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The Life Span

Human Development for Helping Professionals

Fourth Edition

Fourth Edition

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Preface

What's New in This Edition?

The first developmental textbook written specifically for helping professionals, *The Life Span: Human Development for Helping Professionals* is now in its fourth edition. The following are just a few of the improvements and additions to this revision:

- Good empirical research about culture and ethnicity is increasingly available and has been fully integrated into this edition.
- Updated biological and neuropsychological underpinnings of development are presented in keeping with recent cutting edge advances in the developmental sciences.
- Expanded attention has been given to the effects of poverty and other adverse childhood experiences on development relative to cognitive, emotional, and health-related outcomes.
- New figures and tables give students efficient means for accessing a great deal of information. For example, Chapter 1 presents a timeline that gives the student an historical context for contemporary research within the field of developmental psychology.
- Linkages have been made between research in early and late-life cognition, in particular with regard to executive functioning.
- New boxes provide in-depth exploration of current developmental issues, such as the special challenges facing the children of immigrant families.
- Research and applications to practice are updated in all chapters.

The Conceptual Framework of This Book

The study of human development over the life span reveals the fascinating story of human beings and how they change over time. The story is both universal and uniquely personal, because it speaks to us about ourselves and the people who are important in our lives. Besides being intrinsically interesting, knowledge about development has obvious relevance for professionals engaged in psychology, counseling, education, social work, and other helping and health-related fields. We believe that in order to understand the strengths and challenges of our clients or students, we must see them in context. One important context is developmental history. As helping professionals, we must take into account the threads of continuity and change in people's lives that bring them to their present point in development. This text provides the background and the tools to enable professionals to view their clients from a developmental perspective.

This text also reflects the contemporary view that life span development is a process deeply embedded within and inseparable from the context of family, social network, and culture. People do not progress through life in isolation; rather, their developmental course influences and is influenced by other people and systems. Some of these forces are related to the cultural differences that exist in a world of increasing diversity. We recognize the importance of these factors in understanding human development and emphasize cultural and systemic influences on human growth and change throughout the book.

We would also be remiss if we neglected to emphasize the rapidly growing body of knowledge from neuroscience that is refining our appreciation of how

biology and context interact. The marriage of "nature and nurture" and our greater awareness of how they interrelate contribute significantly to a more fully informed understanding of how people change over the life course. This emphasis, which has been strengthened in this new edition, provides an overarching template for practitioners to use in understanding development and in applying developmental knowledge to their work.

Research and applications within the field of human development are becoming more and more interdisciplinary with expanding links to health, social processes, well-being, and so forth. This can make it exceptionally difficult to summarize this dynamic field. Presumably, every author of a book of this nature needs to make some choices about what to include. This particular text is configured to emphasize selected theories and research that have useful applications for helping professionals. A main purpose of this book is to provide students in the helping professions with information that can be translated into professional "best practice" applications. To this end, we have tried to use the most current research available to summarize domains of knowledge that remain, essentially, fields "under investigation." Science by its very nature continually evolves in its efforts to reveal the nature of human experience. Thus, one of the assumptions we continue to emphasize in this edition is the importance of reflective practice for helping professionals.

Reflective practice involves "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it leads" (Dewey, 1933/1998, p. 9). Our primary vehicle for accomplishing this goal is twofold: (1) encouraging the reader to reflect on personal experience and assumptions about development, and (2) communicating the value of research-based knowledge as a means of understanding human development. Our particular orientation intentionally emphasizes the significance of developmental research to the work of the professional helper. We attempt to integrate various lines of developmental research into a useful whole that has practical value for helpers in applied settings. This book bears witness to the enormous amount of work done by developmental researchers, particularly in the last several decades. Without their groundbreaking contributions, helping professionals' efforts to improve people's lives would be greatly impoverished. It has been a challenge and an honor to record their contributions in this book.

Coverage and Organization

The opening chapters establish the theme of the text and introduce broad issues in development. Chapter 1 begins with an examination of the role of developmental knowledge in reflective practice. Students are introduced to classic and contemporary theoretical models and to issues that appear and reappear throughout the text. They are encouraged to reflect on their own theoretical assumptions about development and on the impact those assumptions could have in practice. Students are introduced to developmental psychopathology in a focus feature, and they can learn about prevention science and its connection to developmental research in a box feature.

Chapter 2 takes a close look at the coaction of genetic and environmental factors in the development of all aspects of the human organism. Students are introduced to genetic mechanisms in the context of epigenesis, the control of genetic expression by forces beyond the genes themselves. Sections on atypical early developments and on early brain development highlight the coaction of many genetic and environmental factors in prenatal and early postnatal development. Students are also introduced to the concept of development as adaptation and to the critical stress and adaptation system. Students emerge with an understanding of how biology and experience together craft this system and determine healthy and unhealthy outcomes.

The remaining chapters follow a chronological sequence, covering a full range of critical topics in physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. In Chapters 3 through 5, the infancy and preschool periods are the focus. Among the topics covered are the many aspects of early cognitive growth, such as the development of representational thought and memory, executive functions, early "theory of mind" or naive psychology, the early understanding of symbols and of language, and more. Coverage of early social development includes the emergence of emotions, emotion regulation, attachment processes, early self-development, temperament, and the role of parental disciplinary style in the growth of self-regulation.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 examine important developments in middle childhood and in the transition to adolescence, including the growth of logical thinking, the expanding capacity to process and remember information, perspective-taking skills and friendship development, influences on cognitive functioning, such as formal schooling, influences on the developing self-concept, developments in moral thinking, influences on the emergence of prosocial and antisocial behavior, sex-role development, and peer relationships. The impact of culture and context for many of these developments, such as self-concept, are considered.

Adolescence is the subject of Chapters 9 and 10, covering pubertal change, advances in logical and metacognitive skill, changes to the brain and stress system, identity development, sexual orientation, risk taking, and the influences of biology, peers, parents, school, media, and culture on adolescent behavior. Chapters 11 and 12 describe the young adult period, or what has been called "emerging adulthood," and include a close look at the way thinking changes as adulthood looms and at the progress of work, career, and intimate relationships.

Chapters 13, 14, and 15 describe developmental processes in middle and late adulthood. Chapter 13 focuses on changes in physical, cognitive, and social functioning during the middle adult years. Chapter 14 considers the questions that all middle adults face: What constitutes a well-lived life, and how do normally functioning adults cope with the enormous demands, progress, and setbacks that adult life brings? Finally, Chapter 15 reviews the challenges and developmental processes involved in late adulthood and end-of-life experiences. These chapters examine the many kinds of change that adults experience and the maintenance of well-being in the face of loss. Among the key developmental tasks discussed are marriage and its discontents, the experience of child rearing, spirituality, coping and health, the role of wisdom, stereotypes about aging, facing death and bereavement, and many more.

Features and Highlights

- **Depth of coverage:** Because the book is designed for graduate students, most topics, especially those that have special relevance to helping professionals, are covered in greater depth than in a typical life span text. The expanded coverage of research in specific areas will enhance students' understanding of the scientific basis for applications.
- **Applications:** Blending empirically supported information about treatments with the issues covered in each chapter, these revised sections offer more extensive discussion of how developmental science can inform practice. Applications sections include new and expanded topics such as adolescent health and well-being, new interventions for promoting secure infant attachments, encouraging learning through play, helping parents avoid corporal punishment, and mindfulness-based practices, among many others.
- **Focus on Developmental Psychopathology:** In many chapters, sections on psychopathology trace the developmental roots of disorders such as autism, disorganized attachment, conduct problems, depression, eating disorders, and PTSD. These specific disorders were selected because each represents an example of how developmental processes interact to produce psychopathology.

Linkages between normal and abnormal pathways of development are explained. A review of basic concepts of developmental psychopathology and prevention science is also included.

- **Boxed features:** In many chapters, boxes highlight special topics and provide opportunities for in-depth coverage of research. These may be the biographies of influential theorists or detailed examinations of issues such as how adversity alters child outcomes, children's credibility as eyewitnesses, children of immigrant families, the effects of divorce on children, the criminal culpability of juveniles, identity processes in multiracial individuals, gay and lesbian couples and their families, leadership development in women and men, the burden of caring for elderly relatives, cross-cultural differences in funeral rituals, and many others.
- **Culture and gender:** In every chapter, cross-cultural and cross-gender issues are discussed wherever relevant developmental research is available. Several new tables that examine cultural differences, such as in parenting and in coping, add to the increased coverage of culture in this edition.
- **Chapter summaries:** Every chapter ends with a summary of the major topics covered in that chapter, providing yet another study tool for students and a planning tool for instructors.
- **Case studies and case study discussion questions:** Case studies and questions at the end of each chapter are another set of pedagogical tools for helping students think about the clinical implications of the developmental facts and theories they have learned.
- **Journal questions:** Journal questions at the end of each chapter help students reflect on the issues they have read about, encouraging them to consider the relevance of these issues in their own development.
- **Key concepts:** Throughout the text, new or technical terms are printed in **bold** and defined. At the end of each chapter, a list of these key terms is provided as a study tool.
- **Glossary:** A glossary at the end of the text provides students with a handy reference for key terms.
- **Appendix:** An appendix helps students understand how developmental processes are studied scientifically and how scientifically established information can be useful in practice.
- **Writing style:** The writing style is conversational in tone and is aimed at making even complex material accessible. To avoid sexist language use and yet still have the luxury of using the singular pronouns "she" and "he," we use the feminine pronoun in odd-numbered chapters and the masculine pronoun in even-numbered chapters.

Supplemental Materials

Two online supplements are available for instructors at **www.pearsonhighered.com/educator**. Simply enter the author, title, or ISBN and select this textbook. Click on the "Resources" tab to view and download the available supplements.

- **Online Instructor's Manual and Test Bank:** A new Online Instructor's Manual and Test Bank (ISBN: 0-13-294297-6) has been developed with an average of 30 multiple-choice test items and 3 to 5 essay-style questions per chapter. Carefully scrutinized for accuracy, the multiple-choice questions in the Test Bank include both lower-level and higher-level questions. The lower-level questions expect students to access content knowledge and comprehension; the higher-level questions assess students' ability to synthesize, compare and contrast, and apply their knowledge to problem solving.

- **Online PowerPoint® Slides:** The Online PowerPoint® slides (ISBN: 0-13-294298-4) include key concept summaries, outlines, and other graphic aids to enhance learning. These slides are designed to help students understand, organize, and remember concepts and developmental theories.

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Brief Contents

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THE LIFE SPAN

CHAPTER 1

Organizing Themes in Development

What importance do difficulties in getting along with others have for a 6-year-old youngster? Is she just "passing through a stage"? How do parenting practices affect a child's developing self-concept? How much freedom should be given to adolescents? Does the experience of sex discrimination affect a teenage girl's identity formation? What implications do social problems with friends and coworkers suggest for a 22-year-old male? Does stereotype threat (such as expecting to be judged on the basis of race) alter the course of development? How significant is it for a married couple to experience increased conflicts following the births of their children? Does divorce cause lasting emotional damage to the children involved in a family breakup? What kind of day care experience is best for young children? Do we normally lose many intellectual abilities as we age? What factors enable a person to overcome early unfavorable circumstances and become a successful, healthy adult?

These intriguing questions represent a sampling of the kinds of topics that developmental scientists tackle. Their goal is to understand **life span development**: human behavioral change from conception to death. "Behavioral" change refers broadly to change in both observable activity (e.g., from crawling to walking) and mental activity (e.g., from disorganized to logical thinking). More specifically, developmental science seeks to

- describe people's behavioral characteristics at different ages,
- identify how people are likely to respond to life's experiences at different ages,
- formulate theories that explain how and why we see the typical characteristics and responses that we do, and
- understand what factors contribute to developmental differences from one person to another.

Using an array of scientific tools designed to obtain objective (unbiased) information, developmentalists make careful observations and measurements, and they test theoretical explanations empirically. See the Appendix for *A Practitioner's Guide to the Methods of Developmental Science*.

Developmental science is not a remote or esoteric body of knowledge. Rather, it has much to offer the helping professional both professionally and personally.

As you study developmental science, you will build a knowledge base of information about age-related behaviors and about causal theories that help organize and make sense of these behaviors. These tools will help you better understand client concerns that are rooted in shared human experience. And when you think about clients' problems from a developmental perspective, you will increase the range of problem solving strategies that you can offer. Finally, studying development can facilitate personal growth by providing a foundation for reflecting on your own life.

REFLECTION AND ACTION

Despite strong support for a comprehensive academic grounding in scientific developmental knowledge for helping professionals (e.g., Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990), there has been a somewhat uneasy alliance between practitioners, such as mental health professionals, and those with a more empirical bent, such as behavioral scientists. The clinical fields have depended on research from developmental psychology to inform their practice. Yet in the past, overreliance on traditional experimental methodologies sometimes resulted in researchers' neglect of important issues that could not be studied using these rigorous methods (Hetherington, 1998). Consequently, there was a tendency for clinicians to perceive some behavioral science literature as irrelevant to real-world concerns (Turner, 1986). Clearly, the gap between science and practice is not unique to the mental health professions. Medicine, education, and law have all struggled with the problems involved in preparing students to grapple with the complex demands of the workplace. Contemporary debate on this issue has led to the development of serious alternative paradigms for the training of practitioners.

One of the most promising of these alternatives for helping professionals is the concept of **reflective practice**. The idea of "reflectivity" derives from Dewey's (1933/1998) view of education, which emphasized careful consideration of one's beliefs and forms of knowledge as a precursor to practice. Donald Schon (1987), a modern pioneer in the field of reflective practice, describes the problem this way:

> In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy confusing problems defy technical solutions. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. (p. 3)

The Gap Between Science and Practice

Traditionally, the modern, university-based educational process has been driven by the belief that problems can be solved best by applying objective, technical, or scientific information amassed from laboratory investigations. Implicit in this assumption is that human nature operates according to universal principles that, if known and understood, will enable us to predict behavior. For example, if I understand the principles of conditioning and reinforcement, I can apply a contingency contract to modify my client's inappropriate behavior. Postmodern critics have pointed out the many difficulties associated with this approach. Sometimes a "problem" behavior is related to, or maintained by, neurological, systemic, or cultural conditions. Sometimes the very existence of a problem may be a cultural construction. Unless a problem is viewed within its larger context, a problem-solving strategy may prove ineffective.

Most of the situations helpers face are confusing, complex, ill-defined, and often unresponsive to the application of a simple, specific set of scientific principles. Thus, the training of helping professionals often involves a "dual curriculum."

The first is more formal and may be presented as a conglomeration of research-based facts, whereas the second, often learned in a practicum, field placement or first job, covers the curriculum of "what is really done" when working with clients. The antidote to this dichotomous pedagogy, Schon (1987) and his followers suggest, is reflective practice. This is a creative method of thinking about practice in which the helper masters the knowledge and skills base pertinent to the profession but is encouraged to go beyond rote technical applications to generate new kinds of understanding and strategies of action. Rather than relying solely on objective technical applications to determine ways of operating in a given situation, the reflective practitioner constructs solutions to problems by engaging in personal hypothesis generating and hypothesis testing.

How can one use the knowledge of developmental science in a meaningful and reflective way? What place does it have in the process of reflective construction? Consideration of another important line of research, namely, that of characteristics of expert problem solvers, will help us answer this question. Research studies on expert–novice differences in many areas such as teaching, science, and athletics all support the contention that experts have a great store of knowledge and skill in a particular area. Expertise is domain specific. When compared to novices in any given field, experts possess well-organized and integrated stores of information that they draw on, almost automatically, when faced with novel challenges. Because this knowledge is well practiced, truly a "working body" of information, retrieval is relatively easy (Lewandowsky & Thomas, 2009). Progress in problem solving is closely self-monitored. Problems are analyzed and broken down into smaller units, which can be handled more efficiently.

If we apply this information to the reflective practice model, we can see some connections. One core condition of reflective practice is that practitioners use theory as a "partial lens through which to consider a problem" (Nelson & Neufelt, 1998). Practitioners also use another partial lens: their professional and other life experience. In reflective practice, theory-driven hypotheses about client and system problems are generated and tested for goodness of fit. A rich supply of problem-solving strategies depends on a deep understanding of and thorough grounding in fundamental knowledge germane to the field. Notice that there is a sequence to reflective practice. Schon (1987), for example, argues against putting the cart before the horse. He states that true reflectivity depends on the ability to "recognize and apply standard rules, facts and operations; then to reason from general rules to problematic cases in ways characteristic of the profession; and only then to develop and test new forms of understanding and action where familiar categories and ways of thinking fail" (p. 40). In other words, background knowledge is important, but it is most useful in a dynamic interaction with contextual applications (Hoshman & Polkinghorne, 1992). A working knowledge of human development supplies the helping professional with a firm base from which to proceed.

Given the relevance of background knowledge to expertise in helping and to reflective practice, we hope we have made a sufficiently convincing case for the study of developmental science. However, it is obvious that students approaching this study are not "blank slates." You already have many ideas and theories about the ways that people grow and change. These implicit theories have been constructed over time, partly from personal experience, observation, and your own cultural "take" on situations. Dweck and her colleagues have demonstrated that reliably different interpretations of situations can be predicted based on individual differences in people's implicit beliefs about certain human attributes, such as intelligence or personality (see Dweck & Elliott-Moskwa, 2010). Take the case of intelligence. If you happen to hold the implicit belief that a person's intellectual capacity can change and improve over time, you might be more inclined to take a skill-building approach to some presenting problem involving knowledge or ability. However, if you espouse the belief that a person's intelligence is fixed and not amenable to incremental improvement, possibly because of genetic inheritance, you might be

more likely to encourage a client to cope with and adjust to cognitive limitations. For helping professionals, the implicit theoretical lens that shapes their worldview can have important implications for their clients.

We are often reluctant to give up our personal theories even in the face of evidence that these theories are incorrect (Gardner, 1991; Kuhn, 2005). The best antidote to misapplication of our personal views is self-monitoring: being aware of what our theories are and recognizing that they are only one of a set of possibilities. (See Chapter 11 for a more extensive discussion of this issue.) Before we discuss some specific beliefs about the nature of development, take a few minutes to consider what you think about the questions posed in Box 1.1.

Box 1.1: Questionnaire

Examine Your Beliefs About Development

Rate yourself using the forced-choice format for each of the following items.

1. Physical characteristics such as eye color, height, and weight are primarily inherited.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Intelligence is primarily inherited.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Personality is primarily inherited.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Events in the first 3 years of life have permanent effects on a person's psychological development.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

5. People's personalities do not change very much over their lifetimes.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

6. People all go through the same stages in their lives.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Parents have a somewhat limited impact on their children's development.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

8. The cultural context in which the individual lives has a primary effect upon the psychological development of that person.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

9. Common sense is a better guide to child rearing than is scientific knowledge.

❑	❑	❑	❑
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

Now that you have examined some of your own developmental assumptions, let's consider the theoretical views that influence developmentalists, with special attention to how these views have evolved through the history of developmental science. Later, we will examine how different theoretical approaches might affect the helping process.

Like you, developmental scientists bring to their studies theoretical assumptions that help to structure their understanding of known facts. These assumptions also guide their research and shape how they interpret new findings. Scientists tend to develop theories that are consistent with their own cultural background and experience; no one operates in a vacuum. A core value of Western scientific method is a pursuit of objectivity, so that scientists are committed to continuously evaluating their theories in light of evidence. As a consequence, scientific theories change over time.

Throughout this text, you will be introduced to many developmental theories. Some are broad and sweeping in their coverage of whole areas of development, such as Freud's theory of personality development (see Chapters 7 and 8) or Piaget's theory of cognitive development (see Chapters 3, 6, and 9); some are narrower in scope, focusing on a particular issue, such as Vygotsky's theory of the enculturation of knowledge (see Chapter 3) or Bowlby's attachment theory (see Chapters 4 and 12). You will see that newer theories usually incorporate empirically verified ideas from older theories, but they also reflect changing cultural needs, such as the need to understand successful aging in a longer-lived population. Newer theories also draw from advances in many disciplines, such as biology. Scientific theories of human development began to emerge in Europe and America in the 19th century. They had their roots in philosophical inquiry, in the emergence of biological science, and in the growth of mass education that accompanied industrialization. Through medieval times in European societies, children and adults of all ages seem to have been viewed and treated in very similar ways (Aries, 1960). Only infants and preschoolers were free of adult responsibilities, although they were not always given the special protections and nurture that they are today. At age 6 or 7, children took on adult roles, doing farmwork or learning a trade, often leaving their families to become apprentices. As the Industrial Revolution advanced, children worked beside adults in mines and factories. People generally seemed "indifferent to children's special characteristics" (Crain, 2005, p. 2), and there was no real study of children or how they change.

The notion that children only gradually develop the cognitive and personality structures that will characterize them as adults first appeared in the writings of 17th- and 18th-century philosophers, such as John Locke in Great Britain and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France. In the 19th century, Charles Darwin's theory of the evolution of species and the growth of biological science helped to foster scholarly interest in children. The assumption grew that a close examination of how children change might help advance our understanding of the human species. Darwin himself introduced an early approach to child study, the "baby biography," writing a richly detailed account of his young son's daily changes in language and behavior. By the 18th and 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution led to the growth of "middle-class" occupations (e.g., merchandizing) that required an academic education: training in reading, writing, and math. The need to educate large numbers of children sharpened the public's interest in understanding how children change with age.

The first academic departments devoted to child study began to appear on American college campuses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The idea that development continues even in adulthood was a 20th-century concept and a natural outgrowth of the study of children. If children's mental and behavioral processes change over time, perhaps such processes continue to evolve beyond childhood. Interest in adult development was also piqued by dramatic increases in life expectancy in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as cultural changes in how people live. Instead of single households combining three or four generations of family members,

grandparents and other relatives began to live apart from "nuclear families," so that understanding the special needs and experiences of each age group took on greater importance. As you will see in the following discussion of classic developmental theories, in the 1950s Erik Erikson first proposed that personality development is a lifelong process, and by the 1960s cognitive theorists began to argue that adult thinking also changes systematically over time.

Most classic developmental theories emerged during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. After you learn about some of the classic developmental theories, you will be introduced to contemporary theories. You will see that the newest theories integrate ideas from many classic theories, as well as from disciplines ranging from modern genetics, neuroscience, cognitive science, and psycholinguistics, to social and cultural psychology and anthropology. They acknowledge that human development is a complex synthesis of diverse processes at multiple levels of functioning. Because they embrace complexity, contemporary developmental theories can be especially useful to helping professionals. See the Timeline in Figure 1.1 for a graphic summary of some of the key theories and ideas in the history of developmental science.

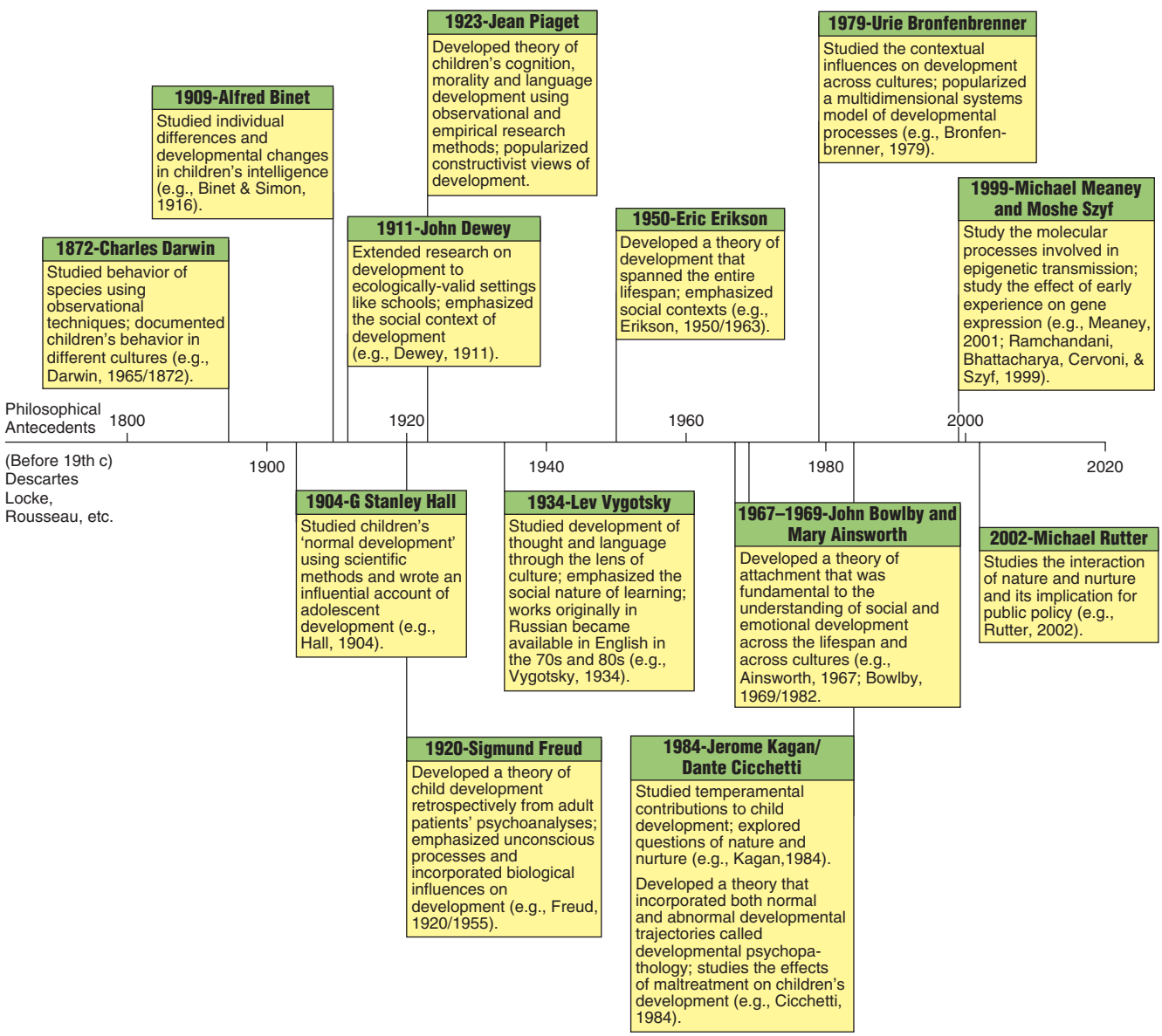

FIGURE 1.1 **Timeline of selected influences on developmental science with dates of representative works.**

Emphasizing Discontinuity: Classic Stage Theories

Some of the most influential early theories of development described human change as occurring in stages. Imagine a girl when she is 4 months old and then again when she is 4 years old. If your sense is that these two versions of the same child are fundamentally different in kind, with different intellectual capacities, different emotional structures, or different ways of perceiving others, you are thinking like a stage theorist. A **stage** is a period of time, perhaps several years, during which a person's activities (at least in one broad domain) have certain characteristics in common. For example, we could say that in language development, the 4-month-old girl is in a preverbal stage: Among other things, her communications share in common the fact that they do not include talking. As a person moves to a different stage, the common characteristics of behavior change. In other words, a person's activities have similar qualities within stages but different qualities across stages. Also, after long periods of stability, qualitative shifts in behavior seem to happen relatively quickly. For example, the change from not talking to talking seems abrupt or discontinuous. It tends to happen between 12 and 18 months of age, and once it starts, language use seems to advance very rapidly. A 4-year-old is someone who communicates primarily by talking; she is clearly in a verbal stage.

The preverbal to verbal example illustrates two features of stage theories. First, they describe development as qualitative or transformational change, like the emergence of a tree from a seed. At each new stage, new forms of behavioral organization are both different from and more complex than the ones at previous stages. Increasing complexity suggests that development has "directionality." There is a kind of unfolding or emergence of behavioral organization.

Second, they imply periods of relative stability (within stages) and periods of rapid transition (between stages). Metaphorically, development is a staircase. Each new stage lifts a person to a new plateau for some period of time, and then there is another steep rise to another plateau. There seems to be discontinuity in these changes rather than change being a gradual, incremental process. One person might progress through a stage more quickly or slowly than another, but the sequence of stages is usually seen as the same across cultures and contexts, that is, universal. Also, despite the emphasis on qualitative discontinuities between stages, stage theorists argue for functional continuities across stages. That is, the same processes drive the shifts from stage to stage, such as brain maturation and social experience.

Sigmund Freud's theory of personality development began to have an influence on developmental science in the early 1900s and was among the first to include a description of stages (e.g., Freud, 1905/1989, 1949/1969). Freud's theory no longer takes center stage in the interpretations favored by most helpers or by developmental scientists. First, there is little evidence for some of the specific proposals in Freud's theory (Loevinger, 1976). Second, his theory has been criticized for incorporating the gender biases of early 20th-century Austrian culture. Yet, some of Freud's broad insights are routinely accepted and incorporated into other theories, such as his emphasis on the importance of early family relationships to infants' emotional life, his notion that some behavior is unconsciously motivated, and his view that internal conflicts can play a primary role in social functioning. Several currently influential theories, like those of Erik Erikson and John Bowlby, incorporated some aspects of Freud's theories or were developed to contrast with Freud's ideas. For these reasons, it is important to understand Freud's theory. Also, his ideas have permeated popular culture, and they influence many of our assumptions about the

Helping professionals need to understand the needs of clients of different ages.

development of behavior. If we are to make our own implicit assumptions about development explicit, we must understand where they originated and how well the theories that spawned them stand up in the light of scientific investigation.

Freud's Personality Theory

Sigmund Freud's **psychoanalytic theory** both describes the complex functioning of the adult personality and offers an explanation of the processes and progress of its development throughout childhood. To understand any given stage it helps to understand Freud's view of the fully developed adult.

Id, Ego, and Superego. According to Freud, the adult personality functions as if there were actually three personalities, or aspects of personality, all potentially in conflict with one another. The first, the **id**, is the biological self, the source of all psychic energy. Babies are born with an id; the other two aspects of personality develop later. The id blindly pursues the fulfillment of physical needs or "instincts," such as the hunger drive and the sex drive. It is irrational, driven by the **pleasure principle**, that is, by the pursuit of gratification. Its function is to keep the individual, and the species, alive, although Freud also proposed that there are inborn aggressive, destructive instincts served by the id.

The **ego** begins to develop as cognitive and physical skills emerge. In Freud's view, some psychic energy is invested in these skills, and a rational, realistic self begins to take shape. The id still presses for fulfillment of bodily needs, but the rational ego seeks to meet these needs in sensible ways that take into account all aspects of a situation. For example, if you were hungry, and you saw a child with an ice cream cone, your id might press you to grab the cone away from the child—an instance of blind, immediate pleasure seeking. Of course, stealing ice cream from a child could have negative consequences if someone else saw you do it or if the child reported you to authorities. Unlike your id, your ego would operate on the **reality principle**, garnering your understanding of the world and of behavioral consequences to devise a more sensible and self-protective approach, such as waiting until you arrive at the ice cream store yourself and paying for an ice cream cone.

The **superego** is the last of the three aspects of personality to emerge. Psychic energy is invested in this "internalized parent" during the preschool period as children begin to feel guilty if they behave in ways that are inconsistent with parental restrictions. With the superego in place, the ego must now take account not only of instinctual pressures from the id, and of external realities, but also of the superego's constraints. It must meet the needs of the id without upsetting the superego to avoid the unpleasant anxiety of guilt. In this view, when you choose against stealing a child's ice cream cone to meet your immediate hunger, your ego is taking account not only of the realistic problems of getting caught but also of the unpleasant feelings that would be generated by the superego.

The Psychosexual Stages. In Freud's view, the complexities of the relationships and conflicts that arise among the id, the ego, and the superego are the result of the individual's experiences during five developmental stages. Freud called these **psychosexual stages** because he believed that changes in the id and its energy levels initiated each new stage. The term *sexual* here applies to all biological instincts or drives and their satisfaction, and it can be broadly defined as "sensual."

For each stage, Freud posited that a disproportionate amount of id energy is invested in drives satisfied through one part of the body. As a result, the pleasure experienced through that body part is especially great during that stage. Children's experiences satisfying the especially strong needs that emerge at a given stage can influence the development of personality characteristics throughout life. Freud also thought that parents typically play a pivotal role in helping children achieve the satisfaction they need. For example, in the **oral stage**, corresponding to the first year of life, Freud argued that the mouth is the body part that provides babies with