

## **The field of human development**

- Scientific
- Applied
- Interdisciplinary

## **Philosophies of childhood**

- Ancient Rome > Middle ages
  - Childhood ends at age 6
- After the Renaissance and Enlightenment
  - Childhood recognised as a unique period
- After 17th & 18th centuries
  - John Locke- tabula rasa
  - Jean Jacques Rosseau - innately good

## **Fundamental issues: nature or nurture?**

### **Nature:**

- Genetic factors
- Stable
- Individuals that are high or low in a factor will remain so at later ages
- Galton noticed that 'eminence' ran in families
  - Correlation between IQ of parent and IQ of their child  $r=0.45$

### **Nurture:**

- Environmental factors
- Plasticity
- Change is possible and likely if new experiences support it

## **Fundamental issues: Is development time sensitive?**

**Sensitive period:** A period of development during which certain behaviours are more easily learned.

**Critical period:** A period of development during which certain experience is needed for future normal development. Without such experience, later development would be impaired.

## **What develops**

### **Physical development**

- Bodily structures, motor development, hormonal changes

### **Cognitive development**

- Sensation, perception, reasoning, memory, language

### **Psychosocial development**

- Emotion, social knowledge, morality, personality

## Periods of development

Prenatal	Conception – birth
Infancy & Toddlerhood	Birth – 2 years
Early Childhood	2 – 6 years
Middle Childhood	6 – 11 years
Adolescence	11 – 20 years
Early Adulthood	20 – 40 years
Middle Adulthood	40 – 60 years
Late Adulthood	60 years – death

## Theories of Development

- Describe behaviour
- Explain behaviour
- Predict behaviour

## Prenatal development

### Germinal period

**Day 1:** fertilisation

**Day 2:** single cell zygote begins to divide

**Day 3-4:** 16 cells. Leaving fallopian tubes > uterus

**Day 5-7:** Blastocyst. Inner cell mass forms and attaches to uterine wall

### Embryonic period

**Week 3:** embryo with 3 layers, ectoderm, mesoderm, endoderm

**Week 4:** ectoderm folds into neural tube, in mesoderm the heart forms, in the endoderm lungs begin to form and gastrointestinal tract, eyes begin to develop

**Week 5:** ear, mouth, throat, arms and leg buds appear, heart divides into 2 regions, brain differentiates into forebrain, midbrain, hindbrain

**Week 6-8:** sexual differentiation - ovaries or testes evident

### Fetal period

**Week 9:** bone tissues emerges, embryo becomes a fetus, fetus can turn head and open and close mouth

**Week 10-12:** fingers and toes form, external genitals developed, kicking but mother can't feel it yet **Week 13-16:** fetal movements become apparent to mother

**Week 17-22:** fingernails, toenails, teeth buds, eyelashes grow

**Week 23-25:** weeks of viability

**Weeks 26-32:** brain growth, weight gain

**Weeks 33-38:** weight gain, brain activity, lungs mature

## Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Development

**Preconventional** (*consequences of behavior*): Externally controlled; based on rewards, punishments, authority figures

- **Stage 1:** The punishment and obedience orientation
- **Stage 2:** The instrumental purpose orientation: Selfinterest

**Conventional** (*laws and rule of society*): Conformity to social rules ensures good human relationships and societal order.

- **Stage 3:** "Good boy-good girl" orientation: Maintaining affection and approval
- **Stage 4:** Social-order orientation: Rules the same for everyone

**Postconventional/principled** (*abstract principles and values*): Morality is defined by abstract principles applying to all situations and societies.

- **Stage 5:** Social contract orientation: Laws are freely followed when rights are respected.
- **Stage 6:** Universal ethical principle orientation: Self-chosen principles define correct action.

## Research on Moral Understanding

Moral dilemmas were judged, not according to the respondent's position (to steal the drug or not), but on the basis of the kind of reasoning the answer exhibited.

- Longitudinal studies provide evidence for stages.
- Development is slow and gradual.
- Few move beyond Stage 5.
- There is no clear evidence of Stage 6.
- Real-life moral problems evoke a lower stage than hypothetical dilemmas

## Culture and Family

- Individualistic and Collectivist societies
- Concept of a family
- **Nuclear Vs Extended Family:** Role of family in the understanding of values, beliefs, attitudes and religion
- Culture and arrangement of sleeping patterns

## Culture as Moderator of Childhood Attachment

- Cross-cultural differences may exist in proportions of both childhood and adult attachment styles
  - May be due to cultural differences in child-rearing
- 'Cultural' values generally emerge from culturally rooted early childhood experiences

## Influence of Culture on Cognitive Development

- The western assumptions: "rational man" core to being humans
  - Aristotle thought humans to be different because we could do sums

- Some progression takes place in mathematical skills from infancy.. cultural differences in encouraging certain skills

### **Aggression: Community and Cultural Influences**

- Parenting and aggression - can the family become a ground for aggression?
- Tendency to engage in violent acts under certain social conditions (role of poverty; ethnic minority)

### **Ethnicity and Migration**

- Stability and change across lifespan
  - Meaning of culture
  - Acculturation process
  - Stereotypes associated to ethnicity