

Making Everything Easier!™

Child Psychology & Development

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand the difference between “bad behavior” and behavior disorders
- Know whether a child is ready for school
- Help a child control impulses, develop self-esteem, and have good relationships

Laura L. Smith, PhD

Charles H. Elliott, PhD

Authors of Overcoming Anxiety For Dummies



Making Everything Easier!™

Child Psychology & Development

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand the difference between “bad behavior” and behavior disorders
- Know whether a child is ready for school
- Help a child control impulses, develop self-esteem, and have good relationships

Laura L. Smith, PhD
Charles H. Elliott, PhD

Authors of Overcoming Anxiety For Dummies



Child Psychology & Development For Dummies®

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/childpsychologyanddevelopment to view this book's cheat sheet.

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[What Not to Read](#)

[Conventions Used in this Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organized](#)

[Part I: Understanding Children: The Big Picture](#)

[Part II: Watching Kids Grow](#)

[Part III: Growing Great Kids](#)

[Part IV: Spotting Troubled Development](#)

[Part V: Getting the Right Therapies](#)

[Part VI: The Part of Tens](#)

[The Appendix](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

Where to Go from Here

Part I: Understanding Children: The Big Picture

Chapter 1: Exploring Child Psychology

Why Child Psychology? Exploring Some Compelling Reasons

Reviewing realistic expectations
Understanding worrisome trends

Reviewing the Recipe for Child Development
Noting Normal Child Development
Analyzing Abnormal Development

Focusing on physical problems
Looking at learning
Analyzing autism
Examining emotional disorders
Investigating behavior disorders
Tracing trauma and abuse

Finding Help for Troubled Kids

Chapter 2: What Makes Kids Tick?

Highlighting Heredity's Influence

Glancing at genetics
Investigating the link between genes and temperament

Putting genetic predispositions in perspective

Emphasizing Experience

Recognizing the experiences provided by caregivers

Examining education

Peeking at peers

Absorbing the truth about health and nutrition

Understanding the influence of unexpected events

Considering Class and Culture

Blending Influences Together

Chapter 3: Goals of Growing Up

Attaching to Others

Looking at loving attachments

Finding friendships

Getting along with others skillfully

Controlling Impulses and Emotions

Taming the need for instant gratification

Calming emotions

Developing a Self-View

[Looking at healthy versus unhealthy self-esteem](#)

[Exploring the real problem: Self-absorption](#)

[Enhancing Education](#)

[Investigating intelligence](#)

[Mastering motivation](#)

[Inspecting Goal Interactions](#)

[Part II: Watching Kids Grow](#)

[Chapter 4: Pregnancy, Delivery, and the First Year](#)

[Preparing for Pregnancy](#)

[Zippering from Zygote to Birth](#)

[Seeing normal development in the womb](#)

[Watching out for danger signs](#)

[Avoiding harmful exposures](#)

[Discussing Delivery](#)

[When everything works out right](#)

[Encountering complications](#)

[Rating babies when they're born](#)

[Watching Babies Grow](#)

[Tracking temperament](#)

[Rocking and rolling](#)

Learning like lightning
Becoming attached

Chapter 5: Tackling the Toddler Years (Ages 1-4)

Watching Attachment Evolve from Parents to Others

Wandering away from Mom
Interacting with others
Understanding others' points of view

Looking in the Mirror: Self-Views

Acquiring competence
Feeling guilty

Exerting Early Control

Going from no to yes
Going from terrible to terrific eating
Increasing kids' attention
Calming down
Tolerating frustration

Mastering the World

Using words and following directions
Knowing how things work

Teetering, Toddling, and Stacking Blocks

Chapter 6: The Middle Childhood Years (Ages 5 - 12).

Getting Stronger, Bigger, and Faster Making Friends

Engaging socially

Helping shy kids

Running into bullies and enemies

Knowing who matters: Family or friends

Developing Self-Esteem Discovering Self-Control

Tolerating the tough times

Staying focused

Acquiring morality

Regulating feelings

Achieving Success

Managing motivation

Assessing readiness for school

Reading, writing, and doing arithmetic

Chapter 7: Traversing the Teen Years (Ages 13-18).

Shifting Attachments

Conflicting loyalties

Fostering friends

Social networking among friends

Changing Bodies

Increasing hormones
Changing body clocks

Resisting Temptations

Constraining impulses
Riding emotional roller coasters
Rebelling: The good and the bad

Exploring Identity: Who I Am

Focusing on me
Body image: Looking in the mirror all the time
Developing sexuality and sexual identity
Resolving identity issues

Advancing in Thinking

Increasing logical thinking
Moving ahead morally
Setting long-term goals

Part III: Growing Great Kids

Chapter 8: Creating Functional Families

Promoting Parental Attachments

Bonding early
Increasing independence

Examining Parenting Styles

Being authoritarian/dictatorial

Allowing permissiveness

Giving the gift of authoritativeness

Detaching by unplugging or being
uninvolved

Making sense of the four parenting styles

Becoming the Parent You Want to Be

Considering four parenting principles to
remember

Removing emotional barriers to effective
parenting

Considering the Rest of the Family

Changing families

Seeing how siblings affect one another

Bringing grandparents into the mix

Chapter 9: Optimizing Education

Evaluating Schools and Child Care

Visiting facilities and asking basic
questions

Looking at day care

Sorting through school options

Achievement scores: Weighing statistics

Promoting Positive Policies in Schools

Working together: Cooperating with others

Squelching bullies

Finding fair, firm discipline

Recognizing real effort

Chapter 10: Building the Right Village for Kids

Investigating Infrastructure

Getting from place to place

Promoting parks

Creating Community Cohesiveness

Mentoring minds

Cleaning up

Collaborating on healthy goals

Getting good food and health care

Rallying around recreation

Securing safety

Part IV: Spotting Troubled Development

Chapter 11: Facing Physical Problems

Previewing Prematurity

Noting the causes of early birth

Taking care of premature babies

Understanding problems preemies have later on

Reviewing Genetic Disorders

Looking at types of genetic disorders
Getting genetic counseling and testing

Regulating the Body: Growing, Sleeping, and More

Failing to thrive
Not sleeping through the night
Taking on toileting problems

Looking at Chronic Illness in Kids

Analyzing asthma
Dealing with diabetes
Confronting cancer

Helping Kids Deal with Pain and Hospital Care

Managing pain in children
Hospitalizing kids

Chapter 12: Understanding Problems That Interfere with Learning

Seeing Risk Factors for Learning Problems

Noting trouble talking and understanding
Looking for delayed movements
Sensing problems getting along with others
Noting when kids can't sit still or listen

Struggling with Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic

Understanding signs of learning disabilities

Investigating learning disabilities further

Attending to Attention Problems

Seeing what attention disorders look like

Counting the costs of attention problems

Looking at the symptoms of ADD/ADHD

Learning Slowly

Impaired intelligence

Problems with everyday functioning

Chapter 13: Addressing Autism Spectrum Disorders

Defining and Describing Autism

Recognizing early signs of trouble

Painting a picture of autism

Laying out the autism spectrum

Debunking myths about autism

Looking at increases in autism rates

When Autism Comes with Unusual Gifts

Examining exceptionalities

Reviewing what to do with these gifts

Chapter 14: Emotional Disorders

Eyeing Early Signs of Emotional Distress Exploring the Anxiety Disorders

Separation anxiety: Fear of being left

Social: Fear of other people

General: Worried all the time

OCD: Rituals and urges

Body obsessions

Phobias: Fear of bugs, snakes, and more

Minding Mood Disorders

Depression: Sad all the time

Bipolar: When emotions go to extremes

Looking at Miscellaneous Problems

Selective mutism: Choosing silence

Schizophrenia: Losing touch with reality

Understanding irrepressible tic disorders

Trying trichotillomania

Playing with fire: Pyromania

Complaining about aches and pains

Hassling with habits

Dealing with eating disorders

Chapter 15: Exploring Behavior Disorders

Looking at the Facts: Behavior Problems

Considering the Risks for Behavior Disorders

[Previewing poverty](#)
[Exploring problems with peers](#)
[Viewing verbal struggles in school](#)
[Finding family conflict](#)
[Setting the record straight: Self-esteem](#)
[Searching for genetics](#)
[Attaining attachment](#)
[Seeking sensations](#)
[Covering culture](#)
[Minding media](#)
[Obtaining and using substances](#)

[Crossing the Line from Normal to Not](#)

[Oppositional-defiant disorder \(ODD\)](#)
[Conduct disorder \(CD\)](#)

[Sleuthing Substance Abuse](#)

[Identifying the effects of substance problems](#)
[Reviewing risks and protective factors](#)

[Chapter 16: Looking at Trauma and Abuse](#)

[Watching Out for Abuse and Neglect](#)

[Uncovering physical abuse](#)
[Looking at neglect](#)
[Encountering sexual abuse](#)
[Listening for emotional abuse](#)

[Looking at Other Sources of Trauma](#)

Noticing neighborhood crime
Attending to accidental trauma
Considering terrorism and war
Noting responses to natural disasters
Losing loved ones

Seeing What Happens to Traumatized Kids

Factors that affect how well a child copes
Resilience
Immediate responses to trauma
Post-traumatic stress disorder
Reactive attachment disorders
Dissociative disorders

Part V: Getting the Right Therapies

Chapter 17: Types of Therapy That Work

Getting Help: The Earlier, the Better
Understanding Types of Treatment

Improving everyday functioning: Physical and occupational therapy
Teaching communication: Speech-language therapy
Using psychological strategies to help kids
Meeting the pros

Looking at medication

Previewing the prescribers

[Exploring concerns about medication and kids](#)
[Making medication decisions](#)

[Seeing What Works for What Problems](#)

[Motivating kids](#)
[Attending to autism](#)
[Addressing Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder](#)
[Defeating depression](#)
[Bashing bipolar disorder](#)
[Attacking anxiety and trauma](#)
[Busting behavior problems](#)
[Seeing psychosis](#)
[Tackling tics and habits](#)
[Dealing with miscellaneous problems](#)

[Chapter 18: Enhancing Educators' Efforts](#)

[Communicating About Children](#)

[Tackling defensiveness](#)
[Keeping in-touch consistently](#)

[Understanding the Meaning of Test Scores](#)

[Knowing what's average](#)
[Freaking out over tests](#)
[Keeping test scores in perspective](#)

[Knowing What to Do When Kids Need More](#)

[Initial interventions](#)
[Getting a formal evaluation](#)
[Reviewing the results](#)
[Understanding the Individual Education Plan \(IEP\)](#)

[Providing Equal Access to All](#)

[Chapter 19: Knowing What Parents Can Do](#)

[Acquiring the Attitudes You Need to Help](#)

[Denying denial](#)
[Fending off fear](#)
[Putting parents in charge](#)
[Minimizing parental anger](#)

[Participating as Partners in Kids' Therapy](#)

[Working with therapists](#)
[Collaborating with mental-health therapists](#)
[Addressing autism](#)
[Axing a child's anxiety](#)
[Defeating depression](#)
[Dealing with behavior disorders](#)

[Part VI: The Part of Tens](#)

[Chapter 20: Ten Ways to Calm Kids Down](#)

[Breathing](#)
[Helping with Hugs](#)

Playing in the Tub
Reading a Good Story
Running Around
Doing Jumping Jacks
Making Music
Calling a Time-Out
Going Outside
Talking Together

Chapter 21: Ten Signs of Gifted Kids

Being Curious
Talking Talents
Musing about Math
Having Humor
Craving Creativity
Minding Memory
Finding Focus
Understanding Others
Thinking Flexibly
Precocious Perception

Chapter 22: Ten Signs That a Kid Needs Help

Delaying Development
Lacking Interest
Withdrawing from Family
Getting Poor Grades
Complaining about Aches and Pains
Feeling Fearful
Getting Angry
Changing Appetites

Regressing
Feeling Fatigued

Appendix: Developmental Milestones
Cheat Sheet

Child Psychology & Development For Dummies[®]

**by Laura L. Smith, PhD, and
Charles H. Elliott, PhD**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Child Psychology & Development For Dummies[®]

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2011 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken,

NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: The contents of this work are intended to further general scientific research, understanding, and discussion only and are not intended and should not be relied upon as recommending or promoting a specific method, diagnosis, or treatment by physicians for any particular patient. The publisher and the author make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this work and specifically disclaim all warranties, including without limitation any implied warranties of fitness for a particular purpose. In view of ongoing research, equipment modifications, changes in governmental regulations, and the constant flow of information relating to the use of medicines, equipment, and devices, the reader is urged to review and evaluate the information provided in the package insert or instructions for each medicine, equipment, or device for, among other things, any changes in the instructions or indication of usage and for added warnings and precautions. Readers should consult with a specialist where appropriate. The fact that an organization or Website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or a potential source of further information does not mean that the author or the publisher endorses the information the

organization or Website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further, readers should be aware that Internet Websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. No warranty may be created or extended by any promotional statements for this work. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for any damages arising herefrom.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011920892

ISBN: 978-0-470-91885-2

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



About the Authors



Photo by Matt Foster of Kim Jew Photography

Laura L. Smith, PhD, and Charles Elliott, PhD, are co-authors of *Overcoming Anxiety For Dummies*, 2nd Edition, *Borderline Personality Disorder For Dummies*, *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder For Dummies*, *Seasonal Affective Disorder For Dummies*, *Anxiety & Depression Workbook For Dummies*, and *Depression For Dummies* (all from Wiley Publishing, Inc.); *Hollow Kids: Recapturing the Soul of a Generation Lost to the Self-Esteem Myth* (Prima); and *Why Can't I Be the Parent I Want to Be?* (New Harbinger Publications). They are members of the board of directors of the New Mexico Psychological Association and affiliated training faculty at the Cognitive Behavioral Institute of Albuquerque. Their work has been featured in various periodicals, including *Family Circle*, *Parents*, *Child*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*, as well as popular publications such as the *New York Post*, *Washington Times*, *Daily Telegraph (London)*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

They have been invited speakers at conferences including: the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, the International Association for Cognitive Psychotherapy, and the National Association of School Psychologists. They have appeared on television networks such as CNN and Canada AM. They have also been featured as experts on various National Public Radio programs, as well as “You The Owner’s Manual,” “Doctor Radio,” “The Frankie Boyer Show,” and “The Four Seasons Radio Show.” They have committed their professional lives to making the science of psychology relevant and accessible to the public.

Laura is a clinical and a school psychologist. Previously, she was a special-education teacher, an educational diagnostician, a psychologist at a juvenile detention center, a child psychologist in private practice, a clinical supervisor at various rural school districts, and a consultant to Head Start programs. Throughout these years, she has raised three kids and enjoyed her four grandchildren. She is often asked to provide consultations to attorneys, school districts, and government agencies.

Chuck is a clinical psychologist and a founding fellow of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. He has written many professional articles and book chapters on the topic of cognitive behavior therapies and pediatric psychology. He has been a director of mental health consultation-liaison at Children’s Memorial Hospital in Oklahoma City, a faculty member at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine (programs for children), a clinical psychologist in private practice, and a faculty member at Fielding Graduate University (psychology).

Drs. Smith and Elliott are available for speaking engagements, expert interviews, and workshops. You may contact either or both of them at www.psychology4people.com

Dedication

To children everywhere and those who care for them.

Authors' Acknowledgments

We want to take this opportunity to thank our outstanding editors at Wiley Publishing: Acquisitions Editor Michael Lewis; Project Editors Sarah Faulkner, Danielle Voirol, and Linda Brandon; and Copy Editors Kathy Simpson and Sarah Westfall. We also want to thank our publicity and marketing team, which includes David Hobson and Adrienne Fontaine at Wiley, and Technical Editor Angela Tomlin, PhD.

We appreciate Trevor Wolfe, Sara Rodriguez, Allison Wolfe, and Brian Elliott for achieving the four goals of growing up. And of course we're grateful to our grandchildren — Lauren, Alaina, Carter, and Cade — for keeping us amused and reminding us about what's really important. Thanks to Kate Guerin for interesting conversations and information about public relations. Thanks to Nathan Rodriguez for putting out fires.

We want to thank Deborah Wearn and Pamela Hargrove for their help in keeping everyone together and willingness to embark on adventures. We appreciate Barbara Warren, Bob and Jeanette Elliott, Tracie Antonuk, Kathy Desmarais, and Geoff Smith for their continued interest and support. Thanks to Betsey, Marty, and Andrew Chavez for being an inspirational family. A special thanks to Judy Frenak for her sisterly interest. Thanks to Sadie and Murphy for taking us on much-needed walks and jogs through Corrales.

Appreciation goes to Jaime J. Diaz, chief operating officer/Midwest New Mexico Community Action Program (NMCAP) and president of the New Mexico Head Start Association, and Pauline Binger, center director/Midwest NMCAP, for their interest and support of research on improving teaching methods and caring about the mental-health needs of the children of New Mexico.

Thanks to Drs. Brad Richards and Jeanne Czajka of the Cognitive Behavioral Institute of Albuquerque for including us in your affiliated training faculty. We look forward to another training session in Santa Fe. Thanks to Mathew Raikes at www.darn-computer.com for his timely, patient expertise on computers. To Dr. Brenda Wolfe and her husband, Ken, thanks for helping us uncork our creativity across the globe.

Finally, we are especially grateful to the many children and parents we've seen over the years in our practices. They helped us understand child psychology and development. They also taught us about resilience, courage, and persistence as nothing else could.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>. For other comments, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Project Editors: Sarah Faulkner, Linda Brandon

Acquisitions Editor: Michael Lewis

Copy Editors: Kathy Simpson, Sarah Westfall

Assistant Editor: David Lutton

Technical Editor: Angela Tomlin, PhD

Editorial Manager: Christine Meloy Beck

Editorial Supervisor and Reprint Editor: Carmen Krikorian

Editorial Assistants: Rachelle S. Amick, Jennette ElNaggar

Cover Photos: © istockphoto.com/Stefanie Timmermann

Cartoons: Rich Tennant (www.the5thwave.com)

Composition Services

Project Coordinator: Patrick Redmond

Layout and Graphics: Joyce Haughey, Lavonne Roberts

Proofreaders: John Greenough, Sossity R. Smith

Indexer: Silvoskey Indexing Services

Publishing and Editorial for Consumer Dummies

Diane Graves Steele, Vice President and Publisher,
Consumer Dummies

Kristin Ferguson-Wagstaffe, Product Development Director,
Consumer Dummies

Ensley Eikenburg, Associate Publisher, Travel

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director, Travel

Publishing for Technology Dummies

Andy Cummings, Vice President and Publisher, Dummies
Technology/General User

Composition Services

Debbie Stailey, Director of Composition Services

Introduction

We love kids. Fact is, we used to be kids. We've had kids, and they've had kids. Also, we've devoted much of our professional lives to assessing, teaching, and treating kids. We've worked with kids in the classroom, in the hospital, and our offices. We've seen kids of all ages from infancy through young adulthood. We've helped kids deal with learning problems, anxiety, depression, autism, deficits in attention, and behavior problems.

So when the editors of the *For Dummies* series asked us to consider writing *Child Psychology & Development For Dummies*, we were delighted. We soon engaged in lengthy discussions and a few sleepless nights about the content and organization of this book. Take a look at most any college textbook on either child psychology or development, and you may find it daunting. Frankly, much of the material is esoteric and as difficult to follow as twisting country roads before Google Maps.

In collaboration with our editors, we took some time deciding on an approach to this book. We realized that most people who are interested in this topic are probably teachers, parents, child-care providers, grandparents, and others who are interested in kids. Thus, you'll discover that we don't follow a textbook approach to *Child Psychology & Development For Dummies*. Rather, like most books in the *For Dummies* series, this book takes complicated theories and ideas and turns them into practical information that can be applied to the real world of children and those who care about them.

We could have filled these pages with endless details about theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget, B. F. Skinner, Albert Bandura, Lev Vygotsky, John Bowlby, and Mary Ainsworth (among many