

Developmental Theory

Developmental theory is an outgrowth of several theories of development. Duvall (1977) described eight developmental tasks of the family throughout its life span (Box 2-1). The family is described as a small group, a semiclosed system of personalities that interacts with the larger cultural social system. As an interrelated system, the family does not have changes in one part without a series of changes in other parts.

Box 2-1

Duvall's Developmental Stages of the Family

Stage I—Marriage and an Independent Home: The Joining of Families

Reestablish couple identity.

Realign relationships with extended family.

Make decisions regarding parenthood.

Stage II—Families with Infants

Integrate infants into the family unit.

Accommodate to new parenting and grandparenting roles.

Maintain marital bond.

Stage III—Families with Preschoolers

Socialize children.

Parents and children adjust to separation.

Stage IV—Families with Schoolchildren

Children develop peer relations.