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CHAPTER 1
HISTORY, THEORY, AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

CHAPTER-AT-A-GLANCE

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BRIEF CHAPTER SUMMARY

Child development is a field of study devoted to understanding constancy and change from conception through adolescence. It is part of a larger, interdisciplinary field called developmental science. Research on child development has been stimulated both by scientific curiosity and by social pressures to improve children's lives.

Child development is often divided into three broad domains—physical, cognitive, and emotional and social—and five age periods: prenatal, infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence. Researchers have proposed an additional period, emerging adulthood, for many contemporary youths in industrialized nations.

Theories of child development take a stand on three basic issues: (1) Is the course of development continuous or discontinuous? (2) Does one course of development characterize all children, or are there many possible courses? (3) Are genetic or environmental factors more important in development, and are individual differences stable or characterized by substantial plasticity? Contemporary researchers have shifted toward balanced positions on these issues.

At least since medieval times, childhood has been regarded as a distinct period of life. Scientific study of child development evolved quickly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the mid-twentieth century, a variety of child development theories emerged: Freud's psychosexual theory, Erikson's psychosocial theory, behaviorism and social learning theory, and Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory. Recent theoretical perspectives include information processing, developmental neuroscience, ethology and evolutionary developmental psychology, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. According to the dynamic systems perspective, the child's mind, body, and physical and social worlds form an integrated system that guides mastery of new skills.

Research methods commonly used to study child development include systematic observation; self-reports; the clinical, or case study, method; and ethnography, the study of a culture or social group. Investigators may use a correlational research design, which shows a relationship but does not allow inferences about cause and effect, or an experimental design, which uses independent and dependent variables to determine cause and effect. Experiments may be carried out in the field, or natural settings, or in the laboratory. To study how individuals change over time, investigators use special developmental research strategies, including longitudinal, cross-sectional, sequential, and microgenetic designs, each of which has distinct strengths and limitations.

Conducting research with children poses special ethical dilemmas because of children's vulnerability to physical and psychological harm. Guidelines have been developed to protect children's rights in research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to answer the following:

1.1a Describe the field of child development, along with factors that stimulated its expansion. (pp. 4–5, section 1.1)

1.1b Explain how child development is typically divided into domains and periods. (pp. 5–6, sections 1.1.1–1.1.2)

1.2 Identify three basic issues on which theories of child development take a stand. (pp. 7–11, sections 1.2–1.2.4)

1.3 Describe major historical influences on theories of child development. (pp. 11–14, sections 1.3–1.3.4)

1.4 Describe theories that influenced child development research in the mid-twentieth century. (pp. 14–20, sections 1.4–1.4.3)

1.5 Describe recent theoretical perspectives on child development. (pp. 21–30, sections 1.5–1.5.6)

1.6 Identify the stand taken by each major theory on the basic issues of child development. (p. 30, section 1.6)

1.7a Describe research methods commonly used to study children. (pp. 30–37, sections 1.7–1.7.1)

1.7b Distinguish between correlational and experimental research designs, noting strengths and limitations of each. (pp. 37–39, section 1.7.2)

1.7c Describe designs for studying development, noting strengths and limitations of each. (pp. 39–44, sections 1.7.3–1.7.4)

1.8 Discuss special ethical concerns that arise in doing research on children. (pp. 44–46, section 1.8)

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LECTURE OUTLINE

1.1 THE FIELD OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT (pp. 4–6, sections 1.1–1.1.2)

- **Child development** is a field of study devoted to understanding constancy and change from conception through adolescence. It is part of a larger, interdisciplinary field known as **developmental science.**
- Research in child development has both scientific and *applied* importance.
- Child development is often divided into three broad domains—*physical, cognitive,* and *emotional and social*—and five age periods: *prenatal, infancy and toddlerhood, early childhood, middle childhood,* and *adolescence.*
- For many contemporary youths in industrialized nations, *emerging adulthood*—from about age 18 to the mid- to late twenties—is a period of intensified exploration of options in love, career, and personal values.

1.2 BASIC ISSUES (pp. 7–11, sections 1.2–1.2.4)

- A **theory** is an orderly, integrated set of statements that describes, explains, and predicts behavior. A theory's continued existence depends on *scientific verification.*
- Theories of child development take a stand on three basic issues: (1) Is development **continuous** or **discontinuous** (taking place in **stages**)? (2) Does one course of development characterize all children, or are there many possible courses, affected by relationships between children and their **contexts**? (3) What are the roles of genetic and environmental factors in development (the **nature–nurture controversy**)? Is development characterized more by stability or by **plasticity**? Theorists have shifted toward balanced positions on these issues.
- The relative impact of early and later experiences varies greatly from one domain of development to another and across individuals, as research on **resilience** reveals.
- Increasingly, researchers take a *developmental systems perspective,* viewing developmental change as a perpetually ongoing process molded by a complex network of genetic/biological, psychological, and social influences.

1.3 HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS (pp. 11–14, sections 1.3–1.3.4)

- In medieval Europe, childhood was already viewed as a separate period of life.
- In the sixteenth century, the Puritans believed that children were born evil and stubborn and had to be civilized through harsh child-rearing practices.
- The seventeenth-century Enlightenment brought more humane conceptions of childhood, including John Locke's view of the child as a *tabula rasa,* or "blank slate."
- The eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau saw children as *noble savages* with an innate plan for orderly, healthy growth. Rousseau's philosophy includes the concepts of *stage* and **maturation.**
- In the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin's *theory of evolution* emphasized the adaptive value of physical characteristics and behavior.
- G. Stanley Hall and his student Arnold Gesell launched the **normative approach**, in which age-related averages are computed to represent typical development.
- French psychologists Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon constructed the first successful intelligence test, sparking tremendous interest in individual differences in development.

1.4 MID-TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEORIES (pp. 14–20, sections 1.4–1.4.3)

- The **psychoanalytic perspective** assumes that children move through a series of stages in which they confront conflicts between biological drives and social expectations. How these conflicts are resolved determines their ability to learn, to get along with others, and to cope with anxiety.
- In Sigmund Freud's **psychosexual theory,** three parts of the personality—*id, ego,* and *superego*—become integrated during five stages of development. Healthy personality development depends on the quality of the early parent–child relationship.
- Erik Erikson's **psychosocial theory** improved on Freud's vision, emphasizing the ego's positive contributions to development and adding three adult stages to Freud's five stages. Erikson recognized that normal development must be understood in relation to each culture's life situation.
- Despite its contributions, the psychoanalytic perspective is no longer in the mainstream of child development research, partly because it focuses too exclusively on the clinical approach.
- According to **behaviorism,** directly observable events—stimuli and responses—are the appropriate focus of study.
- Albert Bandura's **social learning theory** emphasizes *modeling* as a basis for development. Today, this theory is described as a *social-cognitive* approach.

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- Behaviorism and social learning theory have given rise to **applied behavior analysis,** with the goal of eliminating undesirable behaviors and increasing desirable responses.
- According to Jean Piaget's **cognitive-developmental theory,** children move through four broad stages, each characterized by qualitatively different ways of thinking: *sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational,* and *formal operational.* His theory encouraged the development of educational programs emphasizing discovery learning and direct contact with the environment.
- Piaget's theory has been challenged for underestimating the competencies of infants and preschoolers and for paying too little attention to social and cultural influences on development.

1.5 RECENT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES (pp. 21–30, sections 1.5–1.5.6)

- **Information-processing** researchers view the human mind as a symbol-manipulating system through which information flows. Their view of development is one of continuous change.
- **Developmental cognitive neuroscience** brings together researchers from psychology, biology, neuroscience, and medicine to study the relationship between changes in the brain and a child's cognitive processing and behavior patterns.
- **Developmental social neuroscience,** a complementary new area, focuses on the relationship between changes in the brain and emotional and social development.
- **Ethology** is concerned with the adaptive, or survival, value of behavior and its evolutionary history.
- A **sensitive period** is a time that is biologically optimal for certain capacities to emerge because the individual is especially responsive to environmental influences.
- John Bowlby applied ethological theory to the development of human infant–caregiver attachment.
- **Evolutionary developmental psychology** seeks to understand the adaptive value of species-wide cognitive, emotional, and social competencies as those competencies change with age.
- Lev Vygotsky's **sociocultural theory** focuses on how culture is transmitted from one generation to the next through social interaction—in particular, cooperative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society.
- Urie Bronfenbrenner's **ecological systems theory** views the child as developing within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment—**microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem,** and **macrosystem**—as well as a temporal dimension, the **chronosystem.**
- A new wave of systems theorists view children's development from a **dynamic systems perspective,** in which the child's mind, body, and physical and social worlds form an *integrated system* that guides mastery of new skills.

1.6 COMPARING CHILD DEVELOPMENT THEORIES (p. 30, section 1.6)

- Major theoretical perspectives in child development focus on different domains of development.
- Every theory takes a stand on the basic issues of child development.

1.7 STUDYING THE CHILD (pp. 30–44, sections 1.7–1.7.4)

- Common *research methods* include systematic observation, self-reports, clinical or case studies, and ethnographies.
- Systematic observation—either **naturalistic observation** in the field or **structured observations** in a laboratory—provides information about actual behavior but tells us little about the reasoning behind the responses.
- Self-reports include the **clinical interview,** in which researchers ask questions in a flexible, conversational style, and the **structured interview,** in which each participant is asked the same set of questions in the same way.
- The **clinical,** or **case study, method** brings together a wide range of information about a single child, allowing investigators to obtain as complete a picture as possible of that individual.
- **Ethnography** is a descriptive, qualitative technique directed toward understanding a culture or distinct social group through *participant observation.*
- Two main *research designs* are used to study human behavior: *correlational* and *experimental.*
- A **correlational design** reveals relationships between participants' characteristics and their behavior or development but does not allow researchers to infer cause and effect.
- A **correlation coefficient,** ranging from +1.00 to –1.00, describes how two variables are associated with one another.
- An **experimental design** permits inferences about cause and effect because researchers engage in **random assignment** of participants to two or more treatment conditions. Researchers manipulate an **independent variable** and investigate the effects on a **dependent variable,** while taking precautions to control for **confounding variables.**
- In *field experiments,* researchers assign participants randomly to different treatment conditions in natural settings.
- In *natural,* or *quasi-, experiments,* investigators research preexisting treatments, choosing participant groups carefully to ensure that their characteristics are as much alike as possible.

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- Designs for studying development include the **longitudinal design,** in which participants are studied repeatedly at different ages, and the **cross-sectional design,** in which groups of people differing in age are studied at the same point in time.
- Problems in conducting longitudinal research include participant dropout, *practice effects,* and **cohort effects.**
- Cross-sectional research may also suffer from cohort effects and does not provide evidence about development at the individual level.
- In a **sequential design,** investigators conduct several similar cross-sectional or longitudinal studies, or *sequences,* at varying times.
- The **microgenetic design** allows researchers to observe how change occurs within a "microcosm" of development by presenting children with a novel task and following their mastery over a series of closely spaced sessions.
- Research that combines an experimental strategy with either a longitudinal or a cross-sectional approach is becoming increasingly common.

1.8 ETHICS IN RESEARCH ON CHILDREN (pp. 44–46, section 1.8)

- Because children are more vulnerable than adults to physical and psychological harm, special ethical guidelines have been developed to ensure that the quest for scientific knowledge does not exploit them.
- Researchers seek advice from *institutional review boards (IRBs)* that follow U.S. federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects.
- The ethical principal of *informed consent* requires special interpretation with children, who cannot fully appreciate the research goals and activities.
- In addition to parental consent, children's own informed *assent* should be obtained, and special precautions should be taken in the use of deception and concealment.
- *Debriefing* may not work well with children because it can undermine their trust in adults.

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LECTURE ENHANCEMENTS

LECTURE ENHANCEMENT 1.1
Developmental Perspectives on Resilience in Vulnerable Children (p. 10, section 1.2.4)

Objective: To consider evidence for a bidirectional relationship between individual resilience and social support, with implications for designing interventions to promote resilience.

Masten, A. S., & Barnes, A. J. (2018). Resilience in children: Developmental perspectives. *Children, 5,* 98. doi:10.3390/children5070098

In this review of research in developmental resilience science, Masten and Barnes (2018) observe that the current "surge of global interest in resilience" may be motivated by growing concern about the risks to children's health and well-being posed by adverse life experiences, including "disasters, war, poverty, pandemics, climate change, and associated displacement." Defining *resilience* as a system's capacity to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten its survival or future development, these authors note that from a developmental perspective, resilience is not a trait but, rather, "a feature of complex adaptive systems, including … families, economies, ecosystems, and organizations" as well as individuals. Thus, as described in the Biology and Environment box on page 10, section 1.2.4, resilience depends on both genetically influenced characteristics (such as high intelligence or socially valued talents) and environmental influences, including family life as well as school and community experiences.

Masten and Barnes note that the past five decades have seen a shift away from a disease-oriented approach to resilience and toward a health-oriented view, in line with the increasing dominance of developmental systems theory as a framework for understanding individual development. The authors review evidence on the effectiveness of a range of interventions designed to foster resilience, noting the special role of children's health-care professionals, along with parents and teachers. This paper can be used as a basis for classroom discussion of ways in which schools and other institutions can help promote resilience, including both promotive factors (those associated with better outcomes at any level of risk) and protective factors, which have greater effects at high levels of risk.

LECTURE ENHANCEMENT 1.2
The "U.S. Immigrant Paradox": Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice (p. 36, section 1.7.1)

Objective: To consider changes in models of adaptation for immigrant youths, and the implications of these changes for research, policy, and practice.

Marks, A. K., Ejesi, K., & Coll, C. G. (2014). Understanding the U.S. immigrant paradox in childhood and adolescence. *Child Development Perspectives, 8,* 59–64. doi: 10.1111//cdep.12071

This article examines implications of the so-called *U.S. immigrant paradox* in childhood and adolescence. It can be used to expand discussion of the Cultural Influences box on immigrant youths (page 36, section 1.7.1), which cites evidence that children who are either first generation (foreign-born, immigrated with their parents) or second generation (American-born, with immigrant parents) often have more optimal developmental outcomes—in terms of both academic achievement and psychological adjustment—than their agemates who have native-born parents.

These authors cite evidence that, for today's immigrant youths, optimal modes of adaptation may include biculturalism rather than assimilation to the majority culture. Theoretical frameworks, however, have been slow to shift away from the assumption that immigrant youths will thrive as their families move toward full adoption of "American" ways. The authors suggest that bicultural models best capture optimal adaptation—for example, focusing on skills children need to coordinate their experiences across important everyday settings, such as home and school. Such models, they maintain, are more relevant to today's immigrant families and their U.S.-born children than are the older cultural assimilation models.

To enhance in-class discussion of adaptation by immigrant youths, the instructor can use the ideas presented in this article to provide an overview of the ways in which research models may influence thinking about minority populations and, consequently, may affect policy and practice.

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LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.1
True or False: Mid-Twentieth-Century Theories and Recent Theoretical Perspectives (pp. 14–30, sections 1.4–1.5.6)

Present the following exercise as an in-class activity or quiz.

Directions: Read each of the following statements and indicate whether it is *True* (T) or *False* (F).

_____ 1. According to Freud, in each stage of psychosexual development, parents walk a fine line between permitting too much or too little gratification of their child's basic needs.
_____ 2. Both Freud and Erikson emphasized that normal development must be understood in relation to each culture's life situation.
_____ 3. Behaviorism has been praised for acknowledging children's contributions to their own development.
_____ 4. In Piaget's theory, as the brain develops and children's experiences expand, they move through four broad stages, each characterized by qualitatively distinct ways of thinking.
_____ 5. Research indicates that Piaget underestimated the competencies of infants and preschoolers.
_____ 6. Information-processing researchers view the mind as a symbol-manipulating system through which information flows.
_____ 7. Developmental neuroscience can identify relationships between changes in the brain and cognitive processing, but it has little to say about social or emotional development.
_____ 8. According to Vygotsky, social interaction is necessary for children to acquire the ways of thinking and behaving that make up a community's culture.
_____ 9. The mesosystem consists of social settings that do not contain children but nevertheless affect children's experiences in immediate settings.
_____ 10. In Bronfenbrenner's theory, children are both products and producers of their environments.

Answers:

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. F
8. T
9. F
10. T

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.2
Keeping a Theory/Research Notebook (pp. 14–32, sections 1.4–1.7.1)

Among the many theories of child development, students are likely to find some more appealing and plausible than others. Encourage students to keep a theory/research notebook in which they construct a systematic list of their theoretical likes and dislikes. For each theory, ask students to list the concepts and principles they consider important and those they believe to be inadequate or incorrect. As students learn more throughout the course, ask them to revise their opinions periodically, noting research that supports their changing views. At the end of the course, students should have developed a personal perspective on child development—one that may emphasize a single theory or blend aspects of a number of theories.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.3
Applying Ecological Systems Theory to a Current Issue in Child Development (pp. 26–29, sections 1.5.5–1.5.6)

Have students form small groups and ask each group to select a current issue in child development that is widely discussed in the media—for example, the recent controversy regarding separating migrant children from their parents at the U.S. border, access to universal health care, state and federal policies regarding transgender children, the effects of child abuse and neglect, the obesity epidemic, or children's use of the Internet and social media.

After groups have selected their topics, ask students to consider how each level of the environment in the ecological systems approach may affect development, including bidirectional influences and the role of third parties. For example, a transgender child is likely grappling with family dynamics in the microsystem, school policies in the mesosystem, health-care access in the exosystem, and public policies in the macrosystem.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.4
Thinking About Research Methods and Designs (pp. 32–46, sections 1.7.1–1.8)

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Students can gain a greater appreciation for the research methods used by developmental psychologists by proposing data collection strategies of their own. Present the following scenarios to students:

(a) An investigator is interested in determining whether infant child care leads to an insecure attachment bond between children and their mothers during the first year of life as well as into the preschool years.
(b) An investigator wants to investigate whether a family-based intervention is more or less effective than individual counseling in protecting adolescents against obesity and eating disorders.
(c) A researcher wants to test the theory that early childhood isolation affects language development and social skills but not cognitive development.
(d) An investigator wants to determine whether sociability in children is related to school achievement and whether this relationship, if any, varies for children in preschool, elementary school, and middle school.
(e) A researcher wants to investigate the extent to which parental and peer models influence the development of social norms for helping and prosocial behavior among kindergartners.

For each scenario, ask students to answer the following questions:

(1) What research method and design would you choose for this study? Why?
(2) Would the results tell you anything about cause and effect? Why or why not?
(3) Would this study involve any special ethical considerations? If so, what are they?

LEARNING ACTIVITY 1.5
Cross-Sectional, Longitudinal, and Sequential Research Designs (pp. 40–44, sections1.7.3–1.7.4)

Present the following exercise as an in-class activity or quiz.

Directions: Each of the following statements pertains to cross-sectional, longitudinal, or sequential research designs. For each statement, determine which research design is being described.

1. The researcher studies groups of participants who differ in age at the same point in time.
2. The researcher is interested in whether frequent exposure to violent television in early childhood predicts aggressive and antisocial behavior in adulthood.
3. The researcher wants to investigate psychological well-being in middle childhood for groups of participants born a decade apart.
4. Age-related changes may be distorted because of participant dropout, practice effects, and cohort effects.
5. The researcher follows a sequence of samples (two or more age groups), collecting data on them at the same points in time.
6. This design does not permit the study of individual developmental trends. Age differences may be distorted because of cohort effects.
7. To investigate age-related changes in children's problem-solving skills, the researcher selects three samples—children born in 2008, children born in 2011, and children born in 2014—and tracks each group for five years.
8. To investigate how children of different ages process traumatic events, such as school violence, the researcher recruits children who were in grades 6, 9, and 12 in the 2017–2018 school year and interviews them about their responses to the shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in February 2018.
9. The researcher studies the same group of participants repeatedly at different ages.

Answers:

1. Cross-sectional
2. Longitudinal
3. Sequential
4. Longitudinal
5. Sequential
6. Cross-sectional
7. Sequential
8. Cross-sectional
9. Longitudinal

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ASK YOURSELF . . .

CONNECT: Provide an example of how one domain of development (physical, cognitive, or emotional/social) can affect development in another domain. (p. 5, section 1.1.1)

Each domain influences and is influenced by the others. For example, new motor capacities, such as reaching, sitting, crawling, and walking (physical), contribute greatly to infants' understanding of their surroundings (cognitive). When babies think and act more competently, adults stimulate them more with games, language, and expressions of delight at their new achievements (emotional and social). These enriched experiences, in turn, promote all aspects of development.

APPLY: Review Reiko's story in the introduction to this chapter. What factors likely contributed to her resilience in the face of wartime persecution, relocation, and internment? (pp. 3, 10, introduction and section 1.2.4)

During their years of wartime internment, Reiko's parents managed to provide Reiko and her siblings with affection and support, including encouragement to do well in the makeshift school at the internment camp. Reiko's close relationship with her parents, as well as social support from other children and teachers within the internment camp, helped protect her from the damaging effects of trauma, disruption, and persecution. After the war, when the family returned to their old neighborhood, Reiko was able to revive her friendship with Mary Frances, which helped her feel safe at school. In each case, Reiko's personal characteristics—her buoyant personality and active, curious nature —played a role in her resilience, making her receptive to positive experiences and relationships that compensated to some extent for the stresses caused by persecution, relocation, and internment.

REFLECT: Describe an aspect of your development that differs from a parent's or a grandparent's when he or she was your age. How might differing *contexts* be responsible? (pp. 8–9, section 1.2.2)

This is an open-ended question with no right or wrong answer.

CONNECT: What aspect of behaviorism made it attractive to critics of psychoanalytic theory? How did Piaget's theory respond to a major limitation of behaviorism? (pp. 16–20)

The early behaviorists sought to create an objective science of psychology that would study directly observable events—stimuli and responses. As psychologists wondered whether behaviorism might offer a more direct and effective explanation of the development of children's social behavior than the less precise concepts of psychoanalytic theory, several kinds of social learning theory emerged. The most influential emphasizes *modeling,* also known as *imitation* or *observational learning,* as a powerful source of development.

Behaviorism and social learning theory were criticized for offering too narrow a view of important environmental influences, which extend beyond immediate reinforcement, punishment, and modeled behaviors to people's rich physical and social worlds. They also underestimated children's contributions to their own development. Piaget did not believe that children's learning depends on reinforcers, such as rewards from adults. Rather, according to Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory, children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world.

Besides investigating children's understanding of their physical environment, Piaget explored their reasoning about the social world. He convinced the field that children are active learners whose minds consist of rich structures of knowledge.

APPLY: A 4-year-old becomes frightened of the dark and refuses to go to sleep at night. How would a psychoanalyst and a behaviorist differ in their views of how this problem developed? (pp. 14–15, 16–17, sections 1.4.1, 1.4.2)

According to the psychoanalytic perspective, children move through a series of stages in which they confront conflicts between biological drives and social expectations. In this view, fear of the dark reflects an unconscious motivation or deep-seated anxiety within the child. A psychoanalyst might conclude, for example, that the child's fear really represents anxiety about nighttime separation from the parent. Once the anxiety is resolved, the fear will subside.

In contrast, behaviorists look at the effects on behavior of directly observable events, not at the inner workings of the mind. From a behaviorist perspective, a child would be afraid of the dark as a result of previous negative experiences in the

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dark. Perhaps the child heard a sudden, loud noise at night or was frightened by the visual images of a nightmare. On the basis of these experiences, the child would be conditioned to respond fearfully to being in the dark.

REFLECT: Illustrate Bandura's ideas by describing a personal experience in which you observed and received feedback from another person that strengthened your self-efficacy. How did that person's message influence your self-perceptions and choice of models? (p. 17, section 1.4.2)

This is an open-ended question with no right or wrong answer.

CONNECT: Explain how each recent theoretical perspective regards children as active contributors to their own development. (pp. 21–29, sections 1.5.1–1.5.6)

Information processing: The information-processing approach regards children as active, sense-making beings who modify their thinking in response to environmental demands. In this view, the human mind is a symbol-manipulating system through which information flows. From the time information is presented to the senses at input until it emerges as a behavioral response at output, it is actively coded, transformed, and organized. When presented with a task, children perform a set of mental operations and experiment with various strategies in their attempts to solve the problem.

Developmental neuroscience: By analyzing brain activity while children perform various tasks, *developmental cognitive neuroscientists* investigate how genetic makeup combines with specific experiences at various ages to influence the brain's growth and organization. A complementary new area, *developmental social neuroscience,* considers the relationship between changes in the brain and emotional and social development, including the negative impact of extreme circumstances—such as early rearing in emotionally deprived settings or child abuse and neglect— on brain development and cognitive, emotional, and social skills.

Ethology and evolutionary developmental psychology: Both ethologists and evolutionary developmental psychologists are interested in the evolutionary history of behavior and its adaptive, or survival, value. For instance, newborn behaviors such as smiling, babbling, grasping, and crying are built-in social signals that encourage the caregiver to approach, care for, and interact with the baby. By keeping the parent near, these behaviors help ensure that the baby will be fed, protected from danger, and provided with the stimulation and affection necessary for healthy growth. Evolutionary psychologists aim to understand the entire *person–environment system.*

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory: Vygotsky's theory focuses on how culture—the values, beliefs, customs, and skills of a social group— is transmitted to the next generation. According to Vygotsky, social interaction, particularly cooperative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society, is necessary for children to acquire the ways of thinking and behaving that make up a community's culture. Like Piaget, Vygotsky saw children as active, constructive beings. But whereas Piaget emphasized children's independent efforts to make sense of their world, Vygotsky viewed cognitive development as a *socially mediated process,* in which children depend on assistance from adults and more-expert peers as they tackle new challenges.

Ecological systems theory: Ecological systems theory views the child as developing within a complex *system* of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. The child's biologically influenced dispositions join with environmental forces to mold development. Life changes can be imposed on the child, or they can arise from within the child, since as children get older they select, modify, and create many of their own settings and experiences. How they do so depends on their physical, intellectual, and personality characteristics and their environmental opportunities. In ecological systems theory, children and their environments form a network of interdependent effects that, together, determine the course of development.

Dynamic systems perspective: Much like ecological systems theory, the dynamic systems perspective maintains that the child's mind, body, and physical and social worlds form an *integrated system* that guides mastery of new skills. The system is *dynamic,* or constantly in motion. A change in any part of it—from brain growth to changes in physical and social surroundings— disrupts the current organism–environment relationship. When this happens, children actively reorganize their behavior so the various components of the system work together again but in a more complex, effective way.

APPLY: Mario wants to find out precisely how children of different ages recall stories. Desiree is interested in how adult–child communication in different cultures influences children's storytelling. Which theoretical perspective has Mario probably chosen? How about Desiree? Explain. (pp. 21–22, 24–25, sections 1.5.1, 1.5.4)

Mario has probably chosen an information-processing perspective. In this approach, he will likely design a flowchart to map the precise steps children use to recall stories. Then he will analyze each step separately so that he can compare them in detail as they apply to children of different ages.

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Desiree is more likely to choose a sociocultural perspective, focusing on how culture—the values, beliefs, customs, and skills of a social group— is transmitted from one generation to the next through social interaction. For example, she might compare the ways in which children in different cultures engage in storytelling with adults and older peers and how these interactions help them develop the storytelling skills that are valued within each culture.

REFLECT: To illustrate the chronosystem in ecological systems theory, select an important event from your childhood, such as a move to a new neighborhood, a class with an inspiring teacher, or parental divorce. How did the event affect you? How might its impact have differed had you been five years younger? How about five years older? (p. 27, section 1.5.5)

This is an open-ended question with no right or wrong answer.

CONNECT: What strengths and limitations do the clinical, or case study, method and ethnography have in common? (pp. 34–35, 1.7.1)

Both the clinical method and ethnography are descriptive, qualitative research techniques. But whereas the aim of the clinical method is to obtain as complete a picture as possible of a single individual's psychological functioning, ethnography is directed toward understanding a culture or a distinct social group. A major strength of both methods is that they yield richly detailed descriptions that offer valuable insights into the multiplicity of factors affecting development. Limitations of both methods are that: 1) investigators' cultural values or theoretical preferences may lead them to observe selectively or misinterpret what they see and 2) findings cannot be assumed to generalize to other individuals or cultures.

APPLY: A researcher wants to study the thoughts and feelings of children who have a parent on active duty in the military. Which method should she use? Why? (pp. 33–34, section 1.7.1)

The *clinical interview* is the method best suited to investigating this research question because the researcher wants to learn about participants' thoughts and feelings. The clinical interview uses a flexible, conversational style, so it permits individuals to display their thoughts in terms that are as close as possible to the way they think in everyday life. This method also provides a large amount of information in a fairly brief period.

The researcher might also consider using a *structured interview,* such as a questionnaire, in which each participant is asked the same questions in the same way. The structured interview eliminates the risk that variations in responses may reflect the manner of interviewing rather than real differences in the way children think about a topic. It is also more efficient: Answers are briefer and can be gathered from an entire group at the same time. However, structured interviews do not yield the same depth of information as a clinical interview.

CONNECT: Review the study of the Family Check-Up, described on page 39, section 1.7.2. Why is it ethically important for researchers to offer the intervention to the no-intervention control group after completion of the study? (*Hint:* Refer to Table 1.6 on page 45, section 1.8) (pp. 39, 44–46, sections 1.7.2, 1.8)

One of the research rights states that when researchers are investigating experimental treatments believed to be beneficial, children in control groups have the right to alternative beneficial treatments (if available) or to the same treatment (if found to be effective) once the research is complete. In this case, families assigned to the Family Check-Up, but not controls, gained in positive parenting, which predicted a reduction in child problem behaviors and higher academic achievement when the children reached school age. Once this favorable aspect of the Family Check-Up was known, it was ethically important that families in the control group be given an opportunity similar to the advantages provided to the experimental group.

REFLECT: Suppose a researcher asks you to enroll your baby in a 10-year longitudinal study. What factors would lead you to agree and stay involved? Do your answers shed light on why longitudinal studies often have biased samples? Explain. (pp. 41–42, section 1.7.3)

This is an open-ended question with no right or wrong answer.

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MEDIA MATERIALS

For details on the video segments that accompany *Infants, Children, and Adolescents,* Ninth Edition, please see the Video Guide, found on the DVD *Explorations in Child and Adolescent Development.* The DVD and guide are available to confirmed adopters of *Infants, Children, and Adolescents,* 9e, through your Pearson sales representative.

Additional videos that may be useful in your class are listed below. These are not available through your Pearson sales representative, but you can order them directly from the distributor. (See contact information at the end of this manual.)

Child Development Theorists: Freud to Erikson to Spock … and Beyond (2009, Films Media Group, 22 min.). An introduction to major child development theorists. Educational resources are available online.

Ethics in Psychological Research (2013, Insight Media, 19 min.). The importance of ethics in psychological research, including examples of research studies that have raised ethical issues.

John Bowlby: Attachment Theory Across Generations (2007, Films Media Group, 40 min.). An exploration of attachment theory. Part of the series *Giants of Psychology.* Educational resources are available online.

Nonexperimental Research Methods in Psychology (2006, Films Media Group, 34 min.). The advantages and limitations of nonexperimental research methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and naturalistic observation. Part of the series *Understanding Psychology.*

Psychology Research in Context (2008, Films Media Group, 29 min.). An overview of selected principles of science that are used in psychological research. Part of the series *Understanding Psychology.* Educational resources are available online.

Research Methods in the Social Sciences (2005, Films Media Group, 4-part series, 23–46 min. each). An exploration of qualitative and quantitative research methods used in the social sciences. Instructors' guides are available online.

Study of the Child: Theories of Development (2007, Films Media Group, 2-part series, 16–27 min. each). A survey of the theories of influential thinkers in child development.

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