Life–Span Development and Behavior

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Abstract

Originally published in Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books, 1995, Vol 40(11), 1081–1082. This is a review of the book, "Life–Span Development and Behavior (Vol. 12)" (see record 1994-97264-000). This is volume 12 in a series of edited volumes on developmental psychology. Volume 12 contains an impressive mix of topics and approaches and is, like the volumes that preceded it, a collection of well-written, thoughtful, and comprehensive chapters that will be of interest to a wide array of readers. As has been customary in the series, this volume contains pieces on particular aspects of both cognitive and social development as well as chapters that focus on more general conceptual and methodological issues in life span developmental research. The volume contains contributions on parenting, autonomy, coping, and wisdom, as well as more general chapters on the stability of individual differences in adulthood, log-linear modeling in developmental research, and the integration of research and outreach in the field of human development. “Life–Span Development and Behavior” is indispensable for graduate teaching. This volume also contains a listing of the contents of all previous volumes in the series, which will alert many readers to some terrific chapters that they may have missed. Unfortunately, Volume 12 marks the end of this series. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2006 APA, all rights reserved)
The life span perspective conceptualizes human behavior as influenced by developmental processes across biological, historical, sociocultural, and psychological factors from conception to death (Lerner, 2002). It extended the theoretical focus of historically traditional developmental psychology with a focus on intra-individual processes for incorporating sociocultural influences. According to life-span perspectives, an individual's context determines the course, direction, and outcomes of development from birth to death. Moreover, life-span contextualism has contributed importantly to understanding of the specific role that contexts play in the process of aging (Baltes, Reese, and Lipsitt, 1980; Lerner and Kaufman, 1985). Understanding the concepts of life-span development and how changes occur physically, mentally and socially across a person's lifespan. One contemporary concern of lifespan development according to Luckey and Fabes (2005) is the behavior of nonsocial play during the period of early childhood. Evidence suggests that some forms of nonsocial play in early childhood may be healthy while other forms may be detrimental to the child's development (Luckey & Fabes, 2005). Children who play independently in a constructive way such as playing with puzzles or coloring are believed to be engaged in a healthy activity (Luckey & Fabes, 2005). Lifespan development explores how we change and grow from conception to death. This field of psychology is studied by developmental psychologists. They view development as a lifelong process that can be studied scientifically across three developmental domains: physical, cognitive development, and psychosocial. There are many theories regarding how babies and children grow and develop into happy, healthy adults. Sigmund Freud suggested that we pass through a series of psychosexual stages in which our energy is focused on certain erogenous zones on the body. Eric Erikson modified Freud's ideas