Preface to Developmental Psychopathology,
Second Edition

It has been over a decade since the first two volumes of Developmental Psychopathology were published. These volumes were extremely well received: They have been highly cited in the literature and they have served as a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners alike. The expansion of the second edition of Developmental Psychopathology from two to three volumes speaks to the continued growth of the field, as well as to the ascendance of theory and research in the area of neuroscience informed by a developmental perspective.

There can be no doubt that the discipline of developmental psychopathology has grown significantly in a relatively short period of time. The more than 30 years that have elapsed since the initiation of the Schizophrenia high-risk projects (Garmezy & Streitman, 1974) have been marked by significant contributions to the field. Noteworthy among these are the publication of Achenbach’s (1974) first text, Rutter and Garmezy’s (1983) chapter in the Handbook of Child Psychology, and the continued growth of the journal Development and Psychopathology, including the Millennium Special Issue entitled Reflecting on the Past and Planning for the Future of Developmental Psychopathology (Cicchetti & Sroufe, 2000). A not insignificant contributor to this rapid growth can be found in the very definitional parameters of the discipline. Theorists and researchers in the field of developmental psychopathology use a lifespan framework to elucidate the many factors that can contribute to the development of mental disorders in individuals at high risk, as well as those operative in individuals who have already manifested psychological disturbances or who have averted such disorders despite their high risk status. In essence, a developmental psychopathology perspective provides a broad, integrative framework within which the contributions of diverse disciplines can be incorporated and enhanced (Cicchetti & Sroufe, 2000). Thus, rather than having to develop new theories and methods, those working within a developmental psychopathology framework can build on and extend previously established traditions. The ability to incorporate knowledge from diverse disciplines and to encourage interdisciplinary research will expedite growth within the field of developmental psychopathology.

As with the previous edition, the current volumes were not organized exclusively around thematic psychiatric disorders. Rather, authors were encouraged to explore developmentally relevant theories, methods of assessment, and domains of functioning. Although many chapters do address specific psychiatric disorders, it is the processes that contribute to the emergence of psychopathology that are emphasized rather than the psychiatric disorders per se.

Volume I, Theory and Method, presents various approaches to understanding developmental influences on risk and maladaptation. As previously, the volume begins with an explication of the discipline of developmental psychopathology. Within this chapter, a number of significant advances within the field are noted, including the increased attention to processes and mechanisms, the use of multiple levels of analysis, the rise of developmental neuroscience, and the evolution of translational research paradigms. Chapters address a range of topics, including approaches to diagnoses of disorders, developmental epidemiology, diverse theoretical perspectives, various contextual issues, and new frontiers in statistical techniques for developmental phenomena. The volume concludes with a chapter on prevention and intervention.

Volume II, Developmental Neuroscience, was added to acknowledge the significant growth in this area since the publication of the first edition of this Handbook. Given the seminal historical role that neuroscience played in the emergence of developmental psychopathology (Cicchetti, 1990; Cicchetti & Posner, 2005), it is only fitting that developmental neuroscience has both informed and been informed by developmental psychopathology theorizing.
Neural plasticity, brain imaging, behavioral and molecular genetics, stress and neurobiology, immunology, and environmental influences on brain development are covered in this volume.

Volume III, Risk, Disorder, and Adaptation presents various perspectives on contributors to disorder. For example, chapters address the role of social support, family processes, and early experience on adaptation and maladaptation. Other chapters address specific disorders, including mental retardation, language disorders, Autism, disorders of attention, obsessive-compulsive disorders, Tourette’s syndrome, social anxiety, Schizophrenia, anti-social disorders, substance abuse, and dissociative disorders. A number of chapters on resilience despite adversity also are included. The volume concludes with a chapter on stigma and mental illness.

All authors were asked to conclude their chapters with discussions of future research directions and needs. Thus, these volumes serve not only to highlight current knowledge in the field of developmental psychopathology, but also to suggest avenues to pursue for progress to continue. In particular, it is increasingly important to incorporate multiple-levels-of-analysis approaches when investigating maladaptation, psychopathology, and resilience (Cicchetti & Blender, 2004; Cicchetti & Dawson, 2002). The examination of multiple systems, domains, and ecological levels in the same individuals over developmental time will yield a more complete depiction of individual patterns of adaptation and maladaptation. Moreover, such methods are likely to be extremely valuable in elucidating how interventions may affect brain-behavior relations (see, e.g., Caspi et al., 2002, 2003; Cicchetti & Posner, 2005; Fishbein, 2000; Goldapple et al., 2004; Kandel, 1979, 1998, 1999). Such endeavors could result in significant progress toward understanding psychopathology, highlighting efficacious interventions, and ultimately decreasing the burden of mental illness (Cicchetti & Toth, in press).

I now turn to more personal considerations. Although Donald Cohen is no longer with us, he worked closely with me as we developed our plans for the second edition of Developmental Psychopathology. Given our collaboration on the first edition of the volumes and our discussions leading up to the publication of these volumes, I thought it only fitting that he be listed as my coauthor. I believe in my heart that Donald would be pleased to have his name affiliated with these volumes and that I found this plan with his wife, Phyllis, she gave her enthusiastic endorsement. However, I hasten to add that, unfortunately, Donald’s illness and untimely death precluded his active involvement in editing the chapters in these volumes. Thus, despite our many conversations as the plan for these volumes unfolded, I alone am responsible for the final editing of all chapters.

In closing, I want to dedicate these volumes to my dear friend, Marianne Gerschel. Marianne is a true visionary and she has contributed significantly to my work in the area of developmental psychopathology. Without her belief in the value of this field, my efforts and accomplishments would have been greatly compromised.

Finally, as I write this preface, I am ending a significant era in my life. After more than two decades as the director of Mt. Hope Family Center, I am leaving Rochester to accept a position at the Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota. There I will be the director of an interdisciplinary center that will emphasize a multiple-levels-of-analysis approach to research and intervention in developmental psychopathology.

This transition is difficult, as Mt. Hope Family Center and my colleagues there have contributed greatly to the growth and development of the field of developmental psychopathology. It is reassuring to know that Mt. Hope Family Center will continue to build upon a solid foundation under the capable directorship of my long-time collaborator and friend, Sheree L. Toth. Although I welcome the new opportunities and challenges that await me, I cannot help being a bit sad to leave. My spirits are buoyed by the knowledge that my work at Mt. Hope Family Center will continue and by my excitement at returning to my roots at the Institute of Child Development where I will have both University and community support to use the field of developmental psychopathology to extend my vision for helping disenfranchised individuals and families throughout the nation and the world.

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REFERENCES

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