



The Fundamentals of Brain Development: Integrating Nature and Nurture

By Joan Stiles

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In a remarkable synthesis of the research of the last two decades, a leading developmental neuroscientist provides psychologists with a sophisticated introduction to the brain--the system that underpins the functions that they study.

In clear terms, with ample illustrations, Joan Stiles explains the complexities of genetic variation and transcription, and the variable paths of neural development, from embryology through early childhood. She describes early developmental processes from gene expression to physiology to behavior. Sections on clinical correlations show the consequences for later physiological, neurological, or psychological disturbances in neural development.

As Stiles shows, brain development is far more complex and dynamic than is often assumed in debates about nature vs. nurture, nativism vs. cultural learning. Inherited and experienced factors interact constantly in an ever-changing organism. The key question is, what developmental processes give rise to particular structures or mechanisms?

A landmark of synthesis and interdisciplinary illumination, *The Fundamentals of Brain Development* will enrich discussion of developmental processes and more rigorously define the terms that are central to psychological debates.

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Editorial Review

Review

This incisive and accessible account of brain development should be of great interest to the serious student of human behavior. Stiles does a superlative job of reviewing a vast literature, and her discussion of nativism, and the nature/nurture problem, is brilliant. I wish *The Fundamentals of Brain Development* could be a foundational text for all graduate work in developmental psychology. (Charles A. Nelson, Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School)

The Fundamentals of Brain Development, as Stiles intended, is a timely survey of developmental neurobiology. Neuronal differentiation, migration, plasticity, sensitive periods, intrinsic factors and a discussion of experiential environments are all here. It is detailed, beautifully illustrated, thoroughly researched and should become a standard for any researcher who needs to look to neurobiological explanations to account for early developmental changes. (Bruce M. Hood *Nature* 2008-05-08)

[Stiles] ends up taking readers through a surprisingly detailed exposition of brain development and constructing a scholarly synthesis that will inform not only developmental psychology but even all of neuroscience and cognitive science. (Mriganka Sur *Science* 2008-12-12)

[Stiles] successfully blends the genetic regulation of brain development with the influence of environment at each developmental stage. (L. A. Meserve *Choice* 2009-02-01)

About the Author

Joan Stiles is Professor Emeritus of Cognitive Science at the University of California, San Diego.

Users Review

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