WHY IS CARING FOR CHILDREN IMPORTANT? (Kaczynski/Walker)
The Importance of Studying Children’s Development—The study of children’s development provides information about who we are and how we came to be this way. Improving the Lives of Today’s Children—Many factors converge to improve the lives of children.

- Health and Well-Being—Lifestyles and psychological states promote health and well-being and the impetus of caring for the child is not in the hands of physicians but those of the caregivers. For example, research on premature infants has found that massage therapy can facilitate weight gain in premature infants.
- Parenting—Changing family patterns, more working parents, and increased use of day-care facilities all influence the development of the child. (Changing Roles Hand-out) Can 2 gay men raise a healthy child? Are children harmed if both parents work?
- Education—Parents are taking a greater role in the formal education of their children, asking questions about curriculum, testing, safety in schools, and qualifications of teachers.
- Sociocultural Contexts and Diversity—The settings influenced by historical, economic, social, and cultural factors. Every child’s development occurs in numerous contexts.
  - Culture—Behavior patterns and beliefs passed on to succeeding generations. Cross-cultural studies compare aspects of two or more cultures.
  - Ethnicity—Cultural heritage, nationality, race, religion, and language—ethnic identity is a sense of membership in that cultural heritage. Not all Asians, Latinos
  - Socioeconomic status (SES)—The grouping of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics. Socioeconomic status implies certain inequalities.
  - Gender—Refers to the characteristics of people as males and females. The sociocultural dimension that surrounds gender stimulates interesting questions of what is or is not appropriate. Questions page 10
- Resilience, Social Policy, and Children’s Development—Some children develop confidence in their abilities despite negative stereotypes about their gender or ethnic group. Social policy is a government’s course of action designed to promote the welfare of its citizens. The ideology, background, values, and political needs of legislators often shape the social policy related to child development. Figure 1.1 We now have child labor laws, child care funding, Head Start Program, WWII help

WHAT ARE SOME HISTORICAL VIEWS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT?
Early Views of Children—Once treated as miniature adults; many views on how they should be reared. (Theories of Development)
  - Original Sin—Children are basically bad; rearing must provide salvation.
  - Tabula Rasa View—John Locke’s theory argued that children are not innately bad, but instead, are like a “blank tablet,” or that children are born as blank slates; childhood experiences are therefore important.
  - Innate Goodness View—Rousseau’s theory that children are inherently good; should grow naturally, with little parental monitoring or constraint.
The Modern Study of Child Development—During the past century, the study of child development has evolved into a sophisticated science. New knowledge about children is rapidly accumulating.

- Methods for a New Science—Early psychologists and philosophers debated whether the experimental methods of science were appropriate for studying human life. During the twentieth century, the study of child development expanded to include observational and self-report methods. Psychologists like Alfred Binet invented many tasks to study attention/memory, and he used his own children, children with mental retardation, gifted children and some adults eventually developing the first modern I.Q. test. Stanley Hall pioneered the use of questionnaires with large groups of children. Geselle created a photographic dome to observe children.

- Theories for a New Science—Provocative views on children’s development presented by Arnold Gesell, G. Stanley Hall, Sigmund Freud, John B. Watson, James Mark Baldwin, and Jean Piaget helped push forward the scientific study of child development in the twentieth century.

WHAT CHARACTERIZES DEVELOPMENT?

Biological, Cognitive, and Socioemotional Processes

- Biological processes produce changes in an individual’s body include genes inherited from parents, brain development, height/weight gains, and hormonal changes.
- Cognitive processes refer to changes in an individual’s thought, intelligence, and language.
- Socioemotional processes involve changes in an individual’s relationships, emotions, and personality (smiles, assertiveness, joy).

Periods of Development

- Prenatal—the time from conception to birth
- Infancy—the period from birth to 18–24 months
- Early childhood—the period that extends from the end of infancy to about 5–6 years of age
- Middle and late childhood—the period that extends from about 6–11 years
- Adolescence—the period from about 10–12 years to about 18–22 years

Issues in Development—Many questions about children’s development remain unanswered.

- Nature and Nurture—The nature-nurture issue involves the debate about the relative importance of an individual’s biological inheritance vs. its environmental experiences on development.
- Continuity and Discontinuity—The continuity-discontinuity issue focuses on the extent to which development involves gradual, cumulative change vs. distinct stages.
- Early and Later Experience—The early-later experience issue focuses on the degree to which early experiences or later experiences are the key determinants of a child’s development.

HOW IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT A SCIENCE?
The Importance of Research—An approach to the study of child development that is objective and systematic reduces the likelihood that information is based on personal beliefs, opinions, and feelings.

- The scientific method includes the steps of conceptualizing the problem, collecting data, and revising research conclusions and theory.
- A theory is an interrelated, coherent set of ideas that helps to explain phenomena and make predictions about behavior.
- A hypothesis is a specific, testable assumption or prediction.

Theories of Child Development—A wide range of theories on child development provide multiple perspectives on biological, cognitive, and socioemotional processes.

- Psychoanalytic Theories—Psychoanalytic theories describe development as primarily unconscious and heavily influenced by emotion. Psychoanalytic theorists also stress that early experiences with parents extensively shape development.
  - Freud’s theory proposed the existence of the id, ego, and superego, three personality structures that emerge and interact as an individual progresses through five psychosexual stages of development. He was convinced their problems were the result of experiences early in life. (Figure 1.7)
  - Erikson’s theory proposed that individuals progress through eight psychosocial stages over the lifespan; each stage involves a characteristic crisis that the individual must resolve. (Figure 1.8)
  - The contributions of psychoanalytic theories are the recognition of importance of early experiences, family relationships, personality, and the mind on development; criticisms include the lack of testability, the use of unreliable data, an overemphasis on sexuality and the unconscious, and/or views of development that are overly negative and culture- and gender-biased.

- Cognitive Theories—Cognitive theories emphasize conscious thought.
  - Piaget’s theory states that children actively construct their understanding of the world as they go through four stages of cognitive development. (Figure 1.9)
  - Vygotsky’s theory emphasizes how culture and social interaction guide cognitive development. Vygotsky portrayed development as inseparable from social and cultural activities.
  - Information-processing theory emphasizes that individuals manipulate, monitor, and strategize about information in a manner analogous to the functioning of a computer’s hardware and software.
  - The contributions of cognitive theories are that they present a detailed view of individuals that is positive and active in development and/or that they underscore the importance of examining developmental changes in children’s thinking; criticisms include that Piaget’s stages are not as uniform as he theorized, that cognitive theories do not give adequate attention to individual differences, and that information-processing theory does not provide an adequate description of developmental changes in cognition.

- Behavioral and Social Cognitive Theories—Development is observable behavior that can be learned through experience with the environment.
Pavlov’s Classical Conditioning—Pavlov discovered how a neutral stimulus (the bell) acquires the ability to produce a response originally produced by another stimulus (food).

Skinner’s Operant Conditioning—Skinner explained how consequences to behavior, such as reinforcement and punishment, can be manipulated to induce an organism to emit a desired response.

Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory—Bandura proposed that cognition and environment are key factors in development. People often cognitively identify with others’ behavior and then model or imitate it. A person’s behavior influences the environment, which in turn influences behavior. (Figure 1.10)

The contributions of behavioral and social cognitive theories include their emphasis on the importance of research, the environmental determinants of behavior, and the inclusion of observational learning and person/cognitive factors (in social cognitive theory); criticisms include that behavioral theories place too little emphasis on cognition, and that the theories place too much emphasis on environmental determinants while paying inadequate attention to developmental changes and a consideration of human spontaneity and creativity.

Ethological Theory—Ethology stresses that behavior is strongly influenced by biology, tied to evolution, and therefore characterized by critical or sensitive periods. Contributions of ethological theory include an increased focus on biological and evolutionary bases of development, use of careful observations in naturalistic settings, and emphasis on sensitive periods in development; criticisms include that concepts of critical and sensitive periods may be too rigid, an overly strong emphasis on biological foundations, inadequate attention to cognition, and that the theories are more applicable to research with animals than humans.

Ecological Theory—Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory holds that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems. (Figure 1.11)
  - Microsystem—where the child lives, involving family, peers, school, and neighborhood.
  - Mesosystem—relationships within the micросystem, such as family and school experiences.
  - Exosystem—the influences of factors over which one has no control, such as divorce, parents’ work stress.
  - Macrosystem—the culture in which one lives, its beliefs and value systems.
  - Chronosystem—the sequence of patterning of events that impact the child’s life; divorce may affect the child differently at different times in his or her life.

An Eclectic Theoretical Orientation—An eclectic theoretical orientation is an approach that selects concepts from one or more of the various theories in analyzing a child’s development.

Research Methods for Collecting Data—The study of child development with the scientific method allows researchers to choose from several ways of collecting data.

Measures
  - Observation—Scientific observation requires an important set of skills to control for bias, accurate record keeping and categorizing, and effective communications on what was
observed. Observations may be made either in a controlled laboratory setting or within the subject’s natural environment as in naturalistic observation.

- **Survey and Interview**—Self-report methods are direct and useful ways of collecting data. Questions need to be clearly articulated and unbiased, allowing respondents to answer unambiguously.
- **Standardized Test**—A standardized test has uniform procedures for administration and scoring.
- **Case Study**—A case study is an in-depth look at an individual that may provide detailed information about psychological dynamics but may not be easily generalized to wider populations.
- **Physiological Measures**—Assess the functioning of the central nervous system (CNS), the autonomic nervous system (ANS), and the endocrine system.

**Research Designs**

- **Descriptive Research**—Descriptive research aims to observe and record behavior.
- **Correlational Research**—The goal of correlational research is to describe the strength of the relationship between two or more events or characteristics. A numerical measure called a correlation coefficient describes the degree of association between two variables.
- **Experimental Research**—An experiment is a carefully regulated procedure in which one or more of the factors believed to influence the behavior being studied are manipulated and all other factors are controlled. The independent variable is the “cause” being manipulated, while the dependent variable is the “effect” or the behavior that changes. The experimental group is a group whose experience is manipulated, while the control group is the comparison group. Random assignment of participants to experimental and control groups reduces the likelihood of preexisting differences between groups.
- **Time Span of Research**—To study the relation between age and other variables, researchers can study individuals of different ages at the same time, as with a cross-sectional approach, or the same individuals over time, as with a longitudinal approach to research.

**Research Journals**—Scholars publish most of their research in journals, which are the core information source in virtually every academic discipline. The major sections of an article include the abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, and references.

**Research Challenges**—Challenges in research in child development include that research is conducted in an ethical manner and that research bias is minimized.

- **Conducting Ethical Research**—The American Psychological Association (APA) has established a code of ethics by which researchers abide in order to protect the subject and the researcher and to provide authenticity to the study. Informed consent means that participants are aware of the circumstances of their involvement. Researchers must maintain the confidentiality of the participants and conduct debriefing where the participants are informed of the purpose and methods used in the study. In cases of deception, researchers must ensure that the deception will not harm participants, and that participants will be debriefed as soon as possible after the study is completed. **Little Albert Clip**
- **Minimizing Bias**
  - **Gender bias**—Researchers must be cautious concerning gender bias in their studies. They must consider how gender influences questions, hypotheses, and
research design; how research on topics such as relationships, feelings, and empathy challenge existing theory; and how previous research exaggerating gender influence may now affect views on gender.

- Cultural and ethnic bias—Children of minorities have been excluded in research on child development or have been victims of ethnic gloss, where an ethnic group is labeled by virtue of a stereotype relative to their ethnicity.