

Children with Down Syndrome: A Developmental Perspective. Edited by DANTE CICHETTI and MARJORIE BEEGHLY. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 472 pp. £35.00 (hb), £15.00 (pb).

My difficulties with this book began with the title. Syndromes are normally described by the name of the person who described them in the genitive, therefore Down's Syndrome and not Down Syndrome; in this case the grammatical alteration felt particularly unfortunate. Then, in the first page, I was faced with 24 references, and this did not get much lighter further into the text. The rhythm of the text kept getting broken, and the heavily jargonised language made reading copious, with the possible exception of the chapter on conceptual development by Mervis. Twelve of the thirteen chapters are founded on observation-based research, but avoid any speculation as to the usability in the clinical context of the insights which they promote; only the last and briefest chapter addresses intervention, and even then in the detached style of a review. There is a recurring assertion throughout the book that better understanding of developmental issues will influence practice, but the book concerns itself exclusively with the better understanding, not with the influences on practice; this makes it static rather than dynamic, and seriously affects its clinical relevance.

The thoroughness of the reviews and the long reference lists would certainly admit a place in the reference section of academic libraries and make it a valuable source book for researchers, but as for the claim on the jacket that it will appeal even to parents, it must be referring to researcher parents. The book is not unreasonably priced, particularly the paperback version.

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Child Development and Personality. By PAUL HENRY MUSSEN, JOHN JANEWAY CONGER, JEROME KAGAN and ALETHA CAROL HUSTON. London: Harper & Row. 1990. 700 pp. £13.95.

Of all the standard American texts on child development this is the grandparent. Now into its seventh edition, it still sells over 100 000 copies a year, and is used by more college courses than any other similar book. Over the years it has adapted well to changing demands. While retaining the conventional format, starting with the pre-natal period and concluding with adolescence, it has incorporated the shifting emphases of theory and practice, and remains a lively and readable book.

In this latest edition, several topics have new or considerably expanded coverage. In the first section, important information about behavioural genetics and

hazards in pre-natal development is discussed. In the chapter on infants, recent knowledge derived from neuroscience about cognition and emotion is presented, together with information about cross-modal perception, temperamental differences in sociability and inhibition, and a current assessment of daycare. An entire chapter has been devoted to the transition from infancy to early childhood – a period of development that has until recently been virtually ignored.

In the area of childhood, challenges to Piaget are well documented, together with up-to-date approaches to language acquisition and the development of cognitive skills. A new chapter on government policy and its effects on family life has been included, and in the adolescence section there is increased emphasis on topical issues, such as teenage pregnancy and parenting, drug abuse, and affective disorders.

Particularly interesting are the three text boxes inserted in each chapter to describe social issues, case studies or important research. Topics covered include the developmental risks of children with sex chromosome abnormalities, research on parent–infant bonding, a case study of a child who was isolated from human language until age 13, an autobiography of a black child growing up in the United States, research on only children in China and research on the effects of employment during secondary schooling.

Sad though it is, it has to be acknowledged that there is no European competitor to this volume with quite the same comprehensive coverage. Although essentially an undergraduate text, it remains pre-eminent in the field of child development.

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Sainsbury's Key to Psychiatry. (4th edn) By M. J. SAINSBURY and L. G. LAMBETH. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons. 1988. 519 pp. £15.95.

This is a medium-sized general psychiatric text book, presumably marketed as a moderately comprehensive outline of general psychiatry to suit the postgraduate requirements of trainees. In general its scope is about right and anybody who digested the majority of its contents would probably have little difficulty with the MRCPsych examination. The bibliography is just about right for its intended readership and it has a useful ICD glossary at the back.

However, the book does have a few flaws and drawbacks. For instance, it is riddled with spelling errors, e.g. 'multi-infaret' dementia' and 'Tricyclid' (sounds like a malevolent plant from a John Wyndham novel). The book is written in a somewhat woolly, anecdotal style with examples of various phenomena being illustrated by long-winded accounts from the authors' own clinical practice. There is also an irritating trend to tautology,