

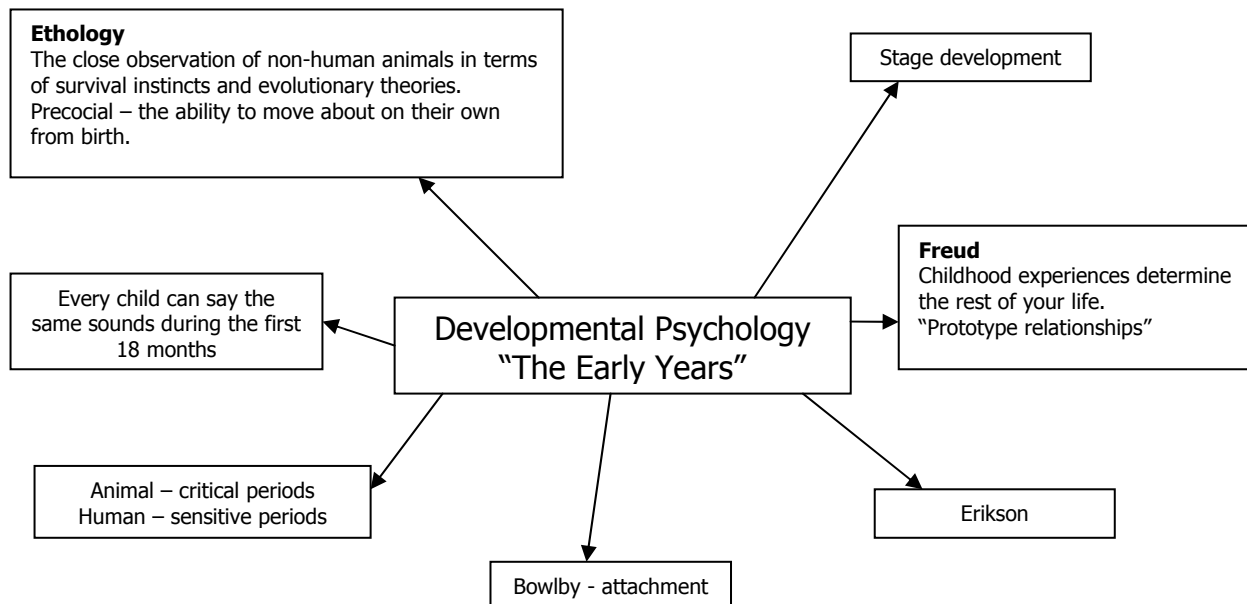
Developmental Psychology - Introduction

Also known as "Lifespan psychology".

Key Terms

- Stages
- Clinical periods
- Sensitive periods
- Personality
- Cognition
- Sociability
- Ethology
- Animal psychology
- Cognitive
- Moral

Ethology



Animals to Humans

Imprinting – Lorenz (renowned ethologist)

Imprinting works both ways. The animal must imprint on the mother to survive; the mother must recognise its offspring in order to continue its own genetic transmission. Imprinting is the early attachment of a newly born animal to its mother.

This idea of forming a close relationship which was necessary for survival was carried over into human psychology.

Attachment

The emotional bond between two people. It is a two-way process that endures over time. It leads to certain behaviours such as clinging and proximity seeking and serves the function of protecting an infant.

The Development of Attachments

Research shows that infants pass through typical phases as they develop their relationships with others.

Phase 1 – Preattachment (0-2 months)

Newborn infants are said to show indiscriminate social responsiveness. They are equally happy being picked up by familiar or unfamiliar people, and can be comforted as easily by strangers as by their parents. However, they soon begin to realise familiar smells, voices and faces (there is even evidence that at birth they recognise voices they heard when in the womb).

Phase 2 – Attachment in-the-making (2-7 months)

This phase is characterised by the increasing ability to recognise familiar people. An infant is more easily comforted by someone familiar but still does not show anxiety with strangers or less familiar people.

Phase 3 – Specific attachments (from 7 months)

“Attachment-proper” is signalled by the appearance of two new behaviours. The infant displays separation protest – the distress when an infant is separated from his/her caregiver. This may happen when the caregiver puts the infant down or when the caregiver leaves the room. Infants also show especial joy at reunion with that person and are most comforted by her/him. The second new behaviour is stranger anxiety – distress when picked up or approached by someone who is unfamiliar.

Phase 4 – Multiple attachments (from 8 months)

Initially, infants show attachments to one primary caregiver (as demonstrated by separation protest). Very soon after a first attachment is formed, most infants also show attachments to other people. The number of other attachments that are formed depends on how many consistent relationships the infant has. There is some debate about whether these different attachments are equally intense or whether the infant always has one special attachment figure at the top of a hierarchy of different attachments. The idea of one special attachment is called monotropy (which means “focuses on one person”).

Phase 5 – Reciprocal relationships (from 8-24 months)

The infant learns to predict the responses of others and this means that it is possible to consciously influence the behaviour of others. This is the beginning of real relationships.