

CURRENT ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Current Issues in Developmental Psychology

Biopsychological Perspectives

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PREFACE

This volume contains a number of contributions, which concern basic issues in the field of brain-behavioural development in the human, especially with regard to the young child. They have been written by distinguished scientists, active in this field, who have all been participating in an Erasmus teachers exchange program, entitled 'Biopsychology of Development' (ICP-NL-3026/14). This volume is the product of this cooperation.

The book is intended for scientists in this and related fields as well as for graduate students and advanced undergraduates, as a means of updating their knowledge about human brain-behaviour development. It offers a contemporary review, methodologically and theoretically, of some basic issues in early human brain-behaviour development. Attention is paid to normal development and also to deviance as exemplified by discussions on child abuse and on early development of preterms and children of deaf mothers.

For the title of the book we have chosen for the term 'Developmental Psychology' with as a subtitle 'biopsychological perspectives' in order to express our interest in the basic requirements in the organism for an optimal adaptation during ontogeny as well as in the mechanisms underlying maladaptive behaviour. The term may indicate that we are not just focusing on 'higher brain functions' which would be suggested by the term 'Developmental Neuropsychology'. Further, it is meant to express our interest in the integrated study of normal and deviant development, without a particular focus on abnormality, which would be suggested by the term 'Developmental Psychopathology'.

Focus is on the biological basis of early functional development in the human and the refined interplay between the organism and the (social and physical) environment. Clearly enough, simple main effect and interactional models do not suffice for the understanding of the development of human adaptive behaviour. Longitudinal studies on brain-behaviour relationships should account for the complexity of these processes including the role of the self-organizing capacities of the organism. It is the aim of this volume to present some basic insights with respect to these developments on the basis of recent research in crucial domains of early human functioning, namely: state organisation, motor control, perception of sound and speech, visual attention and social interaction.

The editors