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Talk for writing in
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Child Development Masterclass

**An Online Course from
Inspirational Teachers School**



Module 1

Introduction to child development



A

What is child development?



B

Why study child development



C

Dimensions of child development



D

The nature-nurture debate



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Recap and Assignment





A. WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

A simple definition of child development is that it is the study of growth and change in children from birth to maturity. It can also be said to be the process through which human beings typically grow and mature from infancy through adulthood.



A. WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

It is the sequence of physical, language, thought and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood. During this process a child progresses from dependency on their parents/guardians to increasing independence. Child development is strongly influenced by genetic factors (genes passed on from their parents) and events during prenatal life. It is also influenced by environmental facts and the child's learning capacity.



DEFINE CHILDHOOD

Childhood does not have a universally accepted definition. The definition varies from culture to culture. In this course, the focus is mainly on the pre-school years and onwards.

DEFINE DEVELOPMENT

Development according to the dictionary is ‘a gradual unfolding; a fuller working out of the details of anything’. To develop means to ‘unfold fully’.



WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

From these definitions, we can see that one of the essential features of development is 'change'. In the first few years of a child's life, children change very rapidly. Exploring and understanding the nature of these changes is the main subject of this module.



WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Child development definitions should never be about value judgments. For example, a seven-year-old may not necessarily be a better person than a three-year-old. The development and change made by a younger child should be celebrated as much as those of an older child.



WHAT IS CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

The most important thing is to take into consideration whether each child is developing herself or himself. The differences in children do not mean that one child is 'better' than the other. Concerns arise when an individual child is not moving along a course of development over time.



WHY STUDY CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Everyone believes they know about little children. After all, we all were once little. Undoubtedly, common sense is the foundation for the vast majority of child rearing all over the world. Common sense however, is subjective. It cannot be relied on to give us a consistent framework of approaching living and working with young children.



WHY STUDY CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

We need to study child development so that we have information about general patterns of development in different dimensions of child development. Knowing these will enable us offer appropriate activities and setting for each of the children in our care.



WHY STUDY CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

Over the years, experts in different disciplines (psychology, medicine, sociology etc) have collected large amounts of data seeking to establish patterns of development. These studies have now resulted in theories which provide us with a broader foundation upon which to base our knowledge of how children develop.

Read the summary of the notable theories





DIMENSIONS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

There are five dimensions of child development.

1. Physical development
2. Intellectual or cognitive development
3. Language development
4. Emotional development
5. Social development

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

This is the most obvious dimension of child development. It is concerned with how a child's body changes and grows. It also refers to development of control of gross and fine motor skills.



INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

This dimension is concerned with the study of how knowledge and understanding grows and changes through childhood. In this dimension, we will study in detail at ways that a child works things out, reasons, solves problems, concentrates and learns concepts.



LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

This dimension covers all aspects of language – speaking, listening, reading and writing. In this dimension, we would examine the early stages of language development, from the first babble to the more sophisticated speaking as well as reading and writing.



EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This dimension focuses on feelings and the ways in which they can be and are expressed. In this dimension, you will learn the importance of a child's self-esteem in everything that the child does. You will also learn about the role that parents/carers play in helping a child to feel emotionally secure in her/his world.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This dimension refers to those aspects of development that are concerned with a child becoming a social being. This involves looking at how children relates to other people, learns to share, take turns, behave within groups and how they try to understand other people's point of view.



THE NATURE-NUTURE DEBATE

Daily we hear a lot of comments about children and their developments. These comments reflect old and continuing debates about children and how they develop. The debate is: is it what we inherit that makes us who we are or is it the environment that we grow up in?



THE NATURE-NUTURE DEBATE

What we inherit is our **nature** and our environment is our **nurture**. The nature versus nurture debate is one of the oldest philosophical issues within psychology.



THE NATURE-NUTURE DEBATE

Nature: all of the genes and hereditary factors that influence who we are.

Nurture: all the environmental variables that impact who we are, including our early childhood experiences, how we were raised, our social relationships, and our surrounding culture.

Read the debate summary

Module 1

Recap



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Assignment

Please check due date on the template

Observe two children; a child in first year of life and another who is three years old or more. These observations do not have to be done at exactly the same time. Over a period of five to ten minutes, note down everything that the child does and says. Then use the five developmental dimensions to analyse and discuss each's child's development. After the analysis, answer the questions given on the template.

