

Developmental Quotient Encyclopedia Article

Developmental Quotient

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Developmental Quotient

The developmental norm used to express a child's physical, behavioral, and language development.

The developmental quotient is a norm used to express aspects of a child's development as measured by the **Gesell Development Schedules**. These tests were created by Arnold Gesell (1880-1961), the United States's foremost authority on child rearing in the 1940s and early 1950s. Gesell was among the first to outline standard stages of child development, which he considered to be governed more by biological than environmental factors. He envisioned both mental and physical development in infants, children, and adolescents as comparable, orderly processes, with every child passing through a sequence of predictable stages, although at varying ages.

The Gesell Development Schedules, which are still published as part of the Gesell Preschool Test produced by the Gesell Institute, were originally designed for use with children between four weeks and six years of age. They measure development in a wide range of areas—including motor and **language development**, adaptive behavior, and personal-social behavior—both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of the test are expressed first as developmental age (DA) and then converted into developmental quotient (DQ). A separate developmental quotient may be obtained for each area represented on the scale.

In the 1940s and 1950s, developmental quotients were widely used by educators and mental health professionals to assess children's **intelligence**. Eventually, Gesell's ideas were supplanted by theories that stressed the importance of environmental rather than biological elements in child development, notably those of Jerome Bruner (1915-) and **Jean Piaget**. The developmental quotient is no longer accepted as a valid measure of intellectual ability. However, it is still used to assess the behavioral, emotional, and physical development of children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 6. Included among the abilities assessed by the Gesell Preschool Test are eye-hand coordination, attention span, ability to understand and follow directions, visual perception, short-term memory, recognition of similar shapes, language comprehension, and gross motor skills.

For Further Study

Books

Ames, Louise Bates. *Arnold Gesell: Themes of His Work*. New York: Human Sciences Press, 1989.