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## UNIT 1 GENERAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT 1

### Issue 1. Does the Cultural Environment Influence Lifespan Development More Than Our Genes? 2

**YES:** Paul Ehrlich and Marcus Feldman, from “Genes and Cultures: What Creates Our Behavioral Phenome?” *Current Anthropology* (February 2003) 5

**NO:** Gary Marcus, from “Making the Mind: Why We’ve Misunderstood the Nature-Nurture Debate,” *Boston Review* (December 2003/January 2004) 14

Stanford University professors of biology Paul Ehrlich and Marcus Feldman argue that human behavior exhibits such complexity that genetic programs simply cannot explain the way people develop. Psychologist and researcher Gary Marcus asserts that research clearly demonstrates how a relatively small number of genes influence our environmental learning by “cascading” to determine the paths of our behavioral development.

### Issue 2. Are Peers More Important Than Parents During the Process of Development? 26

**YES:** Judith Rich Harris, from “How to Succeed in Childhood,” *Wilson Quarterly* (Winter 1991) 29

**NO:** Howard Gardner, from “Do Parents Count?” *New York Times Book Review* (November 5, 1998) 38

Developmental psychology writer Judith Rich Harris presents a strong and provocative argument suggesting that parents do not influence child development to any significant degree, while peers and social groups have a primary influence. Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner reviews Harris’s work and suggests her argument is overstated and misleading—parents do matter.

### Issue 3. Is Chinese Parenting Culturally Distinct? 51

**YES:** Amy Chua, from “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior,” *Wall Street Journal—The Saturday Essay* (January 8, 2011) 54

**NO:** Markella B. Rutherford, from “The Social Value of Self-Esteem,” *Society* (September 2011, vol 48, no. 5) 59

Yale law professor and self-proclaimed “Tiger Mother” Amy Chua argues that Chinese parenting is distinct from most Western parenting in its rigor, high expectations, and unwillingness to accept anything less than true excellence. Sociologist Markella B. Rutherford instead sees the “Tiger Mother” idea as just another example of the types of privileged parenting that ultimately prioritizes self-confidence, self-esteem, and perpetuates differences more dependent on class than on culture.

## **UNIT 2    PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFANCY    71**

### **Issue 4.    Is Drinking Alcohol While Pregnant an Unnecessary Risk to Prenatal Development?    72**

**YES:** **Phyllida Brown**, from “Drinking for Two,” *New Scientist* (July 1, 2006) 75

**NO:** **Julia Moskin**, from “The Weighty Responsibility of Drinking for Two,” *The New York Times* (November 29, 2006) 80

Science writer Phyllida Brown reviews contemporary research about the effects of alcohol exposure during prenatal development and concludes that total abstinence from drinking is the smart option during pregnancy. Journalist Julia Moskin finds the evidence against light drinking lacking, and argues that women should be allowed to decide for themselves if an occasional alcoholic beverage is harmful.

### **Issue 5.    Is Breastfeeding Inevitably Best for Healthy Development?    86**

**YES:** **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, from *The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding* (Office of the Surgeon General, 2011) 89

**NO:** **Julie E. Artis**, from “Breastfeed at Your Own Risk,” *Contexts* (vol. 8, no. 4, Fall 2009) 98

As part of a broad mandate to advocate for public health, the U.S. Surgeon General cites numerous benefits of breastfeeding as part of “call to action” oriented toward increasing the practice among new mothers. Sociologist Julie E. Artis argues that the broad promotion of breastfeeding has the potential to unfairly stigmatize women who do not breastfeed while overstating the benefits.

### **Issue 6.    Are There Good Reasons to Allow Infants to Consume Electronic Media, Such as Television?    109**

**YES:** **Victoria Rideout, Elizabeth Hamel, and the Kaiser Family Foundation**, from “The Media Family: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers and Their Parents” A Report from the Kaiser Family Foundation (May 2006) 112

**NO:** **Ellen Wartella and Michael Robb**, from “Young Children, New Media” *Journal of Children and Media* (Issue 1, 2007) 131

Victoria Rideout, Elizabeth Hamel, and the Kaiser Family Foundation find that television and electronic media allow families to cope with busy schedules and are of value to parents of infants. Ellen Wartella and

Michael Robb, who are scholars of children and the media, describe limitations on infant's ability to learn from electronic media and note concerns about the diminishing of direct infant to parent interactions.

## UNIT 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD 143

### Issue 7. Do Innate Gender Differences Influence How Children Learn? 144

**YES:** Kelley King, Michael Gurian, and Kathy Stevens, from "Gender-Friendly Schools," in *Educational Leadership* (November 2010) 147

**NO:** Lise Eliot, from "The Myth of Pink and Blue Brains," in *Educational Leadership* (November 2010) 153

Kelley King, Michael Gurian, and Kathy Stevens, all affiliated with an institute that advocates for accommodating gender differences in learning, identify developmental differences between boys and girls that are deep enough to merit distinct educational practices. Neuroscientist Lise Eliot offers a brain-based perspective to suggest that popular applications of findings on gender differences exaggerate innate tendencies. Instead, Eliot emphasizes that socialization practices are much more influential to the ways boys and girls learn.

### Issue 8. Should Bipolar Disorder be Diagnosed and Treated in Children? 161

**YES:** Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation, from "About Pediatric Bipolar Disorder" at <http://www.bpkids.org/learn/library/about-pediatric-bipolar-disorder> (October 1, 2010) 164

**NO:** Stuart L. Kaplan, from "Pediatric Bipolar Disorder" in *Your Child Does Not Have Bipolar Disorder: How Bad Science and Good Public Relations Created the Diagnosis* (Praeger, 2011) 176

The Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation offers an overview of how pediatric bipolar disorder is defined, identified, and studied to help parents and others understand this relatively new way of thinking about psychiatric problems among children. Child psychiatrist Stuart L. Kaplan thinks that the concept of pediatric bipolar disorder is too eagerly embraced considering its newness, and that there is insufficient evidence for labeling children with a serious psychiatric problem that historically only applied to adults.

### Issue 9. Are Violent Video Games Necessarily Bad for Children? 198

**YES:** Craig A. Anderson, from "Violent Video Games and Other Media Violence (Parts 1 & 2)" in *Pediatrics for Parents* (January/February & March/April 2010) 201

**NO:** Cheryl K. Olsen, Lawrence Kutner, and Eugene Beresin, from "Children and Video Games: How Much Do We Know?" in *Psychiatric Times* (October 2007) 209

Psychologist and researcher Craig A. Anderson finds that violent video game play consistently associates with aggression and problematic behavior, arguing that there is no good reason for making them available

to children. Cheryl K. Olsen, Lawrence Kutner, and Eugene Beresin have all been affiliated with a Harvard Medical School center devoted to studying mental health and the media. In their work they recognize the potential risks of violent video games, but find that most children play video games in ways that pose little risk and offer some potential benefit.

## UNIT 4 ADOLESCENCE 217

### Issue 10. Should Contemporary Adolescents Be Engaged in More Structured Activities? 218

**YES:** Joseph L. Mahoney, Angel L. Harris, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, from "Organized Activity Participation, Positive Youth Development, and the Over-Scheduling Hypothesis," *Social Policy Report* (August 2006) 221

**NO:** Alvin Rosenfeld, from "Comments on 'Organized Activity Participation, Positive Youth Development, and the Over-Scheduling Hypothesis'," . . . . 229

Psychologist Joseph Mahoney and colleagues recognize the concern about "over-scheduling" but present research suggesting that the benefits to structured activities outweigh any costs. Child psychiatrist Alvin Rosenfeld asserts that all of the data suggest that most youth and adolescents need less structured activity and more balance.

### Issue 11. Does the Adolescent Brain Make Risk Taking Inevitable? 236

**YES:** Laurence Steinberg, from "Risk Taking in Adolescence: New Perspectives from Brain and Behavioral Science," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (April 2007) 239

**NO:** Michael Males, from "Does the Adolescent Brain Make Risk Taking Inevitable?: A Skeptical Appraisal," *Journal of Adolescent Research* (January 2009) 245

Although adolescent risk taking has proved difficult to study and explain, psychology professor Laurence Steinberg claims brain science is now demonstrating that basic biological changes explain much about the issue. Sociologist Michael Males rejects "biodeterminism" as an oversimplification that exaggerates the effects of brain age and ignores the realities of social and economic differences.

## UNIT 5 YOUTH AND EMERGING ADULTHOOD 257

### Issue 12. Is There Such a Thing as "Emerging Adulthood"? 258

**YES:** Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, from "Emerging Adulthood: What Is It, and What Is It Good For?" *Child Development Perspectives* (December 2007) 261

**NO:** Leo B. Hendry and Marion Kloep, from "Conceptualizing Emerging Adulthood: Inspecting the Emperor's New Clothes," *Child Development Perspectives* (December 2007) 269

Developmental psychologist Jeffrey Jensen Arnett has earned wide acclaim among scholars for defining an “emerging adulthood” as a distinctly modern stage of the life-span. Life-span research scholars Lew B. Hendry and Marion Kloep argue that defining emerging adulthood as a discrete stage provides a misleading account of the age period between the late teens and the mid- to late twenties.

### **Issue 13. Is There a “Narcissism Epidemic” Among Contemporary Young Adults? 279**

**YES:** Jean M. Twenge and Joshua D. Foster, from “Mapping the Scale of the Narcissism Epidemic: Increases in Narcissism 2002–2007 within Ethnic Groups,” *Journal of Research in Personality* (December 2008) 282

**NO:** M. Brent Donnellan, Kali H. Trzesniewski, and Richard W. Robins, from “An Emerging Epidemic of Narcissism or Much Ado About Nothing?” *Journal of Research in Personality* (June 2009) 287

Jean M. Twenge and Joshua D. Foster present evidence from surveys of college students that reinforces their claim of a “narcissism epidemic.” Research psychologists M. Brent Donnellan, Kali H. Trzesniewski, and Richard W. Robins take the evidence used by Twenge and colleagues and draw different conclusions, arguing claims of an epidemic are greatly exaggerated.

### **Issue 14. Are Today’s College Students Interested in Engaging with Religion and Spirituality? 296**

**YES:** Diane Winston, from “iFaith in the Amen Corner: How Gen Y Is Rethinking Religion on Campus,” in the Social Science Research Council Essay Forum on the Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates (May 11, 2007, <http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/index.html>) 299

**NO:** Tim Clydesdale, from “Abandoned, Pursued, or Safely Stowed?” in the Social Science Research Council Essay Forum on the Religious Engagements of American Undergraduates (February 6, 2007, <http://religion.ssrc.org/reforum/index.html>) 306

Religion scholar Diane Winston describes interacting with students at her university and finding that the students have vibrant religious engagements despite eschewing traditional types of religiosity. Tim Clydesdale, a sociologist who studies young adults transitioning from high school, finds instead that most college students “stow” away their religious engagements and generally immerse themselves in other identity commitments.

## **UNIT 6 MIDDLE ADULTHOOD 317**

### **Issue 15. Do Adults Need to Place More Value on Marriage? 318**

**YES:** W. Bradford Wilcox et al., from *Why Marriage Matters: Thirty Conclusions from the Social Sciences—3rd ed.* (Institute for American Values, 2011) 321

**NO:** Kathleen E. Hull, Ann Meier, and Timothy Ortyl, from “The Changing Landscape of Love and Marriage” *Contexts* (vol. 9, no. 2, Spring 2010) 328

Sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox led a team of prominent family scholars to draw conclusions about the contemporary state of marriage as an institution, and the consequences of being married. They conclude that although marriage patterns are changing, traditional marriages still benefit adults and society. Kathleen E. Hull, Ann Meier, and Timothy Ortyl from the sociology department at the University of Minnesota survey findings suggesting that most contemporary adults value committed relationships even if social forces are changing the nature of marriage itself.

## **Issue 16. Is Parenthood a Detriment to Well-Being? 337**

**YES:** Robin W. Simon, from “The Joys of Parenthood, Reconsidered,” *Contexts* (vol. 7, no. 2, Spring 2008) 340

**NO:** Bryan Caplan, from “The Breeders’ Cup” *Wall Street Journal—The Saturday Essay* (June 19, 2010) 346

Researcher Robin W. Simon finds that although adults willingly believe in the “joys of parenthood,” research consistently suggests that having children results in decreases in many different measures of well-being. Economist Bryan Caplan acknowledges that research finds some association between becoming a parent and being unhappy, but argues that the magnitude of that finding is small and barely applies after parents already have one child. He also suggests that the reason some parents seem unhappy is because they put unnecessary pressure on themselves.

## **UNIT 7 LATER ADULTHOOD 353**

### **Issue 17. Is More Civic Engagement Among Older Adults Necessarily Better? 354**

**YES:** Sheila R. Zedlewski and Barbara A. Butrica, from “Are We Taking Full Advantage of Older Adults’ Potential?” *Perspectives on Productive Aging* (Number 9, December 2007) 357

**NO:** Marty Martinson, from “Opportunities or Obligations? Civic Engagement and Older Adults,” *Generations* (Winter 2006–2007) 366

Urban Institute researchers Sheila R. Zedlewski and Barbara A. Butrica, writing as part of a broader project to investigate the changing nature of retirement, argue that promoting civic engagement is good for both individuals and society. Critical gerontologist Marty Martinson acknowledges that promoting civic engagement in old age can be useful, but suggests that it also serves to shift attention away from broader social problems and responsibilities toward individuals who may or may not benefit from conventional civic engagement.

### **Issue 18. Is “Mild Cognitive Impairment” Too Similar to Normal Aging to be a Relevant Concept? 375**

**YES:** Janice E. Graham and Karen Ritchie, from “Mild Cognitive Impairment: Ethical Considerations for Nosological Flexibility in Human Kinds,” in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* (March 2006) 378

**NO: Ronald C. Petersen**, from “Mild Cognitive Impairment Is Relevant,” in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* (March 2006) 387

Philosophers Janice E. Graham and Karen Ritchie raise concerns that rigidly defining Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) as a disorder associated with aging artificially creates the harmful impression that the conditions of old age are merely biomedical problems. Medical doctor and researcher Ronald C. Petersen has been a prominent proponent of defining MCI as an intermediate stage between normal aging and Alzheimer’s disease. In this selection he counters Graham and Ritchie by emphasizing the usefulness of MCI as a diagnosis.

### **Issue 19. Should We Try to “Cure” Old Age? 394**

**YES: Michael J. Rae et al.**, from “The Demographic and Biomedical Case for Late-Life Interventions in Aging,” in *Science Translational Medicine* (vol. 2, no. 40, July 14, 2010) 397

**NO: Robin Holliday**, from “The Extreme Arrogance of Anti-Aging Medicine,” in *Biogerontology* (vol. 10, no. 2, April 2009) 406

Michael J. Rae was lead author on an article presenting the position a group of prominent antiaging scholars. They promote more funding and support for what they consider promising research directions towards slowing or even curing aging. Molecular biologist Robin Holliday takes a skeptical view of antiaging science, coming away from his own work on cellular aging with a respect for the necessary inevitability of old age.

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