

# Developmental Psychology:

An Introduction Third Edition

Biehler/Hudson



YASUN KUTSUKAWA



KEVIN VOORHIES



LAUREN FELTS



BRIDGET DOLAN



DALAL MLD



KIM BRENNAN



STEVANIE SCOLA

# DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

AN INTRODUCTION  
**THIRD EDITION**

ROBERT F. BIEHLER

LYNNE M. HUDSON  
University of Toledo / Ohio

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# PREFACE

The required text for the very first graduate course taken in 1950 by the senior author of this book was the first edition of the *Manual of Child Psychology* (1946) edited by Leonard Carmichael. At 1,068 double-column pages it was easily the most formidable text the fledgling graduate student had ever encountered but he contented himself with the thought that it probably contained just about all there was to know about developmental psychology. In 1954, the year the senior author taught his first course in developmental psychology, he experienced the ego-building satisfaction of meriting a free examination copy of the second edition of the *Manual* that was published that year. The second edition contained 1,295 double-column pages and served as *the* basic source for lecture outlines. The third edition of the *Manual* (edited by Paul Mussen as the successor to Leonard Carmichael) was published in 1970 and con-

tained 2,391 pages in two volumes. The fourth edition, published in 1983, contains 3,862 pages in four volumes.

This comparison of the various editions of the developmental psychologist's "bible" gives a rough indication of the explosion of scientific knowledge about development that has occurred during the last thirty-five years. But these figures don't tell the whole story. In the 1950s and 1960s, most courses in developmental psychology were concerned with aspects of behavior up to the end of the adolescent years—period. It was assumed that since obvious signs of development stopped at that point, analyses of development should stop at that point. However, starting in the 1970s and continuing to an even greater extent in the 1980s, there has been a trend toward acknowledging that development continues throughout the life span. Research on adulthood and later maturity has

expanded to such an extent that scientific information about aspects of behavior during later stages of life now is summarized in handbooks that equal in size and thoroughness the original edition of the *Manual of Child Psychology*. Reflecting this change, courses, and texts for those courses, often include coverage of the transition from adolescence to adulthood and aging.

One inescapable conclusion that can be drawn from these observations is that it is impossible to summarize all, or even most, scientific information about the nature of developmental psychology, particularly in a text that will be covered in one semester or quarter. Authors of texts such as this one must therefore decide how much to include and how much to leave out. The temptation at first is to be as comprehensive as possible. One risk of using an encyclopedic approach, though, is that students may respond to their text in developmental psychology the same way a 10-year-old girl responded to a book on penguins written by an enthusiastic expert. She returned it to the book club with a critique that was a marvel of succinctness. She wrote: "This book gives me more information about penguins than I care to have." In order to avoid giving readers of *Developmental Psychology: An Introduction* more information than they care to have, a selective rather than encyclopedic approach has been adopted. The selection of topics and research reflects the authors' conception of a core of basic knowledge likely to be of interest and value to students. At the same time, it is organized and presented in a manner that facilitates the presentation of supplementary material by instructors in lectures and discussions.

Chapter 1, a capsule history of developmental psychology, outlines a chronology of key ideas introduced by leading theorists and also acquaints the reader with methods to

study development. The historical overview serves to familiarize the reader with the names and contributions of scientists whose work is emphasized in later chapters. It also reveals how research interests and conclusions are influenced by the spirit of the times and acquaints students with the concept that replacement of once-accepted ideas by new interpretations reflects a strength, rather than a weakness, of scientific study.

Chapter 2 summarizes the nature of the most influential theories of psychology. An outline of the stage theories of Freud, Erikson, and Piaget calls attention to the progression of age-related aspects of social, interpersonal, and cognitive development discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Descriptions of behavioral theory, social learning theory, and information processing supply background so that subsequent discussions of concepts and conclusions based on those theoretical conceptions can be understood more completely than if they were simply noted in passing.

The beginning of human life is traced in separate chapters on developmental behavioral genetics (Chapter 3) and prenatal development and birth (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 summarizes differences of opinion about the hypothesis that experiences occurring during the first few years are more significant than those that occur at any later stage. Evidence and arguments are presented to support the view that there is change as well as continuity in personality development over the life span, and that all stages of development are important.

Next, chapters covering physical, cognitive, interpersonal, and personality development at four age levels (the first two years, two to five, six to twelve, and adolescence and youth) are presented. For each age level, there is one chapter each on physical, cogni-



tive, interpersonal, and personality development; sixteen in all. These age spans were selected because they represent life stages that are marked off by easily recognizable turning points. Chapters on identical sets of topics for each age span make it possible for instructors to use either an age-span or a topical approach in structuring a course. The chapters might be assigned in order by instructors preferring an age-level progression, or the various chapters on physical development can be assigned, followed by the chapters on cognitive development, and so on.

Single chapters on adulthood and later maturity included at the end of the book make it possible for instructors to use a life-span approach if they so desire. When the book is used as the text for courses covering development through adolescence and youth only, the final two chapters can be omitted.

Even though this book is less encyclopedic than many texts on developmental psychology, it still provides the reader with a substantial number of facts, concepts, and theories. Several features of the text help students retain, recall, and apply important information. First, the clear organization of the book makes it possible for the reader to easily grasp how any chapter fits into the whole pattern of the presentation. The history of developmental psychology and the outline of developmental theories presented in the first two chapters provide general background and establish structure for the remainder of the book. The stage theories in particular are referred to frequently in later chapters and serve to make the reader aware how points being discussed at a particular age level fit in the overall scheme of development. Most of the chapters are short and concise, devoted to aspects of a single topic and/or age level, and easy to grasp. Second, lists of Key Points are provided at the beginning of each chapter

and these points are emphasized by marginal notations printed opposite relevant sections of text. The opening page of each chapter lists the Key Points under major headings and provides an overview of the chapter. The margin notes alert students to parts of each chapter that merit special attention and are likely to be stressed (at the instructor's discretion) on exams. Supplementing the Key Points, which often clarify important terms and concepts, a glossary is provided at the end of the book. Finally, concise summaries are provided at the end of each chapter.

Jerome Bruner once observed that "We teach a subject not to produce little living libraries on the subject, but rather to get a student to think as a mathematician [or psychologist] does . . . to take part in the process of knowledge-getting" (1966, p. 72). Although this book is not intended to produce "living libraries," it is intended to help the reader become reasonably well-informed about a selection of current scientific knowledge about development. At the same time, an effort is made to persuade readers of this book that they should occasionally think as psychologists, make direct observations (during and after taking course work) of individuals at various stages of development, and relate their conclusions to the conclusions of specialists. At the end of Chapter 1 a description of ways the reader might make personal use of the various methods described in the historical survey is presented, and many of the end-of-chapter Suggestions for Further Study feature do-it-yourself projects.

A Study Guide is offered to enhance learning and understanding. Designed to help students organize information about the Key Points and to learn these points quickly, easily, and thoroughly, the Study Guide can be used in preparing for exams. To facilitate mastery of difficult or hard-to-remember in-

formation, suggested study techniques and memorization aids are offered.

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Robert F. Biehler

Lynne M. Hudson, University of Toledo

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