

BÖLÜM 2

Gelişimle İlgili Temel Kavramlar: Gelişim Kavramı ve Kapsamı

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GELİŞİM NEDİR?

Gelişim; bireyin doğum öncesinden başlayarak yaşam boyu devam eden biyolojik, bilişsel, duygusal-sosyal değişimlerini kapsayan dinamik bir süreçtir (Baltes vd., 1998; Berk, 1998, 2022; Papalia vd., 1987; Santrock, 1997, 2021). Bu çok boyutlu süreç; kalıtsal (genetik) ve çevresel (çevre) etmenlerin karşılıklı etkileşimiyle biçimlenir ve bireyin işlevselliğini artırmaya yönelik ilerlemeleri içerir (Berk, 1998, 2022; Overton vd., 2015). Gelişim olgusu, hem tüm insanlara özgü evrensel eğilimleri hem de bireyler arasındaki farklılıkları kapsayan bütüncül bir yaklaşımla ele alınır (Bjorklund, 2022; Lerner, 2018). Bu nedenle gelişim, sabit bir çizgide ilerleyen bir süreç değil; değişen koşullara ve bireysel özelliklere bağlı olarak farklı biçimlerde seyreden, esnek ve çok yönlü bir yapı olarak değerlendirilir.

Gelişim olgusunun çok yönlü doğasını anlayabilmek, bu süreci biçimlendiren temel kavramların açık biçimde tanımlanmasını gerektirir. Alan yazında sıkça yer verilen ve gelişimsel sürecin çeşitli boyutlarını açıklamaya yardımcı olan kavramlar arasında büyüme, olgunlaşma, öğrenme, hazır bulunuşluk, kritik dönem ve duyarlı dönem yer alır (bk. Şekil 1). Bu kavramlar, bireyin yaşa bağlı değişimlerini yalnızca biyolojik temeller üzerinden değil, çevresel koşullar ve yaşantılar bağlamında da ele alarak gelişimin bütüncül doğasını yansıtır. Aşağıda, gelişimin anlaşılmasını kolaylaştıran bu temel kavramlar ayrıntılı biçimde ele alınmış ve her birinin gelişim süreci içerisindeki işlevi açıklanmıştır.

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