

Infancy & Childhood

Module 10

Physical development - brain

- ❖ At birth you have most of the brain cells you will ever have
- ❖ But connections between those cells are immature

Physical development - brain

- ❖ From 3-6
 - ❖ Development especially in frontal lobes (logic, planning, self-control)
- ❖ This continues into adolescence
- ❖ Last areas to develop are areas assoc. with thinking, memory, and language

Physical development - brain

- ❖ Experiment on rats 1962
- ❖ Those in an “enriched” environment 60 days showed actual physical brain weight increase 7-10%

Physical development - brain

- ❖ Post-adolescence
 - ❖ Use it or lose it
 - ❖ Unused connections are “pruned” away

Physical development - brain

- ❖ This is not to say that brain development is all over
- ❖ New neurons are born at any time via experience

Physical development - brain

- ❖ Infantile amnesia – we tend to not remember much before age 3 (it's in there, we just can't recall it)
 - ❖ Brain isn't yet fully capable
 - ❖ We don't have the language to put to our experiences that would make them “memorize-able”

Physical development – motor skills

- ❖ As brain develops, so does potential for motor skills
- ❖ Babies tend to develop skills in a predictable order
 - ❖ Based on the growing development of their brain, not experience or imitation
 - ❖ So don't think “walking” your 1 week old baby around will cause him to walk by 1 month!
 - ❖ Motor development based partially on genetics

Cognitive Development

- ❖ Jean Piaget – developmental psychologist – 1896-1980
- ❖ “Stages of Development”
- ❖ Brain is always trying to make sense of the world
- ❖ We develop “schemas” (mental molds) into which we can “pour” our experiences
- ❖ See handout
- ❖ See Table 10.1 pg 136

Cognitive Development

- ❖ Jean Piaget – developmental psychologist – 1896-1980
- ❖ “Object Permanence” – Piaget believed it develops after about 8 months (still in sensorimotor stage)
 - ❖ The understanding that things still exist even though we can't see/hear them
- ❖ Today's researchers feel it's more a development over time, not just a “all of the sudden” discovery

Cognitive Development

- ❖ Jean Piaget – developmental psychologist – 1896-1980
- ❖ “Conservation” – idea something that appears “bigger” is not necessarily “more”
 - ❖ Preoperational children may not comprehend “conservation”
 - ❖ How many pieces do you want your pizza cut into? 6 or 8?
 - ❖ Oh, 8! I'm super hungry!!!

Cognitive Development

- ❖ Jean Piaget – developmental psychologist – 1896-1980
- ❖ Modern view of Piaget –
 - ❖ His stages are still widely supported
 - ❖ He viewed each stage as independently scaffolding onto the previous one
 - ❖ Modern psychologists view it more as a constantly growing and unfolding process

Cognitive Development

- ❖ Lev Vygotsky 1896-1934
- ❖ Importance of language and social connections in learning
- ❖ Language provides the “building blocks” for thinking

Social Development

- ❖ Attachment – survival impulse; strong bond between caregivers and child
 - ❖ Was once believed to be tied to the food-provider
 - ❖ Now realized to be tied to the comfort-provider
 - ❖ Harlows' blankie-mommy experiments
- ❖ “Imprinting period” – some animals (not humans)

Social Development

- ❖ Secure attachment – comfortable to leave mom's side to play and explore as long as she is present; uncomfortable when she leaves, happy when she returns
 - ❖ Associated with attentive mothers
- ❖ Insecure attachment – uncomfortable leaving mom's side to play; cling to mom; either become very upset when she leaves or become indifferent
 - ❖ Associated with inattentive, unresponsive mothers
- ❖ Thought question: So what about all these moms on their phones while Junior is on the playground?

Social Development

- ❖ Deprivation of attachment associated with
 - ❖ Lower intelligence scores
 - ❖ Increased anxiety
 - ❖ Trouble making secure attachments to others
- ❖ But, children are resilient (bounce back from adversity), especially if they have a clear break/removal from the negative situation

Social Development

- ❖ Attachment and Daycare
 - ❖ Children in daycare show no ill effects or attachment issues as long as the care is loving and high-quality
 - ❖ One study running since 2002 shows that children in daycare had slightly advanced thinking & language skills

Social Development

- ❖ Temperament – your characteristic reactivity and intensity
- ❖ apparent from birth – often consistent into later years
- ❖ This is evidence that personality is at least partially biologically determined

Parenting Styles

- ❖ Vary culturally and individually
 - ❖ 3 basic types
 - ❖ Authoritarian
 - ❖ Permissive
 - ❖ Authoritative