BOOK REVIEWS


This volume presents research that was undertaken on the Brazelton Behavioral Assessment Scale by eight different laboratories across the country. Chapters I and II outline the evolution of the scale over the past two decades, the rationale behind it, and the methodological difficulties encountered by researchers because of the lack of uniformity in the statistical properties of analyzing data to determine reliability, validity, factor analysis, and the use of the tool as a predictor of later developmental problems. Also included is a description of the cross-cultural differences between American and non-American samples, which the authors ascribe to such factors as varying practices of mother-infant interactions, testing environments (home versus hospital setting), obstetrical medications, and intrinsic racial differences.

The researchers represented in this volume concur that the scale evaluates several facets of newborn behavior that can best be understood by grouping various subscales. However, the research revealed poor test-retest reliability, thus weakening its value as a predictive tool. Some surmise that this lack of stability is reflective of the nature of early development, rather than discrepancies in the scale. Sameroff summarized it well by stating, “One of the conclusions we may be forced to make is that the rapid changes within the newborn period do not permit a valid assessment of the newborn.”

In the final chapter, the Editor supports the continued use of this assessment tool within a developmental context; he also credits Brazelton with contributing immensely to our understanding of the intricate interactions of the physiological, psychological, and social aspects of development.

This book would be of particular interest not only to those using the Brazelton Neonatal Assessment Scale, but also to other pediatric therapists as well. Although a background in statistics would be necessary to decipher the highly complex research terminology, the basic themes are stated in a clear, well-written fashion. The Annotated Bibliography, which summarizes research publications on the scale, would be an excellent resource for anyone wishing to explore this topic further.

Kay Ashida, OTR

Understanding the Alpha Child at Home and School, Jack L. Fadely, Virginia N. Hosler. Charles C. Thomas, 301-327 E. Lawrence Avenue, Springfield, IL 62717, 238 pp (1979), $15.75.

The neurological process of learning to read is clearly explained, together with the development of spatial skills in children with right hemisphere dominance, as opposed to those with left cerebral dominance. This information would be especially of value to those working with children having reading and perceptual problems. It has many implications for therapy.

There is an excellent chapter that explains the early development of naturalized and socialized behaviors from a neurological point of view. This chapter offers interesting insight to behavior problems associated with learning disabilities or sensory integrative dysfunction. Emotional maturation and its dependence on adequate sensory information processing is discussed in a chapter on personality development.

Although this book does not make reference to occupational therapy, there are many implications for occupational therapists—those working in the school sys-