

Book Report: Child Development by Robert S. Feldman

Student's Name

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**Introduction**

The book entitled “Child Development” was written by Robert S. Feldman, a professor of Psychology and Associate Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Professor Robert S. Feldman has also served as a Hewlett Teaching Fellow, as well as, an online teaching fellow. Among his many accomplishments, the professor received a College Distinguished Teacher award and is also on the Board of Directors of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive sciences and that of the Foundation for the Advancement of Behavioral and Brain sciences. With his strong academic and occupational background in psychology, Robert S. Feldman has become quite a formidable force in the field of psychology. Currently, the author teaches psychology to classes ranging from 15 to 500 students. His works are balanced and easy to understand, such that they are a big help to the students in the field.

**Summary**

“Child Development” is a book that is meticulously thorough and well laid out for easy understanding. Based on the author’s vast academic background and practice in teaching psychology, one would assume that the book would be complicated and full of incomprehensible theories and ideologies. The book is, however, written for students such that the chronology and simplicity of language, as well as the detailed explanations make it an easy resource book. In the book, the author takes the readers through a kind of open class discussion that although one sided, is quite easy to comprehend and follow. While the book cannot totally substitute actual classes, it is a great pointer in the right direction for all people interested in dissecting child development from a social and behavioral point of view.

The book provides theories, research and applications of child development, and also offers tools that make the subject much more engaging for the student. In the book, the author accentuates the scope and diversity of the study pointing out the numerous interrelationships between the various theories and ideologies associated with child and adolescent development. As expected, Robert S. Feldman tackles the child development issue from a psychologist's perspective, giving great attention to the psychological stages of child development.

The main purpose of this book I would say is to make it easier for students to study, enjoy and actually internalize the lessons in a way that is beneficial for their present and future practice (Feldman, 2011). It has been lauded as the most balanced presentation of research and applications. This means it is an all round resource book for students in this field of study.

### **Review**

This book is more of a study guide in the field of child development, although the author gives lessons that can be quite useful in studying other subjects as well. He writes about how to personalize learning to make it easier and more interesting for the student. The engaging experiences coming from an expert in learning make it invaluable to both instructors and students as well, and it motivates them to achieve their learning objectives. Robert writes more like an expert in education, seeking to guide, more than teach. He provides a strong balance between the research and the applications in order to retain the learner's attention as well as interest. With regards to developmental sciences, the author appreciates the subject as well as the student's efforts and seeks to reward them by making it easier to contextualize and comprehend. I expected this book to be simply a resource book filled with information, and requiring specialized concentration to internalize and understand. However, the author crafted a very captivating lesson that is bound to cultivate a deep enthusiasm for the study (Feldman, 2011).

As he talks about the stages of child development, he challenges the students to invoke their critical thinking skills by requiring them to raise a 'virtual child'. By putting them, in a 'real life' situation, he not only tests their capabilities, but also shapes their way of thinking in order to create well rounded professionals. He also shows the students how to apply the concepts learned to real life situations. This enables the students to open up to possibilities that in turn stimulate a deeper and broader understanding and appreciation of the subject. Going through the chapters of this book, I found that child development depends on very many things ranging from genetics, to environment as well as the parents or guardians of the child in question as well as his or her individual traits, strengths and weaknesses and diseases (Papalia & Feldman, 2011).

In the book, the author highlights the social and cultural issues that may impact development in today's societies. By doing this, he provides a context on which students from across the globe can create knowledge that is relevant and applicable within their social and cultural settings. What really interested me in this book is the way the professor breaks down these social and behavioral factors that affect child and adolescent development. He emphasizes on the particular situations that determine how a child develops by examining issues like how self-esteem affects behavior, the types of relationships and friendships that exist in particular age groups, the factors involved in popularity, how sex and ethnicity affect friendships, and how different family and care arrangements affect the children (Healy, 2004).

While playing his role as a fountain of knowledge for the students, Robert also acts as a personal tutor as well as study partner who challenges the student, and implores him or her to discover beyond the written text. The author takes up the role of a study adviser as well in requiring the student to raise virtual children in order to apply the theories and concepts that they learn. This book can be considered as a resource material for the subject of study, but the most

interesting thing about it is the approach used by the author to give this information. The information is invaluable, and the approach used makes it even more priceless. This is not yet another boring topical encyclopedia, but rather a great lesson in text. The applications of theories that are discussed throughout the book give it a manual feeling for persons who are not studying for tests and exams (Papalia & Feldman, 2011). They make it possible for a parent with no academic background in psychology to understand and apply the relevant theories in bringing up their own real children. The perfected chronology of the chapters gives it a step by step layout that is easy to read and internalize. The fact that the author actually takes it as an exercise of bringing up a child, incorporating possible scenarios and the relevant theories, makes the book really practical for a wide range of users.

Feldman (2011) had good intentions when writing this book, since he did not restrict his style to only students' understanding. Although he is a long serving teacher, he does not entirely devote his works to the students' fraternity. His step by step analysis of the stages of psychological development in children is basically crystal clear such that even a child reading it would understand how he or she should be raised.

### **Conclusion**

Basing on how I saw and understood the book, I can say that child development is not necessarily complex, but it is wide with numerous interrelated theories and applications that make it a very interesting topic of study. With this book to guide and aid the student, it would be practically unbelievable to claim that the topic is difficult to comprehend. I found this book particularly useful as a guide for current and future parents as it provides practical guidelines, and very easy to understand language, that is coming from a real expert in matters concerning psychology. While it is more of a study guide, the book is well set to embrace contextual

applications such that aside from the theories being examined, the applications are also set to challenge the student to apply critical thinking while raising a virtual child. For a real parent, the book will simply be like a manual as the child is not virtual anymore. Thus, the book is not only informative and invaluable for the student and parent, but it is also engaging, challenging and consequently very interesting. At first, I was worried that being a book on development sciences I would find it boring and incomprehensible. But the author really surprised me, as he managed to transform a bleak subject into a challenging and captivating lesson that has given me numerous insights on how to bring up a child successfully in today's socio-cultural dispensations. As a book, I would say that child development by Robert S. Feldman is such a great read that is bound to shock anyone who writes off academic books as boring or hard to understand. It is such a rewarding read, not only for students but parents both current and aspiring at that.

## References

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