COMP2310/COMP6310
Systems, Networks, & Concurrency

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Exceptional Control Flow: Signals

Acknowledgement of material: With changes suited to ANU needs, the slides are obtained from Carnegie Mellon University: https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~213/

ECF Exists at All Levels of a System

- **Exceptions**
  - Hardware and operating system kernel software
- **Process Context Switch**
  - Hardware timer and kernel software

} **Previous Lecture**

- **Signals**
  - Kernel software and application software

} **This Lecture**

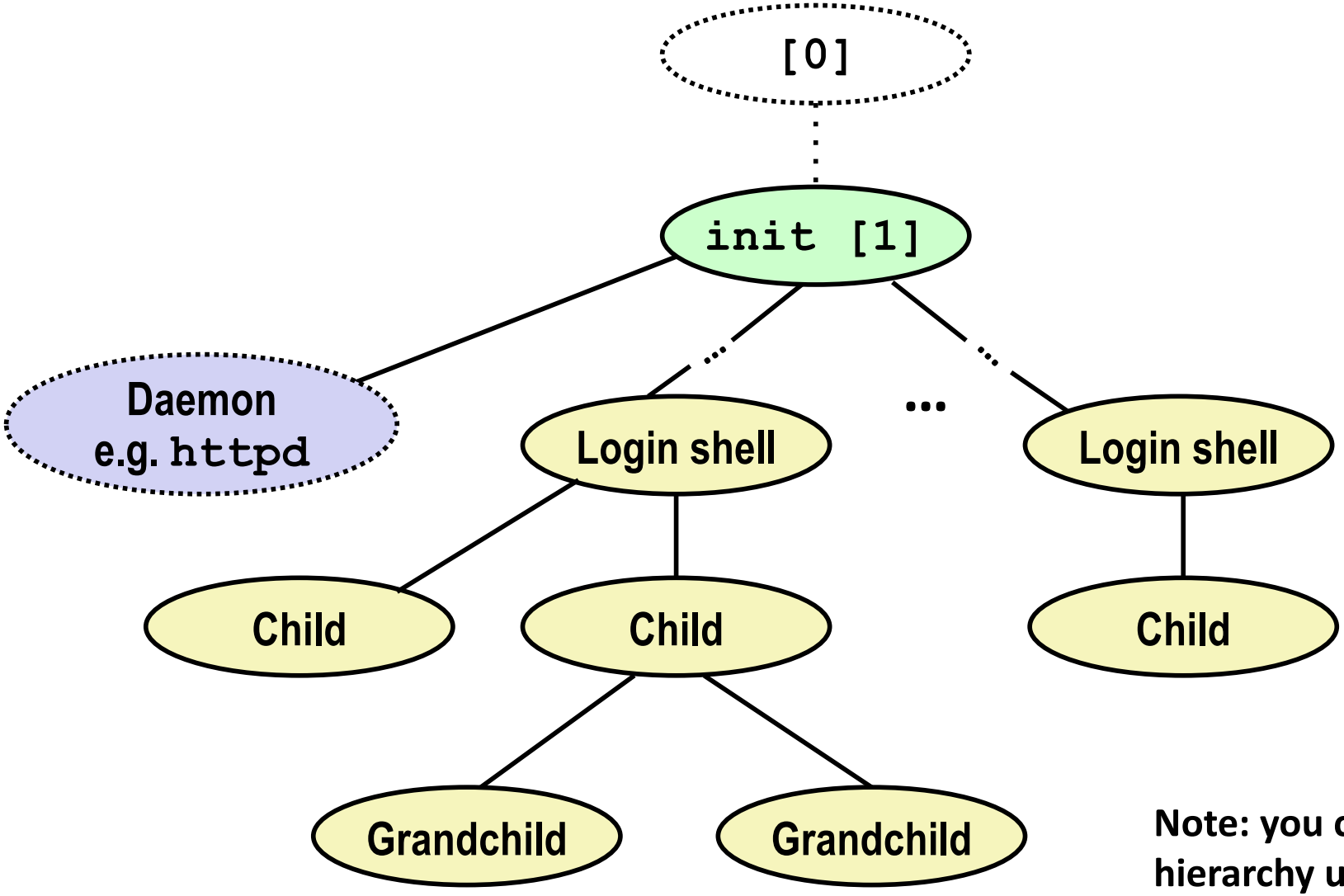
- **Nonlocal jumps**
  - Application code

} **Textbook and supplemental slides**

Today

- **Shells**
- **Signals**

Linux Process Hierarchy



Note: you can view the hierarchy using the Linux `pstree` command

Shell Programs

- A *shell* is an application program that runs programs on behalf of the user.
  - `sh` Original Unix shell (Stephen Bourne, AT&T Bell Labs, 1977)
  - `csh/tcsh` BSD Unix C shell
  - `bash` "Bourne-Again" Shell (default Linux shell)

```
int main()
{
    char cmdline[MAXLINE]; /* command line */

    while (1) {
        /* read */
        printf("> ");
        Fgets(cmdline, MAXLINE, stdin);
        if (feof(stdin))
            exit(0);

        /* evaluate */
        eval(cmdline);
    }
}
```

shellex.c

Execution is a sequence of read/evaluate steps

Simple Shell `eval` Function

```
void eval(char *cmdline)
{
    char *argv[MAXARGS]; /* Argument list execve() */
    char buf[MAXLINE];   /* Holds modified command line */
    int bg;              /* Should the job run in bg or fg? */
    pid_t pid;           /* Process id */

    strcpy(buf, cmdline);
    bg = parseline(buf, argv);
    if (argv[0] == NULL)
        return;   /* Ignore empty lines */

    if (!builtin_command(argv)) {
        if ((pid = Fork()) == 0) {   /* Child runs user job */
            if (execve(argv[0], argv, environ) < 0) {
                printf("%s: Command not found.\n", argv[0]);
                exit(0);
            }
        }

        /* Parent waits for foreground job to terminate */
        if (!bg) {
            int status;
            if (waitpid(pid, &status, 0) < 0)
                unix_error("waitfg: waitpid error");
        }
        else
            printf("%d %s", pid, cmdline);
    }
    return;
}
```

shellex.c

Problem with Simple Shell Example

- **Our example shell correctly waits for and reaps foreground jobs**

- **But what about background jobs?**
  - Will become zombies when they terminate
  - Will never be reaped because shell (typically) will not terminate
  - Will create a memory leak that could run the kernel out of memory

ECF to the Rescue!

- **Solution: Exceptional control flow**
  - The kernel will interrupt regular processing to alert us when a background process completes
  - In Unix, the alert mechanism is called a ***signal***

Today

- Shells
- **Signals**
- Nonlocal jumps

Signals

- **A *signal* is a small message that notifies a process that an event of some type has occurred in the system**
  - Akin to exceptions and interrupts
  - Sent from the kernel (sometimes at the request of another process) to a process
  - Signal type is identified by small integer ID's (1-30)
  - Only information in a signal is its ID and the fact that it arrived

ID	*Name*	*Default Action*	*Corresponding Event*
2	SIGINT	Terminate	User typed ctrl-c
9	SIGKILL	Terminate	Kill program (cannot override or ignore)
11	SIGSEGV	Terminate	Segmentation violation
14	SIGALRM	Terminate	Timer signal
17	SIGCHLD	Ignore	Child stopped or terminated

Signal Concepts: Sending a Signal

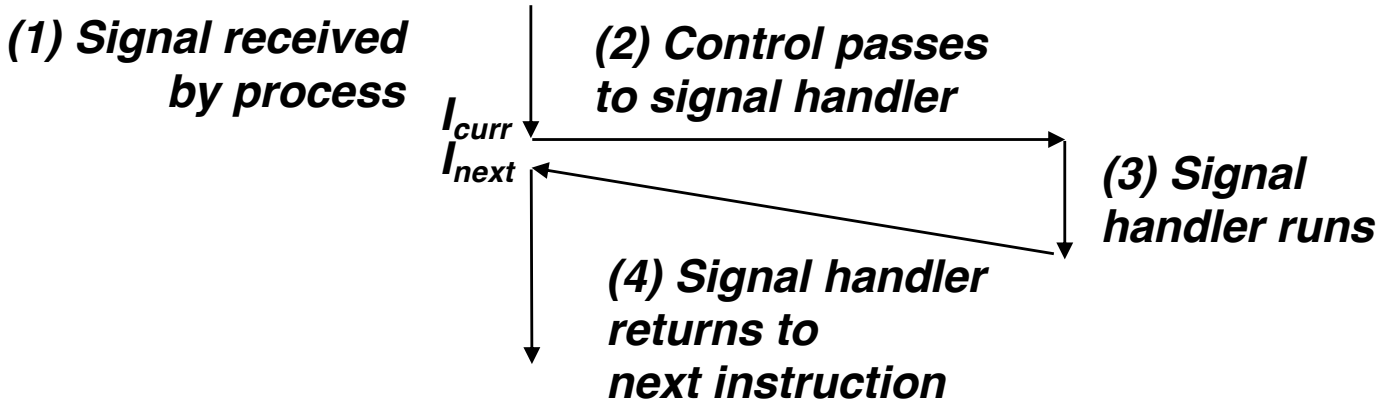
- **Kernel *sends* (delivers) a signal to a *destination process* by updating some state in the context of the destination process**

- **Kernel sends a signal for one of the following reasons:**
  - Kernel has detected a system event such as divide-by-zero (SIGFPE) or the termination of a child process (SIGCHLD)
  - Another process has invoked the **`kill`** system call to explicitly request the kernel to send a signal to the destination process

Signal Concepts: Receiving a Signal

- **A destination process *receives* a signal when it is forced by the kernel to react in some way to the delivery of the signal**

- **Some possible ways to react:**
  - ***Ignore*** the signal (do nothing)
  - ***Terminate*** the process (with optional core dump)
  - ***Catch*** the signal by executing a user-level function called ***signal handler***
    - Akin to a hardware exception handler being called in response to an asynchronous interrupt:



Signal Concepts: Pending and Blocked Signals

- **A signal is *pending* if sent but not yet received**
  - There can be at most one pending signal of any particular type
  - Important: Signals are not queued
    - If a process has a pending signal of type k, then subsequent signals of type k that are sent to that process are discarded

- **A process can *block* the receipt of certain signals**
  - Blocked signals can be delivered, but will not be received until the signal is unblocked

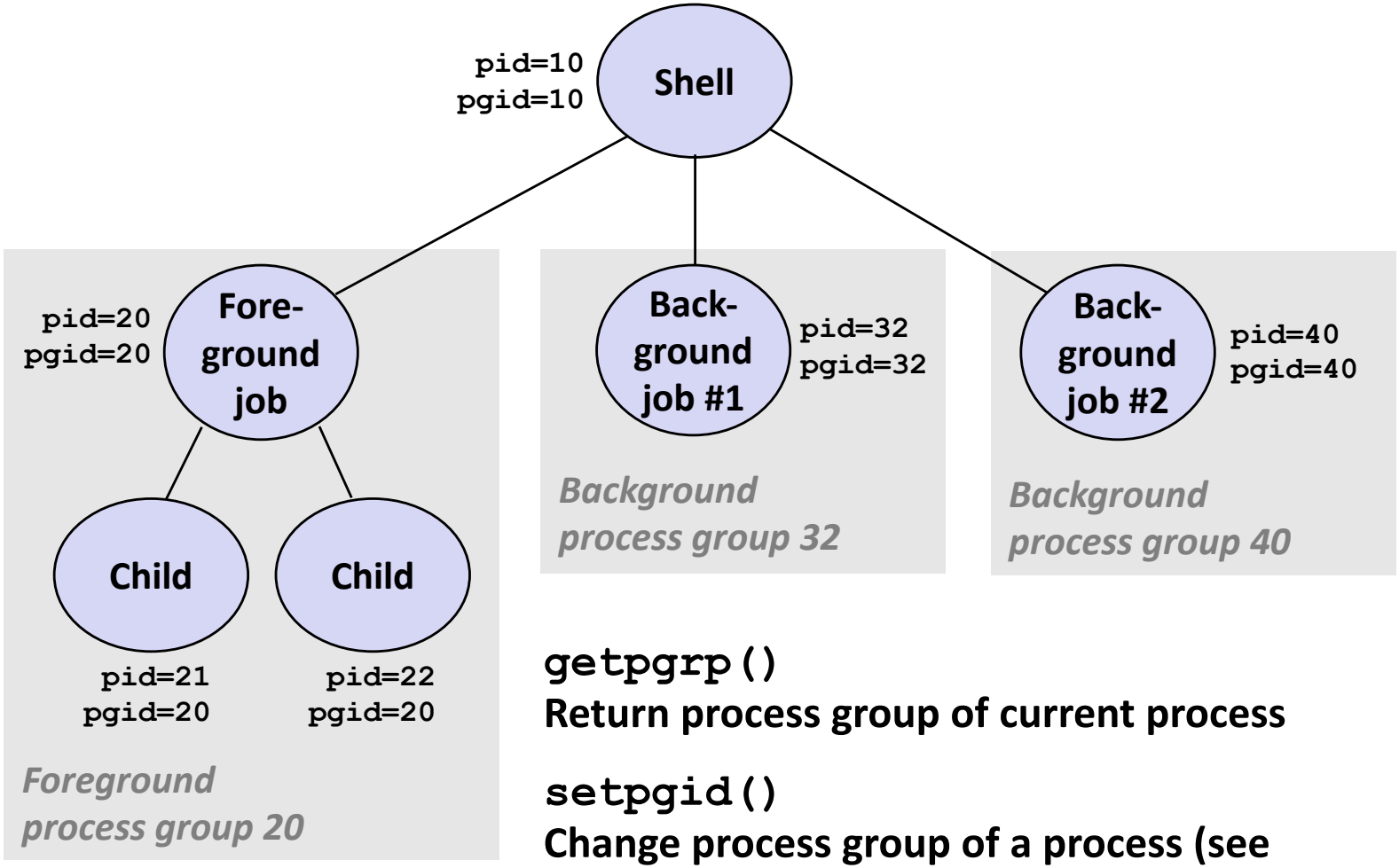
- **A pending signal is received at most once**

Signal Concepts: Pending/Blocked Bits

- **Kernel maintains `pending` and `blocked` bit vectors in the context of each process**
  - **`pending`**: represents the set of pending signals
    - Kernel sets bit k in **`pending`** when a signal of type k is delivered
    - Kernel clears bit k in **`pending`** when a signal of type k is received
  - **`blocked`**: represents the set of blocked signals
    - Can be set and cleared by using the **`sigprocmask`** function
    - Also referred to as the *signal mask*.

Sending Signals: Process Groups

- Every process belongs to exactly one process group



`getpgrp()`
Return process group of current process

`setpgid()`
Change process group of a process (see text for details)

Sending Signals with `/bin/kill` Program

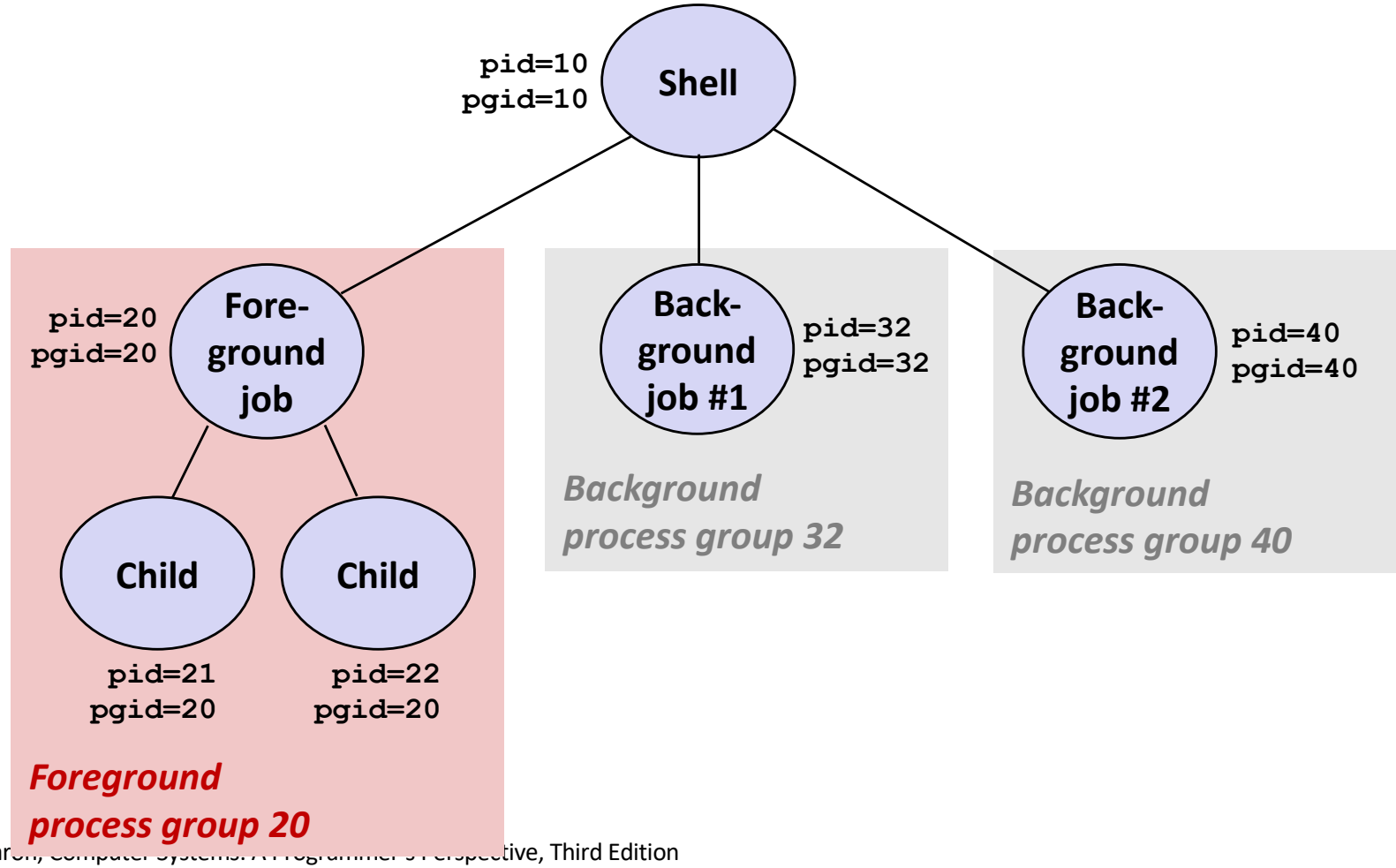
- **`/bin/kill` program sends arbitrary signal to a process or process group**

- **Examples**
  - **`/bin/kill -9 24818`**
    Send SIGKILL to process 24818
  - **`/bin/kill -9 -24817`**
    Send SIGKILL to every process in process group 24817

```
linux> ./forks 16
Child1: pid=24818 pgrp=24817
Child2: pid=24819 pgrp=24817

linux> ps
  PID TTY          TIME CMD
24788 pts/2    00:00:00 tcsh
24818 pts/2    00:00:02 forks
24819 pts/2    00:00:02 forks
24820 pts/2    00:00:00 ps
linux> /bin/kill -9 -24817
linux> ps
  PID TTY          TIME CMD
24788 pts/2    00:00:00 tcsh
24823 pts/2    00:00:00 ps
linux>
```

Sending Signals from the Keyboard

- **Typing ctrl-c (ctrl-z) causes the kernel to send a SIGINT (SIGTSTP) to every job in the foreground process group.**
  - SIGINT – default action is to terminate each process
  - SIGTSTP – default action is to stop (suspend) each process



Example of `ctrl-c` and `ctrl-z`

```
bluefish> ./forks 17
Child: pid=28108 pgrp=28107
Parent: pid=28107 pgrp=28107
<types ctrl-z>
Suspended
bluefish> ps w
  PID TTY      STAT   TIME COMMAND
27699 pts/8    Ss     0:00 -tcsh
28107 pts/8    T      0:01 ./forks 17
28108 pts/8    T      0:01 ./forks 17
28109 pts/8    R+     0:00 ps w
bluefish> fg
./forks 17
<types ctrl-c>
bluefish> ps w
  PID TTY      STAT   TIME COMMAND
27699 pts/8    Ss     0:00 -tcsh
28110 pts/8    R+     0:00 ps w
```

STAT (process state) Legend:

First letter:

S: sleeping
T: stopped
R: running

Second letter:

s: session leader
+: foreground proc group

See "man ps" for more details

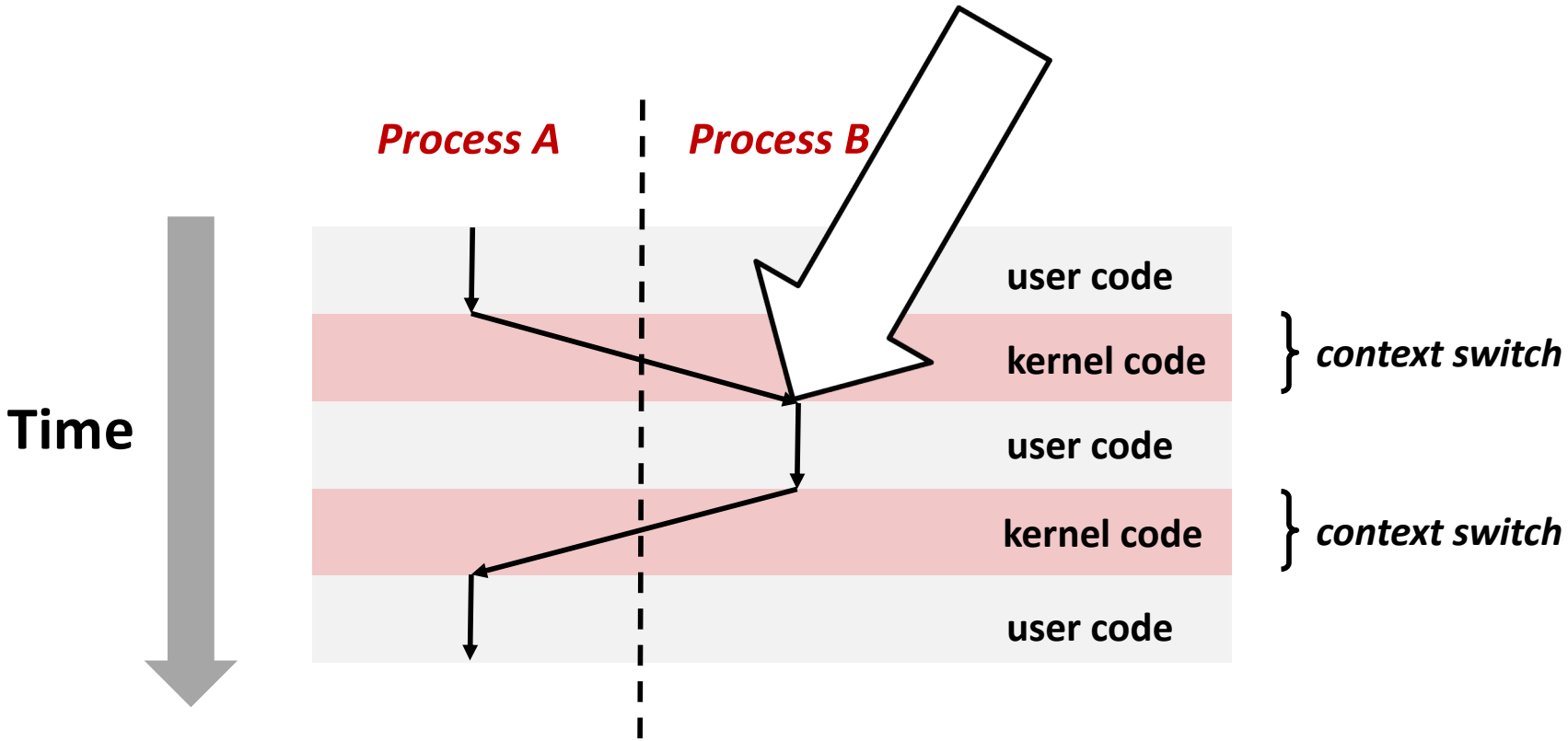
Sending Signals with `kill` Function

```
void fork12()
{
    pid_t pid[N];
    int i;
    int child_status;

    for (i = 0; i < N; i++)
        if ((pid[i] = fork()) == 0) {
            /* Child: Infinite Loop */
            while(1)
                ;
        }

    for (i = 0; i < N; i++) {
        printf("Killing process %d\n", pid[i]);
        kill(pid[i], SIGINT);
    }

    for (i = 0; i < N; i++) {
        pid_t wpid = wait(&child_status);
        if (WIFEXITED(child_status))
            printf("Child %d terminated with exit status %d\n",
                   wpid, WEXITSTATUS(child_status));
        else
            printf("Child %d terminated abnormally\n", wpid);
    }
}
```

forks.c

Receiving Signals

- Suppose kernel is returning from an exception handler and is ready to pass control to process *p*



Receiving Signals

- **Suppose kernel is returning from an exception handler and is ready to pass control to process *p***

- **Kernel computes `pnb = pending & ~blocked`**
  - The set of pending nonblocked signals for process *p*

- **If `(pnb == 0)`**
  - Pass control to next instruction in the logical flow for *p*
- **Else**
  - Choose least nonzero bit *k* in **`pnb`** and force process *p* to ***receive*** signal *k*
  - The receipt of the signal triggers some ***action*** by *p*
  - Repeat for all nonzero *k* in **`pnb`**
  - Pass control to next instruction in logical flow for *p*

Default Actions

- **Each signal type has a predefined *default action*, which is one of:**
  - The process terminates
  - The process stops until restarted by a SIGCONT signal
  - The process ignores the signal

Installing Signal Handlers

- **The `signal` function modifies the default action associated with the receipt of signal `signum`:**
  - `handler_t *signal(int signum, handler_t *handler)`

- **Different values for `handler`:**
  - SIG_IGN: ignore signals of type **`signum`**
  - SIG_DFL: revert to the default action on receipt of signals of type **`signum`**
  - Otherwise, **`handler`** is the address of a user-level ***signal handler***
    - Called when process receives signal of type **`signum`**
    - Referred to as ***"installing"*** the handler
    - Executing handler is called ***"catching"*** or ***"handling"*** the signal
    - When the handler executes its return statement, control passes back to instruction in the control flow of the process that was interrupted by receipt of the signal

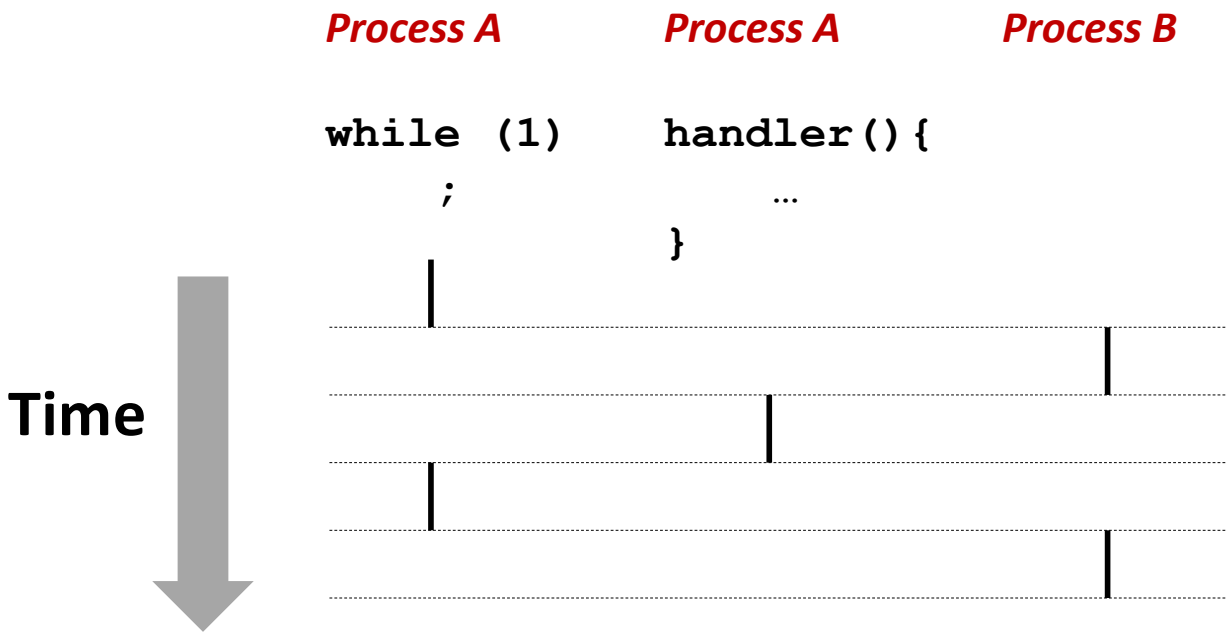
Signal Handling Example

```
void sigint_handler(int sig) /* SIGINT handler */
{
    printf("So you think you can stop the bomb with ctrl-c, do
you?\n");
    sleep(2);
    printf("Well...");
    fflush(stdout);
    sleep(1);
    printf("OK. :-)\n");
    exit(0);
}

int main()
{
    /* Install the SIGINT handler */
    if (signal(SIGINT, sigint_handler) == SIG_ERR)
        unix_error("signal error");

    /* Wait for the receipt of a signal */
    pause();

    return 0;
}
```

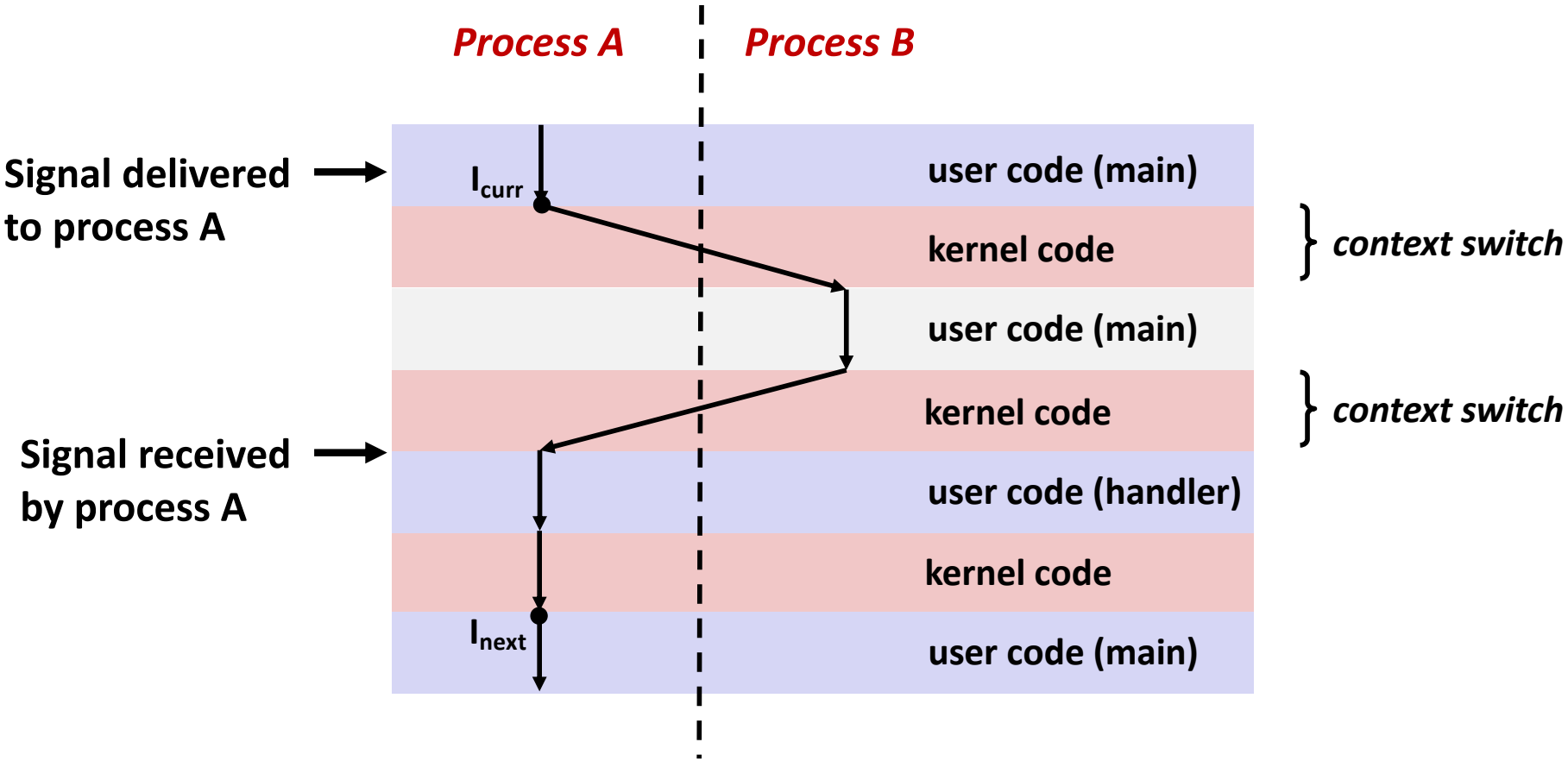
sigint.c

Signals Handlers as Concurrent Flows

- A signal handler is a separate logical flow (not process) that runs concurrently with the main program

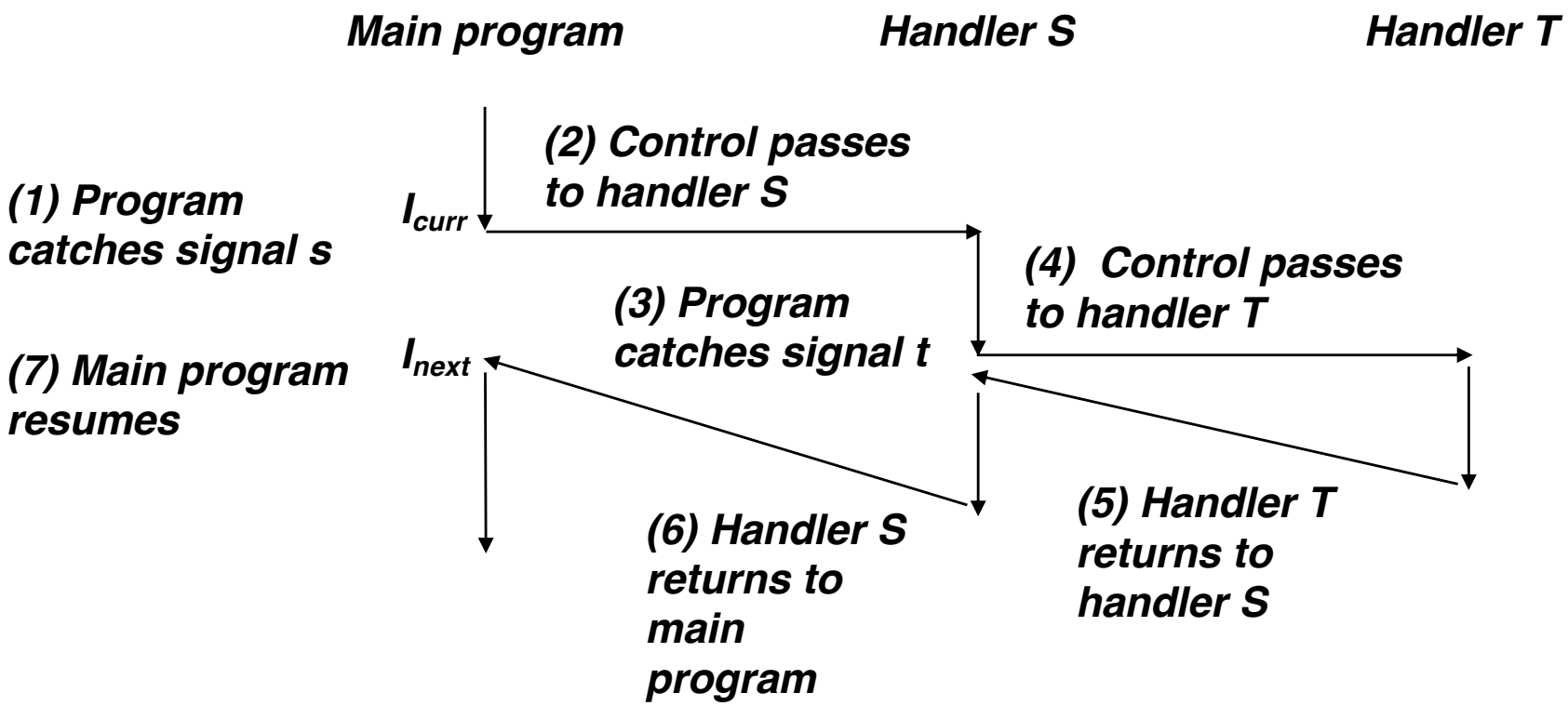


Another View of Signal Handlers as Concurrent Flows



Nested Signal Handlers

- Handlers can be interrupted by other handlers



Blocking and Unblocking Signals

- **Implicit blocking mechanism**
  - Kernel blocks any pending signals of type currently being handled.
  - E.g., A SIGINT handler can't be interrupted by another SIGINT

- **Explicit blocking and unblocking mechanism**
  - `sigprocmask` function

- **Supporting functions**
  - `sigemptyset` – Create empty set
  - `sigfillset` – Add every signal number to set
  - `sigaddset` – Add signal number to set
  - `sigdelset` – Delete signal number from set

Temporarily Blocking Signals

```
    sigset_t mask, prev_mask;

    Sigemptyset(&mask);
    Sigaddset(&mask, SIGINT);

    /* Block SIGINT and save previous blocked set */
    Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask, &prev_mask);

    ⋮   /* Code region that will not be interrupted by SIGINT
*/

    /* Restore previous blocked set, unblocking SIGINT */
    Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev_mask, NULL);
```

Safe Signal Handling

- **Handlers are tricky because they are concurrent with main program and share the same global data structures.**
  - Shared data structures can become corrupted.

- **We'll explore concurrency issues later in the term.**

- **For now here are some guidelines to help you avoid trouble.**

Guidelines for Writing Safe Handlers

- **G0: Keep your handlers as simple as possible**
  - e.g., Set a global flag and return
- **G1: Call only async-signal-safe functions in your handlers**
  - `printf`, `sprintf`, `malloc`, and `exit` are not safe!
- **G2: Save and restore `errno` on entry and exit**
  - So that other handlers don't overwrite your value of `errno`
- **G3: Protect accesses to shared data structures by temporarily blocking all signals.**
  - To prevent possible corruption
- **G4: Declare global variables as `volatile`**
  - To prevent compiler from storing them in a register
- **G5: Declare global flags as `volatile sig_atomic_t`**
  - *flag*: variable that is only read or written (e.g. flag = 1, not flag++)
  - Flag declared this way does not need to be protected like other globals

Async-Signal-Safety

- **Function is *async-signal-safe* if either reentrant (e.g., all variables stored on stack frame, CS:APP3e 12.7.2) or non-interruptible by signals.**
- **Posix guarantees 117 functions to be async-signal-safe**
  - Source: "`man 7 signal`"
  - Popular functions on the list:
    - `_exit, write, wait, waitpid, sleep, kill`
  - Popular functions that are **not** on the list:
    - `printf, sprintf, malloc, exit`
    - Unfortunate fact: `write` is the only async-signal-safe output function

Safely Generating Formatted Output

- **Use the reentrant SIO (Safe I/O library) from `csapp.c` in your handlers.**
  - `ssize_t sio_puts(char s[]) /* Put string */`
  - `ssize_t sio_putl(long v)   /* Put long */`
  - `void sio_error(char s[])   /* Put msg & exit */`

```c
void sigint_handler(int sig) /* Safe SIGINT handler */
{
    Sio_puts("So you think you can stop the bomb with
ctrl-c, do you?\n");
    sleep(2);
    Sio_puts("Well...");
    sleep(1);
    Sio_puts("OK. :-)\n");
    _exit(0);
}
```

sigintsafe.c

Correct Signal Handling

```
int ccount = 0;
void child_handler(int sig) {
    int olderrno = errno;
    pid_t pid;
    if ((pid = wait(NULL)) < 0)
        Sio_error("wait error");
    ccount--;
    Sio_puts("Handler reaped child ");
    Sio_putl((long)pid);
    Sio_puts(" \n");
    sleep(1);
    errno = olderrno;
}

void fork14() {
    pid_t pid[N];
    int i;
    ccount = N;
    Signal(SIGCHLD, child_handler);

    for (i = 0; i < N; i++) {
        if ((pid[i] = Fork()) == 0) {
            Sleep(1);
            exit(0);  /* Child exits */
        }
    }
    while (ccount > 0) /* Parent spins */
        ;
}
```

forks.c

- **Pending signals are not queued**
  - For each signal type, one bit indicates whether or not signal is pending…
  - …thus at most one pending signal of any particular type.
- **You can't use signals to count events, such as children terminating.**

```
whaleshark> ./forks 14
Handler reaped child 23240
Handler reaped child 23241
```

Correct Signal Handling

- **Must wait for all terminated child processes**
  - Put `wait` in a loop to reap all terminated children

```
void child_handler2(int sig)
{
    int olderrno = errno;
    pid_t pid;
    while ((pid = wait(NULL)) > 0) {
        ccount--;
        Sio_puts("Handler reaped child ");
        Sio_putl((long)pid);
        Sio_puts(" \n");
    }
    if (errno != ECHILD)
        Sio_error("wait error");
    errno = olderrno;
}
```

```
whaleshark> ./forks 15
Handler reaped child 23246
Handler reaped child 23247
Handler reaped child 23248
Handler reaped child 23249
Handler reaped child 23250
whaleshark>
```

Portable Signal Handling

- **Ugh! Different versions of Unix can have different signal handling semantics**
  - Some older systems restore action to default after catching signal
  - Some interrupted system calls can return with errno == EINTR
  - Some systems don't block signals of the type being handled
- **Solution: `sigaction`**

```
handler_t *Signal(int signum, handler_t *handler)
{
    struct sigaction action, old_action;

    action.sa_handler = handler;
    sigemptyset(&action.sa_mask); /* Block sigs of type being handled */
    action.sa_flags = SA_RESTART; /* Restart syscalls if possible */

    if (sigaction(signum, &action, &old_action) < 0)
        unix_error("Signal error");
    return (old_action.sa_handler);
}
```

csapp.c

Synchronizing Flows to Avoid Races

- Simple shell with a subtle synchronization error because it assumes parent runs before child.

```
int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
    int pid;
    sigset_t mask_all, prev_all;

    Sigfillset(&mask_all);
    Signal(SIGCHLD, handler);
    initjobs(); /* Initialize the job list */

    while (1) {
        if ((pid = Fork()) == 0) { /* Child */
            Execve("/bin/date", argv, NULL);
        }
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask_all, &prev_all); /* Parent */
        addjob(pid);  /* Add the child to the job list */
        Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev_all, NULL);
    }
    exit(0);
}
```

procmask1.c

Synchronizing Flows to Avoid Races

- SIGCHLD handler for a simple shell

```
void handler(int sig)
{
    int olderrno = errno;
    sigset_t mask_all, prev_all;
    pid_t pid;

    Sigfillset(&mask_all);
    while ((pid = waitpid(-1, NULL, 0)) > 0) { /* Reap child */
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask_all, &prev_all);
        deletejob(pid); /* Delete the child from the job list */
        Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev_all, NULL);
    }
    if (errno != ECHILD)
        Sio_error("waitpid error");
    errno = olderrno;
}
```

procmask1.c

Corrected Shell Program without Race

```
int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
    int pid;
    sigset_t mask_all, mask_one, prev_one;

    Sigfillset(&mask_all);
    Sigemptyset(&mask_one);
    Sigaddset(&mask_one, SIGCHLD);
    Signal(SIGCHLD, handler);
    initjobs(); /* Initialize the job list */

    while (1) {
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask_one, &prev_one); /* Block SIGCHLD */
        if ((pid = Fork()) == 0) { /* Child process */
            Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev_one, NULL); /* Unblock SIGCHLD */
            Execve("/bin/date", argv, NULL);
        }
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask_all, NULL); /* Parent process */
        addjob(pid);  /* Add the child to the job list */
        Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev_one, NULL);  /* Unblock SIGCHLD */
    }
    exit(0);
}
```

procmask2.c

Explicitly Waiting for Signals

- Handlers for program explicitly waiting for SIGCHLD to arrive.

```
volatile sig_atomic_t pid;

void sigchld_handler(int s)
{
    int olderrno = errno;
    pid = Waitpid(-1, NULL, 0); /* Main is waiting for nonzero pid
*/
    errno = olderrno;
}

void sigint_handler(int s)
{
}
```

waitforsignal.c

Explicitly Waiting for Signals

Similar to a shell waiting for a foreground job to terminate.

```
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    sigset_t mask, prev;
    Signal(SIGCHLD, sigchld_handler);
    Signal(SIGINT, sigint_handler);
    Sigemptyset(&mask);
    Sigaddset(&mask, SIGCHLD);

    while (1) {
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask, &prev); /* Block SIGCHLD */
        if (Fork() == 0) /* Child */
            exit(0);
        /* Parent */
        pid = 0;
        Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev, NULL); /* Unblock SIGCHLD */

        /* Wait for SIGCHLD to be received (wasteful!) */
        while (!pid)
            ;
        /* Do some work after receiving SIGCHLD */
        printf(".");
    }
    exit(0);
}
```

waitforsignal.c

Explicitly Waiting for Signals

- Program is correct, but very wasteful
- Other options:

```
while (!pid)  /* Race! */
    pause();
```

```
while (!pid) /* Too slow! */
    sleep(1);
```

- Solution: `sigsuspend`

Waiting for Signals with `sigsuspend`

- `int sigsuspend(const sigset_t *mask)`

- Equivalent to atomic (uninterruptable) version of:

```
sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask, &prev);
pause();
sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev, NULL);
```

Waiting for Signals with `sigsuspend`

```
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    sigset_t mask, prev;
    Signal(SIGCHLD, sigchld_handler);
    Signal(SIGINT, sigint_handler);
    Sigemptyset(&mask);
    Sigaddset(&mask, SIGCHLD);

    while (1) {
        Sigprocmask(SIG_BLOCK, &mask, &prev); /* Block SIGCHLD */
        if (Fork() == 0) /* Child */
            exit(0);

       /* Wait for SIGCHLD to be received */
        pid = 0;
        while (!pid)
            Sigsuspend(&prev);

       /* Optionally unblock SIGCHLD */
        Sigprocmask(SIG_SETMASK, &prev, NULL);
        /* Do some work after receiving SIGCHLD */
        printf(".");
    }
    exit(0);
}
```

sigsuspend.c

Today

- Shells
- Signals

Summary

- **Signals provide process-level exception handling**
  - Can generate from user programs
  - Can define effect by declaring signal handler
  - Be very careful when writing signal handlers