

Introduction to Child Growth and Development

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Key concepts, stages, and factors that shape a child's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional progress.

1. What Is Child Development?

Dimension	Definition	Typical Outcomes
Physical (Growth)	Changes in body size, organ systems, motor abilities	Height/weight gain, fine & gross motor milestones
Cognitive	Development of thinking, problem-solving, language, memory	Symbolic play, language acquisition, logical reasoning
Socio-Emotional	Formation of self-concept, relationships, regulation of emotions	Attachment, empathy, peer interaction
Adaptive/Self-Help	Ability to care for oneself and manage daily tasks	Feeding, dressing, toileting

Development is **holistic** – progress in one domain influences the others.

2. Major Theoretical Perspectives

Theory	Proponent(s)	Core Idea	Relevance to Practice
Psychodynamic	Freud, Erikson	Stages driven by internal conflicts & social needs	Emphasizes secure attachment & trust
Cognitive	Piaget, Vygotsky	Children construct knowledge through interaction; zones of proximal development	Guides scaffolding & guided participation
Behaviorist	Skinner, Bandura	Learning via reinforcement, modeling, and observation	Shapes behavior management strategies

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Theory	Proponent(s)	Core Idea	Relevance to Practice
Ecological Systems	Bronfenbrenner	Development occurs within nested environmental systems (microsystem ? macrosystem)	Highlights importance of family, school, culture
Life?Course / Developmental? Contextual	Lerner, Sameroff	Development is a lifelong, dynamic process shaped by risk & protective factors	Informs early? intervention and preventive programs

3. Growth Milestones by Age (Typical Ranges)

Age	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Language	Social?Emotional
0?3? mo	Lifts head, turns side?to?side	Hands open, grasps reflexively	Cries, coos	Begins to smile, shows interest in faces
4?6? mo	Rolls both ways, sits with support	Reaches, grasps objects	Babbles, responds to name	Recognizes caregiver, expresses pleasure
7?12 ?mo	Crawls, pulls to stand, may walk	Transfers objects, pincer grasp	First words, understands “no”	Shows separation anxiety, imitates actions
13?24 ?mo	Walks independently, runs, climbs	Stacks blocks, scribbles	Vocabulary burst (50+ words), 2?word sentences	Begins parallel play, asserts independence
2?3? yr	Jumps, kicks ball, rides tricycle	Turns pages, draws circles	Uses 3?4 word sentences, asks “why?”	Engages in simple pretend play, shows empathy
3?5? yr	Hops, balances on one foot, skips	Cuts with scissors, copies shapes	Speaks in full sentences, tells stories	Cooperative play, follows rules, develops self?control

Individual variation is normal; deviations should be assessed in context.

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4. Factors Influencing Development

Development

4.1 Biological Factors

- **Genetics:** Determines potential for height, temperament, predisposition to certain conditions.
- **Nutrition:** Adequate macro? and micronutrients are essential for brain growth and bone development.
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