

Book Reviews

Handbook of Child Psychology: Fifth Edition, Vol. Three: Social, Emotional and Personality Development. Editor in Chief, W. Damon; Volume Editor, N. Eisenberg. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, U.K., 1998. pp. 1208. £125.00 (pb) for all four volumes.

This weighty volume of 1208 pages (more “two-hands-and-a-table” than mere “hand” book) is, despite its intimidating size, surprisingly user-friendly, engaging, and full of up-to-date reviews, thinking, and information. Picking it up gives one the feeling at first sight that it may be overly heavy, solid, and plodding, but on closer acquaintance first appearances prove to be deceptive and the book is unexpectedly lively, entertaining, and light on its feet. This stimulating and enlightening manner starts in the preface by William Damon, which summarises the intermingled history of these *Handbooks* and child psychology itself, and continues through many of the chapters.

As volume editor, Nancy Eisenberg’s stated goal was “to present state-of-the-art reviews of conceptual and empirical work on social, emotional and personality development” and her invited authors succeed very well. The volume consists simply of a set of 16 chapters, which are not sequenced or arranged under any subheadings or groupings. The secret of the coherence within the volume lies in the fact that themes genuinely run through all the chapters, so that they do not need to be grouped under contrived headings or subgroupings so often found elsewhere. Whichever chapter one reads or dips into one finds a highly consistent style and quality of authorship; the chapters treat the same major themes in each of their individual subject areas. There is thus a sense of underlying unity and a common approach within the diversity of topics and without artificial subdivisions.

Eisenberg states in her Introduction that she gave the authors “a wide brief”, but the coherence which she establishes belies this and one suspects that they must have been given quite clear editorial guidelines. She traces six emerging themes in *Child Psychology: Emotion, Regulation, Cognition, Contextual and Environmental Inputs to Development, Biology, and Relationships*, and these are covered in different contexts in each chapter. Eisenberg notes, for instance, the dramatic increase in work and publication on emotion and the basis of emotion as determining development and other functions. Her introductory chapter is worth reading on its own—and if one read nothing else in the volume—for the overview of the current field it contains, but it also provides an excellent guide and jumping-off point to the volume as a whole. For those with a general interest, a very good way to use the book would be to follow from the introduction to sections of interest to the reader.

The chapters are arranged in a general sequence from those concerned with early development and more general influences on developmental process, such as Early Socio-personality Development, Temperament, Biology and the Child and Emotional Development: Action, Communication and Understanding, through topics such as Socialisation Processes, Socialisation in the Family: Ethnic and Ethological Perspectives, Development of Self-representation, Peer Interactions, Relationships and Groups, to more specialist topics of Prosocial Development, which is followed in contrast by a chapter on Aggression and Antisocial Development. The volume is completed with chapters on The Development of Morality, Gender Development, Motivation to Succeed, and Adolescent Development in Family Contexts.

All the chapters contain the history of the topic, recent influences and changes in thinking, and some consideration of

the implications for the field. All are full of detailed and coherent reviews of experimental findings, theoretical positions, and applied implications. There is inevitably some replication, for instance in consideration of early caregiver interactions, but in each case this is in the context of the chapter topic and each time the material has a new slant or new insights. Hence there is a strong impression of a core of agreed material being used to illuminate different aspects of developmental processes. As the volume title indicates, all authors take a strongly developmental approach and consideration is given throughout to processes causing change over time, which is a considerable strength of the volume, at least for this reviewer.

As one example, the chapter by Carolyn Saarni, Donna Mumme, and Joseph Campos on Emotional Development: Action, Communication and Understanding is a detailed review of “the extraordinary changes which have taken place in the study of emotion in the last 25 years ...” (p. 237) including early developmental processes and origins of emotion and later functions and effects of emotion on adjustment and cognition, in childhood and adolescence. This links well with preceding chapters by Jerome Kagan, on *Biology and the Child*, on Temperament by Mary Rothbart and John Bates, and on Early Sociopersonality Development by Ross Thompson. All take account of early interaction processes, of the transactions between biology/physiology and the developing social environment, and view the nature of developmental change as being based on the transactions over time. This pattern of links between chapters is followed throughout the volume.

The only major quibble is that the book should perhaps be titled *A Handbook of American Child Psychology* since of 27 contributors to 16 chapters, only 3 are not United States based—1 Australian, 1 Canadian, and 1 German. Two of these (Bugental and Goodnow) author a joint chapter, whilst the third (Schiefele) joint-authors with two U.S. colleagues. Although one recognises that any editor will tend to ask known colleagues to author chapters, earlier editions of the *Handbook* had more European authors, so the prevailing U.S. emphasis in this volume is perhaps an indicator of the current state of the field—or at least perceptions from across the pond. Admittedly there are references in many chapters to the work of, say, Judy Dunn, Michael Rutter, and other British and European psychologists, but it does seem unfortunate that “*Child Psychology*” should be presented almost as if it is solely a transatlantic phenomenon.

However, otherwise the book exemplifies the highest standard of editing, print, production, and readability. The referencing is very easy to use and, although I did not test the subject index fully, I was easily able to find my own hobbyhorses in the various chapters. This is a book for everyone’s departmental library.

Terence Gaussen

Handbook of Child Psychology, Fifth Edition, Vol. Four: Child Psychology in Practice. Editor in Chief, W. Damon; Volume Editors, I. E. Sigel and K. A. Renninger. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, U.K., 1998. pp. 1188. £125.00 (pb) (includes all four volumes).

The fourth volume of the revised *Handbook* covers four subareas: Child Rearing and the Family, Education in School, Mental and Physical Health, and Community and Culture, followed by an epilogue by Irving Sigel. Areas of both general

and specific interest are brought into focus, from the effects of day-care and mass media to specific issues of science and literacy education or children's testimony. Inevitably, the level of analysis of the chapters is rather uneven, and concentrates to a large extent on the American literature and context.

The first chapter, on Parenting Interventions, tries to instil some order into a rather theory-free area. The authors propose a theory checklist, generating nine cells in a matrix based on child, parent, and interactional cross-tabulated with biological, psychological, and social levels. Unfortunately, the system does not quite work, as some theories seem to crop up in more than one cell. The authors use the model to categorise parenting interventions. The authors rightly point to the discrepancy between academic formulations in the field of parenting interventions, and the implementation of family support in the real context.

Michael Lamb's chapter on nonparental child-care points out the poorly specified variability between studies. He concludes, however, that day-care experiences need not have harmful effects but can do so, particularly when the care providers fail to make good stable relationships with the child. The chapter is clearly written, and carefully argued, and provides a much-needed evaluation of a politically contentious area.

McLoyd's chapter on children in poverty again tackles an area with political as well as child-development implications. Many of the causes of poverty, even in the relative affluence of a country like the U.S.A., are relatively impervious to child- and family-level interventions and reflect societal trends and contexts. In the current British context of investment in Sure Start, the chapter provides a useful review of both the vulnerabilities in families and strategies of intervention targeting parents or children to bring about effective and sustainable changes.

The second section, on education in schools, begins with a careful contrast of two methods of education broadly described as "lecture" or "discussion". These are seen as emerging from the didactic-educational field and the developmental psychology field respectively. This is primarily a practical chapter and of specific interest to the educationalist. The second chapter on the development of literacy highlights the important contrast between the basic skills of phonics and word recognition, and the skills of the expert reader for whom the mechanics of the process are subordinate to meaning. An interesting debate on bottom-up vs. top-down learning results, with the explicit focus of what and how should be taught in classrooms. Since one quarter of Americans leave school with inadequate literacy skills, this is no academic debate.

Similarly, Chapter 6 examines the interface between science education and cognitive developmental psychology. The final chapter in this section looks at research and practice in children's mathematical thinking. Again in the era of the numeracy hour this chapter addresses an area that has practical and political repercussions as well as theoretical importance. Identifying mathematics education as a topic which "arouses anxiety in children, parents and teachers", the authors (Ginsberg, Klein, and Starkey) produce a thought-provoking and extraordinarily unstuffy and interesting chapter.

The third section, titled Mental and Physical Health, begins with a scholarly review of developmental psychopathology by Cicchetti and Toth, illustrating the argument with examples from the field of maltreatment and depressive disorders and drawing conclusions for training. A chapter by Noam attempts to develop clinical developmental psychology as a model of understanding and therapy that integrates psychodynamic and social-cognitive capacities. More anecdotal than the previous chapter, I found less to stimulate my thinking. A third "integrative" chapter introduces the field of pediatric psychology and examines some very difficult areas such as treatment compliance, coping, dying children, knowledge, and attitudes about illness and the ethics of genetic testing. All clinicians of any discipline might do well to read this. Ceci and Bruch provide the next chapter on Children's Testimony. They

provide clear delineation of the caveat that children have tremendous strengths in recalling their pasts "provided that adults who have access to them do not do anything to usurp their memories", and the "baleful consequences of transgressing this caveat". In our current climate of reactivity to allegations of child pornography and paedophilia, I would like this chapter to be made obligatory reading for anyone involved with children and the law. This is followed by a chapter by Goodman et al. looking at children in the aftermath of divorce, maltreatment, foster care, and adoption. A series of important questions about joint custody, the effects of contact with non-residential parents, placement with the same-sex parent, etc. are systematically addressed. The literature is specifically American and so omits, for example, Martin Richard's work in Cambridge, which I have found very helpful. Nevertheless, the questions addressed are exactly those asked of psychologists by lawyers and so are of high salience in our interface with the legal system.

The fourth section, on Community and Culture, is particularly wide ranging. The first chapter by Weissburg and Greenberg looks particularly at competence enhancement and prevention programmes. The conclusions drawn are that interventions need to be aimed at changing institutions, environments, and individuals and that multi-year programmes are most likely to foster enduring benefits. The content is good but again, in concentrating on the American perspective, misses some useful and well-evaluated interventions. The following chapter on issues in community-based research draws contrasts between applied and action research vs. "basic" research. Being firmly wedded to the "basic" research school, I found the content too loose for my taste. The following chapter on mass media and children's development is full of highly pertinent information on both the risk and use of television, computers, and mass media. The content is well structured but again lacks any European input, e.g. Kevin Browne's work on film/TV and delinquent youth. The chapter on culture and human development, while rejecting the idea that immigrants to the U.S.A. should be regarded as a tabula rasa on which American culture should be inscribed, nevertheless looks at cultural diversity within America and the implications of this without a broader world view.

This is a huge volume. The chapters that I am best placed to judge are sound, but it lacks a perspective broader than that of North America, and although the U.S.A. clearly has contributed enormously to the field, this diminishes the relevance of the content for European readers. The book deserves a place on library shelves but as the chapters are so diverse it is unlikely that any one individual will find the whole book sufficiently central to make it worth purchasing.

Christine Puckering

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy Abuse: A Practical Approach. Edited by M. Eminson and R. J. Postlethwaite. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 1999. pp. 321. £27.50 (pb).

In the foreword to this book, Professor David Taylor writes "By such a book as this, the field of medicine responds compassionately to an issue that is forced upon it but which, in several important ways, does not really belong to it". I can't put it better than that, but there is more.

This book brings clarity to the murky world of Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSBP) abuse, with even this title (chosen from an array of possible alternatives) emphasising that we are dealing with a form, albeit a convoluted one, of child abuse. MSBP is located within a spectrum of parental behaviour regarding the health of their child, and clearly distinguished from other abnormal patterns.

This book is useful, adopting throughout a practical approach to the recognition, understanding, and management of MSBP, both where this is suspected and where it has been confirmed. The clinical vignettes provide vivid illustrations of

the problems faced by clinicians and are accompanied by clear accounts of how these may best be managed. A whole chapter is dedicated to dealing with uncertainty, always a central issue in cases of MSBP, both explaining why this is almost inevitable and providing guidelines for how to proceed.

This book is comprehensive, covering the background of MSBP, clinical presentations of different types and within different settings, management, treatment, and outcomes. It includes a chapter on child mental health presentations, an area that has been sadly neglected in the literature but which is rich in opportunity for MSBP abuse. The chapter on parental achievement by proxy serves to indicate how the principal dynamics of MSBP behaviour can usefully be applied outside of the medical arena. The multi-disciplinary approach is reflected in the range of contributors, and the chapters on the child protection process are essential reading for anybody who may come across MSBP abuse, or indeed child abuse in general. It was also good to see a chapter on the effect of MSBP abuse on nurses (although applicable to other medical staff) as this often receives little attention, either in the literature or in practice.

Above all, this book is balanced, both in terms of its cover of the different types of MSBP abuse and in its account of how this behaviour may be explained and managed. This is in contrast to other books on MSBP which tend to focus on one particular explanatory model or which even dispute the very existence of the problem.

My only complaints about the book are that it does suffer from some degree of repetition, perhaps inevitable with so many contributors, and the awful picture on its cover! I learned a lot from reviewing it and heartily recommend it to paediatricians, nurses, and child mental health workers, particularly if working in a paediatric setting. Finally, although MSBP abuse could be seen as a very particular problem, it exemplifies how things can go wrong for all professional “helpers” involved with children and their families. As made clear in the quote at the beginning of this review, we are involved in what goes on—even if we don’t want to be or don’t even know we are. This book is all about our responsibility when helping goes wrong and, as such, it merits a wide readership.

Peter Loader

Working with Children and Parents through Separation and Divorce. The Changing Lives of Children. By E. Dowling and G. G. Barnes. Palgrave, Basingstoke, U.K., 2000. pp. 210. £12.99 (pb).

This book, which is one of a new series on the “fundamentals of counselling and therapy which will be essential reading for [those] in training and practice”, discusses working with families through separation and divorce. It is based on a transitions approach that draws on attachment and family systems theory. Central in the book are the experiences of the authors working with 30 families and 50 children in a child and family mental health service in central London over the past 5 years. This clinical sample is placed in a broader context that draws on some of the psychological research on separating parents and their children.

As we would expect from these two very experienced clinicians and the authors, the book provides a very competent overview of this important field from their particular perspective. It is admirable in its clarity and is well organised with helpful summaries at key points.

In a relatively brief book of this kind covering such a large and complex field, there are bound to be omissions. There are three which I think are significant. The first concerns children’s perspectives. A chapter is devoted to this key issue but it is underinformed by the recent blossoming of research with children. For example, there is no mention of the important qualitative studies by Carol Smart and her colleagues. The book has helpful chapters on the role of general practice, the school environment, and some of the other professions that may be

involved, but it is rather short on discussion of what we might call the material context of divorce and separation. One of the reasons why separation can be so stressful is that it not only brings emotional and social upheaval, but at a time when adults and children may be feeling very emotionally threatened and conflicted, there are usually a large number of practical issues about income, where to live, changes in employment and schooling, housekeeping and child care, and so on to be settled. This context inevitably casts a long shadow over any therapeutic work with families and children but that is rather underplayed in the book. For instance, some basic statistics about the domestic economics of the divorce would be useful.

Finally, there needs to be a word about outcomes and assessment. Of course, there are precious few outcome studies in the divorce field, despite the growing culture of evidence-based intervention and policy. But if that is to change, the issues must be raised and thought about as an integrated aspect of practice.

Those omissions aside, this is a very useful book that will fill a real gap in what is available for those in training and nonspecialists in the divorce field.

Martin Richards

Martian in the Playground: Understanding the Schoolchild with Asperger’s Syndrome. By Clare Sainsbury. Lucky Duck Publishing, Bristol, U.K., 2000. pp. 140. £12.00 (pb).

Asperger’s syndrome is by no means rare, and many hidden cases exist with the consequence of untold suffering. This is why this admirable book should be available on every practitioner’s desk, in every school, and in every clinic. It would surely raise awareness, but moreover, it gives practical and sensible hints for understanding and dealing with the most common problems at the interface between ordinary people and the “Martians” of the title.

This deceptively little book contains more truth and provides more insight into what it is like to have Asperger’s syndrome than many a weighty tome on the subject. It offers a view from the inside, but it is not yet another autobiography. Admirably and refreshingly, the author has refrained from giving an account solely based on her own experiences. Instead she sets out observations from 25 different sufferers, giving often astonishing and sometimes harrowing glimpses of what actually happens to a child with Asperger’s syndrome in the classroom, in the playground, in the lunch queue, at home. Not all the contributors’ quotes are equally articulate and lucid, and they are not necessarily of one voice and of one opinion; they reflect the many different experiences of the many different people with Asperger syndrome.

The diversity created in this way makes the accounts even more poignant and credible. However, there are two strikingly consistent themes that come through the first-hand accounts of the varied experiences in varied settings, from different parts of the world. First is the theme of incomprehension and consequent injustice. Second is the theme of particular teachers, or others, who made a dramatic difference to the everyday wellbeing of the children by their understanding. Some people, it seems, are naturally gifted at divining the problems of people with Asperger’s syndrome, and from the examples given we can learn just what subtlety this requires, and in particular, the ability to give without getting an ordinary “thank you”.

What I found particularly interesting, and what gives particular urgency to the provision of diagnosis even later in life, are the many examples of painfully heightened self-awareness in the older observers, in sharp contrast to a seeming lack of such awareness earlier in life. For instance, one observer says: “She [a sensitive teacher] never embarrassed me by making me get up and answer questions ... In her class I was allowed to sit along the wall of the classroom ... I was able to see everyone without them seeing me or staring at me”. Another observer reports: “they had to let me into the disabled toilet to get privacy to drink”.

Textbooks can never give us an idea what it feels like to have Asperger's syndrome. The shock is to learn that it entails feeling that you are different, but not to have this feeling acknowledged. The difference made by the simple fact of being given a diagnosis has frequently been written about, but here the effects take on individual meaning and give concrete evidence of the benefits. Clare Sainsbury has succeeded not only in providing a rich collection of the direct observations and reflections of true insiders, but also in giving a very readable account of the current understanding of Asperger's syndrome. The many practical hints and examples of approaches that have proved of benefit in individual cases are especially welcome. It is gratifying to note that this book received first prize in the book awards from the National Association for Special Needs.

Uta Frith

Introduction to Family Therapy. By R. Dallos and R. Draper. Open University Press, Buckingham, U.K., 2000. pp. 252. £18.99 (pb).

This book is a welcome addition to a small group of basic family therapy texts. The authors have a wealth of clinical, teaching, and research experience which is evident throughout. They have managed to write a textbook that does an admirable job in leading the reader reliably through a broad range of theoretical ideas whilst retaining an engaging, lively style that captures the excitement of this rapidly developing field. The authors have managed to be "up to date" whilst also holding onto useful ideas from the past and linking them into current practice. The field of family therapy can be hampered by unhelpful divisions but this book manages to remain inclusive and nonpartisan whilst also exploring the connections between systemic theory and other bodies of knowledge. It is a well-written and accessible book that uses the kind of adult learning approach associated with the Open University. The authors provide an excellent guide to using the book, provide a number of useful exercises to help the reader reflect on the ideas and translate them into their own practice, and provide excellent guidance for further reading. Teachers of psychotherapy share the challenge of how to introduce theory in a way that gives sufficient value to basic therapeutic notions such as engagement, relationship, pragmatism, and ethics. In my view the authors have found a recipe that works really well and enables students to grasp the ideas from many different perspectives. In sympathy with post-modern thinking, the authors present their "account" as one of many possibilities and invite the reader to assess what fits for them. This is done in a way that invites robust critique rather than undermines confidence in the text.

The first three chapters trace the development of ideas from the 1950s to the present day and each chapter contains an outline of the cultural context of developments. This is followed by an overview of influential people and ideas, examples of practice, a guide to key texts, and useful exercises for developing skills. The fourth chapter explores the connections between family therapy and theories of emotion and attachment. Chapter 5 is a very welcome section on research and evaluation and its importance for family therapy practice. This is an introduction to research methods that will excite rather than deter readers. The book begins with the voice of the client speaking about the experience of family therapy and ends with some thoughts on integrating ideas into practice. I really admire the way the authors have managed to produce an introductory

text that remains connected to the core purpose of helping families. It is essential reading for those studying family therapy and those wanting to enrich their work with families and couples. Experienced family therapists will find it an excellent resource book for teaching and it would prove a very useful addition to any department library.

Judith Lask

Attention-deficit Disorders and Comorbidities in Children, Adolescents and Adults. Edited by T. E. Brown. American Psychiatric Press, Washington DC, 2000. pp. 671. £47.50 (hb).

If you buy no other book on ADHD, buy this one. As an advocate of the view that impairment of cognitive executive function is at the heart of ADHD, Tom Brown prefers the briefer term attention-deficit disorder, but do not let that put you off. This volume is a chunky (650 pp.) collection of chapters written by many of the great and the good in ADHD research and practice, not surprisingly nearly all North American. The focus, as you might guess, is comorbidity. This is inevitable since several studies have now shown that pure ADHD is unusual, most cases having some other clinical problem as well. In his introduction, Brown states that "over 50% of persons diagnosed with an attention-deficit disorder also meet the diagnostic criteria for one or more additional psychiatric disorders ...". But it may be more than that. In one study, not cited presumably because its title and journal of publication would escape an ordinary search, Kaplan and colleagues (1998) found, in a nonclinical sample, that only 8 out of 48 children with ADHD did not have clinically significant comorbid reading or coordination difficulties. Good-quality child and adolescent mental health practice thus requires broad assessment and comprehensive treatment of any young person with apparent ADHD.

Given that most authors have already published quite widely it is not surprising that in many chapters there is some repetition of work available elsewhere. Yet the power of this book is to have it all between two covers. Reading through it, the message that comorbid disorders are more likely than not when an individual is thought to have ADHD is emphatic. There are interesting contributions about adult ADHD, especially McDermott's chapter on cognitive therapy, an approach that has not borne much fruit with children but shows promise with young adults.

There are notoriously tricky areas in ADHD practice. Readers who want to know about the management of ADHD in young people who also have anxiety disorders, Tourette's syndrome, or substance misuse will find as much good advice in this book as is available, though there is still much to be learned through research. No assumptions are made about prior knowledge and there is a sound briefing section at the start and overview chapters on treatment at the end. Perhaps there is room for a little pruning here and there but as a thorough and clinically centred reference book that makes a worthwhile point this is a winner.

Peter Hill

References

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