



Key Concepts in Developmental Psychology

ECAP4005

1



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Understand the history of developmental psychology.

Evaluate both the early and modern theories of developmental psychology

Evaluate the role of developmental psychology in describing the nature of development in the child.

2



Understanding Development

- Developmental Psychology

- What beliefs do we have about development?

- Development: "the sequence of changes in the lifespan of an organism".

3

Historical Foundations

6th-15th Century

Medieval Europe – the idea of childhood did not exist (Ariès, 1962)

Newborns were seen as intrinsically evil.

17th Century

Childhood came to be regarded as a distinct stage of life.



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Early Philosophers

John Locke- British philosopher – **Late 17th Century**

'*Tabula rasa*' - experiences



Jean-Jacques Rousseau - **Early 18th Century**

Innate innocence – '*noble savages*'

Innate nature for healthy growth and development

Stages of development



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Historical Foundations: Modern influences

Industrialisation – **Early 19th Century**

Wealthy middle classes – childhood 'to be enjoyed and protected'

Working class families – children as young as 5 in employment



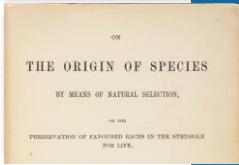
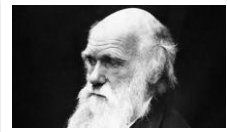
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Historical Foundations

Darwin - theory of evolution

The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection (1859)



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Historical Foundations: Modern influences

G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) - child study to scientifically study development

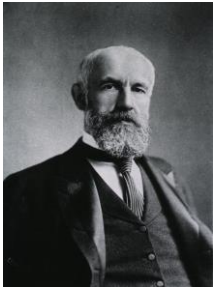
Social reform - late 19th Century onwards

After WW1 - children = 'future of the nation'

Fall in rate of infant mortality

Persisting class inequalities - further reform

Schooling more state organized



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Major Themes

- Nature and Nurture
- Continuity/Discontinuity
- Milestones

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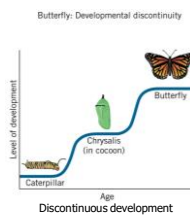
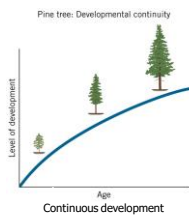
Nature and Nurture

- Nature - biological endowment
- Nurture - range of environments
- "The nature-nurture debate" – is it nature or nurture that supports development?
- Nature – e.g., inheritability of schizophrenia (Kety et al., 1994)
- Nurture – e.g., PM and JM – abused by step-mother (Koluchova, 1972, 1991)



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Continuity vs. Discontinuity



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Milestones

Parental beliefs and expectations about 'milestones' (e.g. Goodnow and Collins, 1990)

Are milestones useful?

3 months	7 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Reaches for something out of reach	Stands without help	Walks steadily	Runs well	Throws a ball	Designs, builds, constructs	Designs, builds, constructs
Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach	Reaches for something out of reach
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Lifespan Development

- How and when a "sense of self" is developed
- Development of moral reasoning
- Adolescence - a time of "storm and stress"?
- Coping with challenges in young and middle adulthood?
- Facing old age
