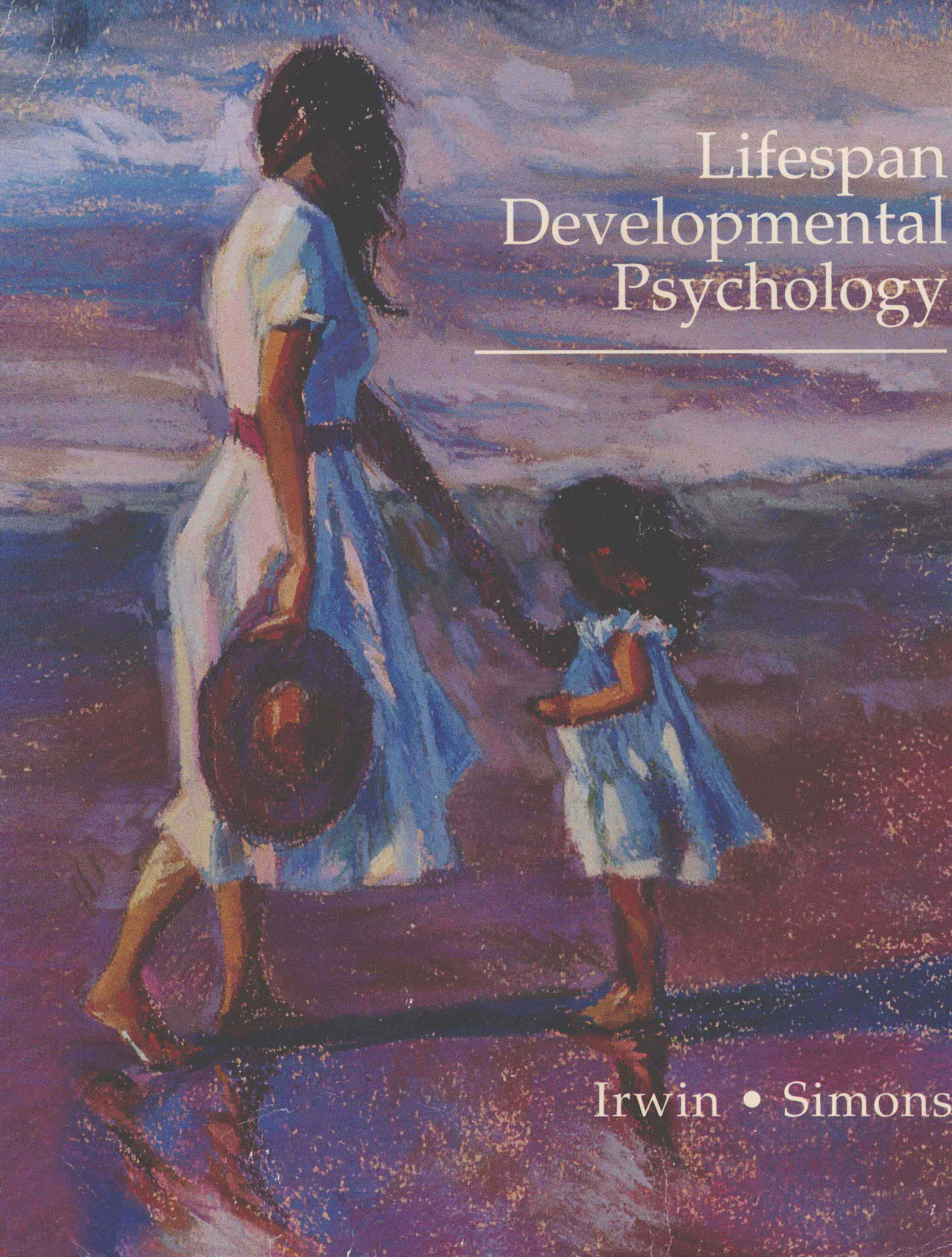

# Lifespan Developmental Psychology

Irwin • Simons

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# Preface

Welcome to our lifespan developmental psychology textbook. The preface is a good place to begin your exploration of a book because it points out the main features and topics of the book, and helps you to browse through the book in a more informed manner. We encourage students and faculty to scan the various chapters of the book before settling down to learn the material in more depth. Look for the following features as you explore the chapters.

**The study guide is incorporated in the textbook.** Students who actively read textbooks—quizzing themselves along the way, doing periodical mini-reviews, and using mnemonics to remember material learn more than students who just read the chapter from start to finish. For many textbooks, students can buy study guides that help in learning and reviewing material, but buying both a book and a study guide is fairly expensive. This textbook includes guided reviews, practice multiple choice items, and study suggestions for each chapter without adding to the cost of the textbook. In addition to twenty review multiple choice questions at the end of the chapters, you will find several suggestions for activities and discussion in the *Exploring Human Development* and *Discussing Human Development* sections. Using these suggestions will make the material more engaging and meaningful for you.

**The book features multicultural information.** Each chapter includes a boxed feature on a cultural aspect of developmental psychology. Some of the boxes feature ethnic diversity in the United States while others feature a global approach to cultural diversity. More importantly, multicultural information is included throughout each chapter rather than limited to just the boxed feature. Some of the multicultural information is theoretical in nature, such as coverage of racial identity theory, while other information features a specific research study, such as the extensive long-term nutritional research being conducted in China. The authors have selected a variety of cultural topics and important research studies.

**The book also looks at gender and age effects in development.** In every chapter, important aspects of gender effects are covered, while also emphasizing that men and women are more similar than different. Biological, psychological, and socialized gender effects are discussed. Every lifespan developmental book explores issues of age, but sometimes the effects of aging and age stereotypes are glossed over. This textbook devotes greater than average space to development during adulthood and looks at both the positive and negative aspects of being various ages. Infancy, childhood, and adulthood are explored in terms of physical development, cognitive development, and psychosocial development. The authors also look at the effects of gender and ethnicity on persons of various ages.

**The book carefully balances research findings and practical information.** It is important to cover well-known and informative research findings as well as to describe some of these studies in depth so that students get a sense of how psychology is "done." It is also important that students understand how psychological findings can be usefully applied. Therefore, we have chosen several topics and research studies that many students will find relevant to their own lives. Each chapter, for example, has a boxed feature on some aspect of parent-child interaction. These boxed features cover a wide variety of topics, ranging from the effects of parent-child bonding to caring for aging parents. Family issues, such as parenting newborns and stepfamily adjustments, are covered throughout the chapters. Moreover, we have included information on a variety of problems that many individuals face during their lifetime, such as eating disorders, domestic violence, substance abuse, mourning, divorce, and religious issues.

## Supplementary Materials

We have worked with our publisher to produce an outstanding, integrated teaching package to accompany our text. We know how important these materials can be in teaching effectively, so we wrote the major ancillaries ourselves. We have already mentioned the many features of the built-in study guide feature of the textbook.

Another key element of the teaching package is the *Instructor's Course Planner*. This flexible planner provides a variety of useful tools to enhance teaching efforts, reduce workload, and increase enjoyment. For each chapter of the text, the *Planner* provides a summary outline, learning objectives, key terms, research projects, classroom

activities, discussion topics, minilecture topics, essay questions, and a transparency guide. The *Planner* also contains a section on "Ethical Practices in Research with Human Subjects" and a chapter-by-chapter videotape list. The *Instructor's Course Planner* is conveniently housed within an attractive 11″ × 13″ × 9″ carrying case. This case is designed to accommodate the complete ancillary package by containing each chapter's material within a separate hanging file. This allows instructors to keep all of their class materials organized at their fingertips.

Because we are committed to all aspects of this text project, we also wrote all the questions for the printed *Test Item File.* This comprehensive test bank includes over 1,800 multiple-choice test questions that are keyed to the text and learning objectives. Each item is also designated as factual, conceptual, or applied, based upon the first three levels of Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.*

The *Brown and Benchmark Developmental Psychology Transparency/Slide Set* consists of 100 newly developed acetate transparencies or slides. These full-color illustrations include graphics from various outside sources. Created by Lynne Blesz-Vestal, these transparencies were expressly designed to provide comprehensive coverage of all major topic areas generally covered in developmental psychology. A comprehensive annotated guide provides a brief description of each transparency and helpful suggestions for classroom use.

The *Brown and Benchmark Customized Reader* allows instructors to select up to 100 journal or magazine articles from a menu provided by Brown and Benchmark sales representatives. The selected readings are then custom printed for students and bound into an attractive 8 1/4″ × 11″ book, giving instructors the opportunity to create their own student reader.

*TestPak 3.0* is an integrated computer program designed to print test masters; to permit on-line computerized testing; to help students review text material through an interactive self-testing, self-scoring quiz program; and to provide instructors with a gradebook program for classroom management. Test questions can be found in the *Test Item File,* or instructors may create their own. Professors may choose to use Testbank A for exam questions and Testbank B in conjunction with the quiz program. Printing the exam requires access to a personal computer—an IBM that uses 5.25- or 3.5-inch diskettes, an Apple IIe or IIc, or a Macintosh. TestPak requires two disk drives and will work with any printer. Diskettes are available through a local Brown and Benchmark sales representative or by phoning Educational Services at 1–800–338–5371. The package contains complete instructions for making up an exam.

A large selection of videotapes is also available to adopters, based on the number of textbooks ordered directly from Brown and Benchmark Publishers.

## Acknowledgments

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We dedicate this book to:

My wife Marilyn, and son, Ben,
who add each day to my
understanding of human development.

*Donald B. Irwin*

My family, my teachers,
my colleagues, and my students.

*Janet A. Simons*



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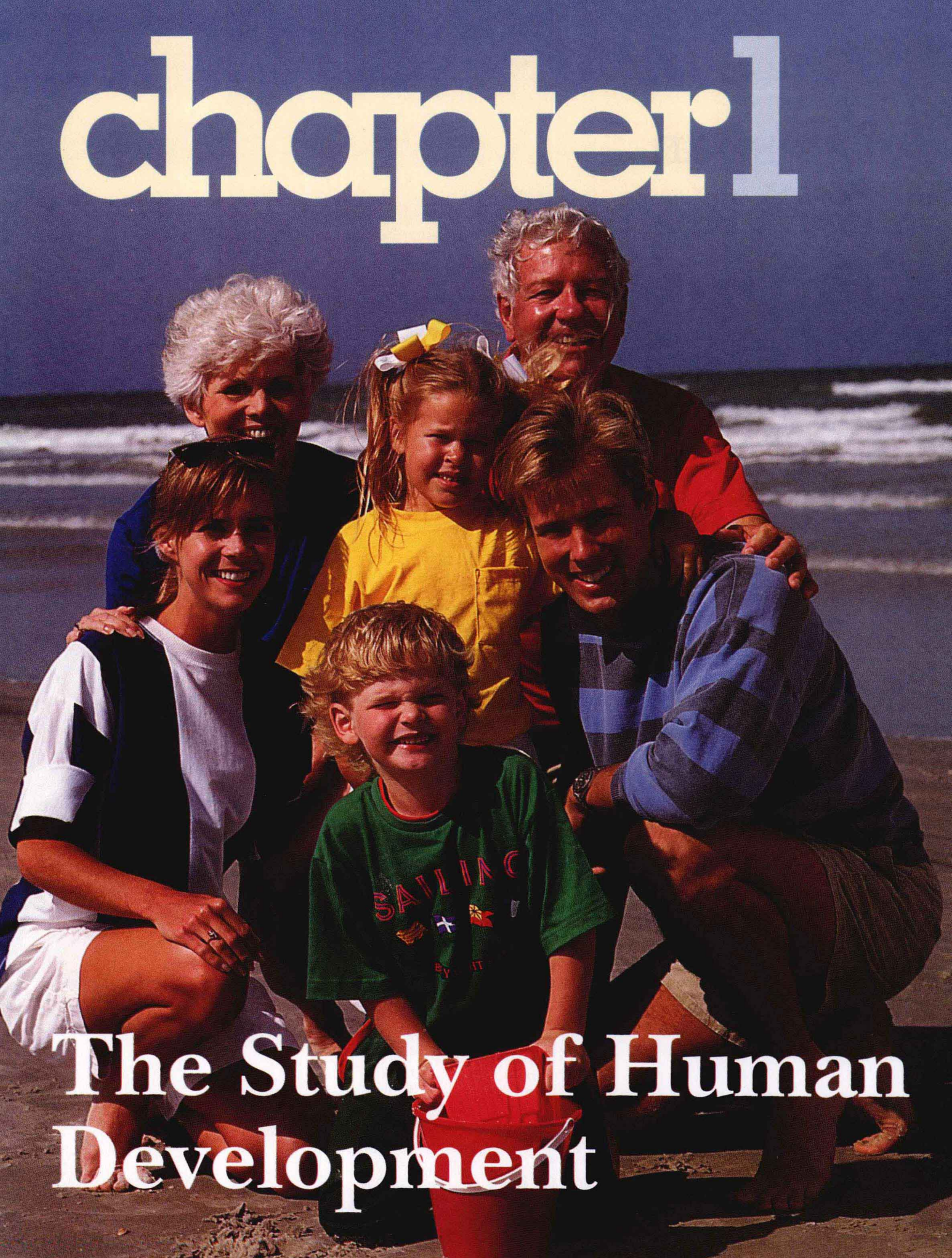
# Lifespan Developmental Psychology

# chapter 1



# The Study of Human Development

## *Outline*

**The Study of Human Development Through the Ages**
- Philosophical Roots
- Historical Views of Children
- The Scientific Beginnings of Lifespan Development
- The Early Child Study Movement
- Developmental Psychology in the United States

**Theoretical Perspectives of Human Development**
- Major Psychological Perspectives
  - *The Biological Perspective*
  - *The Behavioral-Learning Perspective*
  - *The Cognitive Perspective*
  - *The Psychodynamic Perspective*
  - *The Humanistic-Existential Perspective*
- Comparing the Perspectives
- Major Developmental Models
- A Lifespan Developmental Perspective
  - *The Zeitgeist: The Spirit of the Times*
  - *The Ortgeist: The Spirit of the Place*
  - *Complexity of Human Development*

**Research Methodologies**
- Naturalistic Observation and Case Studies
  - *Naturalistic Observation*
  - *Case Studies*
- Surveys and Interviews
- The Correlational Method
- The Experimental Method: Basic Research Design

**Experimental Techniques Used With Developmental Research**
- Cross-Sectional Studies
- Longitudinal Studies
- Sequential Studies

**Research Limitations**
- Research Ethics
  - *Deception*
  - *Invasion of Privacy*
  - *Lasting Effects*
  - *Rights of Children as Subjects*
  - *Rights of Anencephalic Infants*
- Research Problems
  - *Operational Definitions*
  - *Experimenter Bias*
  - *Subject Bias*
- Research Limitations
  - *Statistical Concerns*
  - *The Limits of Knowledge*
- Using Research
  - *Research Articles*
  - *Psychology and the Mass Media*

**General Developmental Issues and Principles**
- The Nature Versus Nurture Issue
  - *Research: Twin Studies*
  - *Other Research Methods*
- Other Psychobiological Developmental Issues
  - *Outmoded Psychobiological Developmental Principles*
  - *Current Psychobiological Developmental Principles*

## *Key Terms*

**Lifespan developmental psychology**
**Nurture**
**Nature**
**Biological perspective**
**Behavioral-learning perspective**
**Cognitive perspective**
**Psychodynamic perspective**
**Humanistic-existential perspective**
**Organismic model**
**Mechanistic model**
**Contextual model**
**Zeitgeist**
**Ortgeist**
**Cross-sectional studies**
**Longitudinal studies**
**Sequential designs**
**Cephalocaudal principle**
**Proximodistal principle**
**Maturation**
**Critical periods**

## *Learning Objectives*

1. Discuss the philosophical roots and the scientific beginnings of the study of human development.
2. Describe beliefs about historical views of children.
3. Describe the characteristics of each of the five psychological perspectives, and list the advantages and disadvantages of each approach.
4. Compare and contrast the five psychological perspectives in terms of their overemphasized and de-emphasized factors.
5. Define the organismic, mechanical, and contextual models, and explain which perspectives emphasize these different developmental models.
6. Describe each of the major research methods, and list their advantages and disadvantages.
7. Explain the basic features of the experimental method.
8. Describe the basic features of cross-sectional, longitudinal, and sequential studies, and explain how each of these studies is useful in developmental research.
9. List and explain the general features of ethical research.
10. Discuss how and why experimenters control problems associated with vague terminology, experimenter bias, and subject bias.
11. Compare and contrast the various sources for psychological information.
12. Debate the role of nature and of nurture in human development.
13. List and describe general principles of physical development.
14. Compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative development.
15. Describe how the Ortgeist and Zeitgeist influence development.

**One cannot step in the same river twice. (*Heraclitus*)**
**You can't go home again. (*Wolfe*)**
**The only constant is change. (*Swift*)**

As philosophers, scientists, and writers, both ancient and modern, have recognized, everything is constantly changing—nothing remains the same. **Lifespan developmental psychology** is the study of changes in peoples' lives from conception to death. You were conceived, nurtured in a womb, born, and cared for in infancy. You grew through childhood, experienced adolescence, and are now somewhere in your adult years. Thus far, your development has involved a mind-boggling number of changes, and many changes are yet to come. Developmental psychologists try to unravel the complex interaction of factors that constitutes development across the lifespan.

## Exploring Your Own Development

In this chapter, you will learn about different perspectives on lifespan development, but no perspective is more important than your personal perspective. The information and ideas presented throughout this text will only become meaningful as you relate them to the events of your life. One way to do this is by personalizing the developmental timelines presented in Figure 1.1. The divisions on each timeline represent a typical course of events across the lifespan for that dimension. Space has been left between each line for you to write in significant events in your life.

Begin with the chronological age line. Above the zero at the left, write your birthdate; then, above each decade marker, write the year you were that age. Place a marker at the appropriate spot to mark today's date, and write today's date above it (e.g., if you are now 25, the mark would go halfway between the markers for 20 and 30). For each decade, write in any significant political/economic/cultural events that occurred during that time period. For example, if you were born in 1965, a major event of the next 10 years was the Vietnam War.

Above and below the occupational timeline, write information and dates for your school attendance, graduations, first job, part-time jobs, career decisions, college or vocational training, career achievements (promotions, pay raises, etc.), and job and career changes. Repeat the process with information and dates for the family cycle timeline. Finally, on the economic cycle timeline, write dates for when you achieved partial or complete financial independence. Also include dates for any major purchases, such as a car, boat, stereo, or home.

For fun, on the unused portions of your developmental timelines, write other significant life events that you anticipate. Some markers, such as graduating from college by a certain date, may become personal goals, while others may represent anticipated outcomes, such as retirement at a particular age or the arrival of your first grandchild.

Compare your markers with the "typical" ones presented in Figure 1.1. These markers represent society's norms for when these events and changes occur (Atchley, 1975). Although your markers may differ significantly from the typical ones presented, your own sense of being "on time" or "out of sync" is influenced by your perceptions of the appropriateness of the timing of your life events. Your perceptions of this may be different from someone else's perceptions. The difference is analogous to the difference in perspectives between a biography and an autobiography (Olney, 1980). Only you have the inner awareness of what living your particular life is like.

This exercise of defining the contexts of your development can become even more meaningful if you compare your markers with those of your classmates. If your class is typical of many today, you may be comparing information with a 39-year-old grandmother, a 39-year-old father of a toddler, and a 19-year-old with 39-year-old parents. By comparing your markers with those of others, you may begin to sense that development is less a regular, inevitable sequence of changes and more a multifaceted series of complex decisions and circumstances. Developmental psychologists use many types of research methods to understand the factors that influence change across the lifespan. In this book, you will learn about developmental psychology across the lifespan, but more importantly, you may gain a better understanding of your own development.

## The Study of Human Development Through the Ages

From the earliest times, philosophers have speculated about the nature of human existence and the factors that affect human lives. Over the centuries, three models emerged to describe the course of human development (Pongratz, 1967). The circular model, prominent in the classical period of ancient Greece, held that humans were static and embodied the idea that "nothing was ever new under the sun" (see Figure 1.2). The semicircular model, found in various historical periods, depicted development as birth, growth, decline, and death. The spiral model, appearing first in the 18th century, viewed development as cyclical but progressive. Thus, today when you say, "Like father, like son," or "People are no different now than they were then," you are expressing ideas that fit with the circular model. When someone mentions that "Forgetfulness is a sign of aging," the person is evoking the semicircular model. Finally, when you hear, "Kids are sure a lot smarter today," the speaker is stating a view consistent with the spiral model.

The emergence of the spiral model, with its optimistic outlook that development showed progressive improvement from generation to generation, followed the period of Enlightenment, during which there were major advances in the natural sciences. Increasingly, the scientists of the time sought to classify and develop relationships between all living and nonliving things (Butterfield, 1957). As they linked ideas together, the concept of evolution or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