

Developmental Psychology	A branch of psychology that studies physical, cognitive, and social change through the life span
Zygote	The fertilized egg; enters a 2-week period of rapid cell division and develops into an embryo
Embryo	The developing human organism from about 2 to 8 weeks after fertilization
Fetus	The developing human organism from 9 weeks after conception to birth
Teratogens	Agents (eg. Chemicals, viruses) that can reach the embryo or fetus during prenatal (before birth) development and cause harm
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)	Physical and cognitive abnormalities in children caused by a pregnant woman's heavy drinking
Rooting Reflex	A baby's tendency, when touched on the cheek, to turn toward the touch, open the mouth, and search for the nipple
Habituation	Decreasing responsiveness with repeated stimulation
Maturation	Biological growth processes that enable orderly changes in behavior, relatively uninfluenced by experience
Schema	A concept or framework that organizes and interprets information
Assimilation	Interpreting one's new experience in terms of one's existing schemas
Accommodation	Adapting to one's current understandings (schemas) to incorporate new information
Cognition	All the mental activities associated with thinking, knowing, remembering, and communicating
Sensorimotor	In Piaget's theory, the stage (from birth to around 2 years of age) during which infants know the world mostly in terms of their sensory impressions and motor activities
Object Permanence	The awareness that things continue to exist even when not perceived
Preoperational Stage	In Piaget's theory, the stage (from 2-6/7 years of age) during which a child learns to use language but does not yet comprehend the mental operations of concrete logic
Conservation	The principle (which Piaget believed to be a part of concrete operational reasoning) that properties such as mass, volume, and number remain the same despite changes in the forms of objects
Egocentrism	In Piaget's theory, the pre-operational child's difficulty taking another's point of view
Theory of Mind	People's ideas about their own and others' mental states- about their feelings, perceptions, and thoughts and the behavior these might predict
Autism	A disorder that appears in childhood and is marked by deficient communication, social interaction, and understanding of others' states of mind

Concrete Operational Stage	In Piaget's theory, the stage in cognitive development (from 6/7 to 11 years of age) during which children gain the mental operations that enable them to think logically about concrete events
Formal Operational Stage	In Piaget's theory, the stage of cognitive development (normally beginning at age 12) during which people begin to think logically about abstract concepts
Stranger Anxiety	The fear of strangers that infants often display, beginning at around 8 months of age
Attachment	An emotional tie with another person; shown in young children by their seeking closeness to the caregiver and showing distress on separation
Critical Period	An optimal period shortly after birth when an organism's exposure to certain stimuli or experiences produces proper development
Imprinting	The process by which certain animals form attachments during a critical period very early in life
Basic Trust	According to Erik Erikson, a sense that the world is predictable and trustworthy
Self-concept	A sense of one's identity and personal worth
Adolescence	The transition period from childhood to adulthood, extending from puberty to independence
Puberty	The period of sexual maturation, during which a person becomes capable of reproducing
Primary Sex Characteristics	The body structures (ovaries, testes, external genitalia) that make sexual reproduction possible
Secondary Sex Characteristics	Nonreproductive sexual characteristics such as female breasts and hips, male voice quality, and body hair
Menarche	The first menstrual period
Identity	One's sense of self
Intimacy	In Erikson's theory, the ability to form close, loving relationships
Menopause	The time of natural cessation of menstruation
Alzheimer's Disease	A progressive and irreversible brain disorder characterized by gradual deterioration of memory, reasoning, language, and physical functioning
Cross-sectional Study	A study in which people of different ages are compared with one another
Longitudinal Study	Research in which the same people are restudied and retested over a long period
Crystallized Intelligence	One's accumulated knowledge and verbal skills (tends to increase with age)
Fluid Intelligence	One's ability to reason speedily and abstractly (tends to decrease in later adulthood)
Social Clock	The culturally preferred timing of social events such as marriage, parenthood, and retirement