. Rather than focusing narrowly on single studies and the technicalities of research methodology, almost all the contributions present reviews of theory and research written in an appealing, accessible style. The few that do present

single studies illustrate major contemporary methods (such as longitudinal and ethnographic research), provide unique insights into biological, social, and cultural contexts, and are prepared in a nontechnical style. The book is rich in everyday examples of children's experiences and behavior.

Organization and Coverage

This anthology is organized chronologically, a strategy that permits students to get to know children of each age period especially well. The infancy, childhood, and adolescent sections contain selections on all domains of development—physical, cognitive, emotional, and social. Consequently, the articles can also be assigned in topical order, according to the instructor's preference.

The book opens with a section on Ethics of Research with Young Participants. In doing so, this collection of readings emphasizes that a caring, compassionate approach to children should permeate all aspects of their lives—including the settings and experiences in which child development knowledge is gathered. Five parts follow:

- Beginnings: Prenatal Development and Birth
- Joining a New World: Infancy to Early Childhood
- The Play and School Years: Early to Middle Childhood
- Pathways to Maturity: Middle Childhood to Adolescence
- Looking Back, Looking Forward: Lifespan Implications

Each of these sections addresses fascinating questions and pressing concerns in children's lives. For example: Do nighttime sleeping arrangements affect the baby's sense of security? How does children's memory for personally meaningful experiences form? What do children understand about their own and others' emotions? How and why do some countries forge child-care policies sensitive to children's needs, whereas others do not? What can adults do to ensure that children develop healthy, varied food preferences? How can parents and teachers best support children's aesthetic sensibilities in the visual arts and music? What disciplinary practices work best with young children? How can we help ethnic minority children successfully negotiate two cultural worlds? What can families and schools do to foster a healthy sense of autonomy in adolescence? What impact do stressful childhood experiences have on adult adjustment?

In answering these and other questions, each contribution draws on a rich, current research base. And almost all take up the impact of cultural values and societal conditions on development.

Authors

A melting pot of experts from around the world contribute to contemporary child development research and the design of effective interventions and practices. The authors contributing to this book reflect this diversity. They come from North America, Australia, Europe, and Israel and represent a broad array of disciplines—developmental psychology, education, family studies, public health,

sociology, anthropology, nutrition, and medicine. Many contributors are researchers nationally and internationally recognized for their work. Others are particularly knowledgeable in applied areas and have spent part of their careers working directly with children. They bring special expertise to the discussions of research-based applications that permeate this volume.

Pedagogical Features

The pedagogical features of this book have been carefully designed to assist students in mastering its content and using what they have learned in their daily lives. The features are as follows:

- **Editor's Introductions:** "Advance organizers" for each chapter provide students with an overview of what they are about to read.
- **Chapter Quotes:** Quotes that reflect main points of each author's presentation are highlighted to strengthen students' comprehension and retention.
- **Bolded Terms and End-of-Book Glossary:** Key terms are bolded within each article and defined within the end-of-book glossary. The glossary contains over two hundred important terms and concepts in the field of human development. Its breadth reflects the extent to which the book's contents reinforce and extend the vocabulary to which students are introduced in a general textbook.
- **Evaluating Your Mastery, Critical Thinking, and Applying Your Knowledge:** Each article concludes with (1) multiple choice, true-false, and fill-in questions that permit students to evaluate their mastery; (2) short-answer essay questions that assist students in thinking critically about the implications of each chapter; and (3) learning activities that encourage students to become actively involved with the subject matter and apply what they have learned. The Critical Thinking questions and Applying Your Knowledge activities can serve as course assignments and springboards for class discussion.

Acknowledgments

The many months I spent planning this book and working with contributing authors were generously supported by a Lillian de Lissa Fellowship, de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia, and by the College of Arts and Sciences, Illinois State University. Special thanks to Glenn Cupit for arranging my three-month stay at the de Lissa Institute; to Ann Veale, Head of School, for handling many details that made my visit to Australia stimulating and productive; to Alexandra Diamond and Jessica Friedberg for working with me on the book's pedagogy; and to Gillian Harvey for assisting with manuscript preparation. The entire staff of the de Lissa Institute extended warm hospitality and friendship to me during my fellowship term. I am grateful to each one of them.

I have been privileged to work with a very talented editorial team at Wadsworth Publishing Company. My appreciation to Sabra Horne, with whom

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I am pleased to donate all royalties from this book to the de Lissa Institute of Early Childhood and Family Studies, University of South Australia, for the purpose of furthering the professional development of its staff and students.

Laura E. Berk



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PART I



Ethics in Research with Young Participants



Behavioral Research Involving Children

A Developmental Perspective on Risk

ROSS A. THOMPSON
University of Nebraska



Research risks vary with the age of the child in complex ways: Some decrease with increasing age, while others increase as the child matures, and some remain essentially stable over development.



Young children are less likely to be stressed by a concern with the researcher's motives and intentions until they have developed an ability to derive psychological inferences about what other people are thinking or intending.



While younger children may be oblivious to the subtle cues, demands, and judgments of their performance that occur in a research context, older children and adolescents are not only likely to perceive these implicit messages accurately but may also be affected adversely by them....



With respect to research participation, these findings suggest that when children experience negative situations for which they are not responsible, younger children may nevertheless be vulnerable to a variety of negative self-conscious emotions, which reflect a negative self-assessment that may not be justified by the circumstances.



In research settings, therefore, young children are likely to respond to researchers with immediate respect and obedience, even when they encounter unreasonable or illegitimate demands, and are more susceptible to coercive research practices as a result.



This analysis of developmental changes in vulnerability to research risk suggestion, however, that along with the conventional risk-benefit analysis, ethical review must also be concerned with establishing and maintaining standards of *decent treatment* of the children who participate in social and behavioral research.



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Ross Thompson's developmental analysis of research risks is a fitting opening to a book that highlights the role of relationships and culture in child development. A caring and compassionate approach to children and adolescents must encompass the practices used to investigate their behavior. Compared with adults, children are less capable of benefiting psychologically from involvement in research investigating their behavior. Yet the risks to their physical and psychological well-being can, at times, be considerable.

How can we make sure that children and adolescents are subjected to the least research risk possible? As Thompson points out, one valuable resource is our expanding knowledge of age-related capacities and individual differences. Research risks vary with development in complex ways. Some risks increase with age, others decrease, and still others occur at many or all ages. And personal characteristics and life circumstances can make some children more vulnerable to harm than others.

Reconciling risks with a study's potential for advancing knowledge and improving children's life condition is crucial because an understanding of child development is of great value to society. Given the complexity of children's research risks, Thompson presents a powerful argument for adding standards of decent treatment to the risks-benefits equation. Among factors that require special consideration in research with young participants are reactions to stress, threats to self-concept, tendency to yield to authority figures, invasion of personal privacy, and debriefing following deceptive research procedures.

One of the most difficult components of the ethical review of social and behavioral research is assessing potential risks to research participants. While procedures for ensuring privacy, confidentiality of research materials, and informed consent can be relatively well-defined, assessing potential risks is inherently more ambiguous because it depends on characteristics of the particular research procedure in relation to the specific subject population. Moreover, members of **Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)** are often discouraged from conducting a fine-grained appraisal of research risk because of their limited expertise in the specific research field, a reluctance to question their colleagues' ethical competence, and a bias in favor of approval of research protocols (Williams, 1984).

Consequently, there is reason for concern that this component of the ethical review process is sometimes neglected, despite its importance for safeguarding subjects' rights as research participants. Concern is especially warranted in behavioral research involving children because of their unique vulnerability in research settings. Children are vulnerable because of their more limited cognitive competencies and experimental backgrounds, which constrain their capacities to understand and defend their rights as research participants and to make reasoned decisions concerning research participation. They are also vulnerable because of their limited social power, which impairs their ability to exercise independent decision making concerning research participation when parents (for example, school personnel) and researchers support their involvement in research. Finally, children are also vulnerable because of their ambiguous standing in the law (Baumrind, 1978; Melton, 1987), which undermines their control not only over participation in research (with parents exercising **proxy consent**), but also over the disposition of research materials, their withdrawal from research participation, and other decisions normally

accompanying research involvement. For these reasons, social and behavioral research involving children mandates an even more sensitive appraisal of risk because children have limited capacities to resist intrusions into their rights as research participants.

The purpose of this article is to contribute to more sensitive risk-assessment by proposing the need for a complex portrayal of developmental changes in vulnerability to research risk. Children are heterogeneous population, varying in developmental competencies as well as in background characteristics. Research risks vary with the age of the child in complex ways: Some decrease with increasing age, while others increase as the child matures, and some remain essentially stable over development. Because vulnerability to research risk does not uniformly decline with age, risk-assessment must compass these developmental changes in vulnerability, as well as differences in the background characteristics of children.

I will outline some of these age-related changes in vulnerability to research risk, and I will also argue that judgments of risk with children must become increasingly focused on establishing and maintaining the standards of decent treatment of minors who are research participants. By supplementing the conventional risk-benefit assessment with more prescriptive treatment norms governing studies with children, researchers and IRB members can remedy some of the existing difficulties with risk-benefit assessment and underscore the special considerations mandated for children as research participants.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN VULNERABILITY TO RESEARCH RISK

The ethical review of research involving minors commonly begins with the reasonable assumptions

Thompson, R. A. (1990, March/April). Behavioral research involving children: A developmental perspective on risk. *IRB*, 12(2), 1-6. © The Hastings Center. Reprinted by permission.