

# Child psychology narrative essay

Science



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Child development is a fascinating thing to observe. It is very challenging in some; while others it comes along naturally. The way a child develops can be determined by a number of factors. Their environment and biological inheritance can be the common denominator to their development. Have you ever wondered what makes Uncle Sam, or Uncle Joe who they are? What determines whether your son, daughter, niece, nephew, or even neighbor who they will become when they grow up. Prior to taking this class I never took the time to really think why some people the way they are.

The Boston bombers did not just wake up one day and say that they were going to plan an attack to hurt or even kill thousands of people, their childhood development determined what route they would take. As we see the people who are around us, we judge their character off of their behavior. The behavior determines who we think they are. There are many different development theories available that states different concepts of human development, but the three main theories that are mainly known are from Sigmund Freud, Erik Erickson, and Jean Piaget.

Although many believe that their theories are old and outdated many psychologists use their theories to base theirs on. In this paper I will explain their theories in detail, provide examples of their use in the mental health treatment of children, and compare and contrast them starting with Mr. Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis and proved to be the most influential writer about the unconscious mind in the twentieth century. (Freud, 2005) Freud was a doctor with a degree.

He also set up a private practice to treat psychological disorders such as hysteria; from his patients came the evidence used in many of his theories about human psychology. (Freud, 2005). Freud believed that the behavior that one portrays is based off of their early development. His research shows that an adult's childhood can explain the behavior of the person. There are three main forces that drive humans which are the ID, the ego, and the super-ego. The ID is the basic personal needs and desires of one's self. It is completely selfish and has no care for sensibility or reality.

It drives for what it wants, when it wants it, and how it wants it with no other considerations. The ID is the inner person without regards to anyone or anything; it is all about itself or oneself. The second part of the personality is the ego. The ego is the realization of reality. It is the ego's job to make one aware of its surroundings, and divide the selfishness from the id to the morality of the person. The conscience makes distinctions between right and wrong according to parental and societal standards. (Mossler, 2011) The third part is the super-ego, is morals and acquired beliefs of right and wrong.

When decisions are made, the ego has the difficult task of balancing the demands of the id while maintaining rules that the super-ego dictates.

(Mossler, 2011) The id should be satisfied but with care not to upset the super-ego. According to Freud the interaction of the three parts of the personality are developed within a series of psychosexual stages. Each of the stages is focused on a particular body part or function. (Mossler, 2011) The five psychosexual stages are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. Each one of these stages are centered around a bodily function or part.

Freud's theory states that stage The pleasures of this stage revolve around the mouth. The second stage is the anal tage. This stage happens between the ages of one and three. A child's focus is surrounded by the anus. This age group is learning disciplined. The milestone for toddlers is potty training. This is the transition from diapers to underwear. Freud relates the discipline to potty training to call this stage the anal stage. The third stage of development in children is the phallic stage. This stage occurs between the ages of three to six.

When children become aware of their genitals and the difference between one another is another development. Being a mother of a five year old, I do elieve this is a transition for him. Starting school and being around other children his age who act differently than what he is use was a transition for him to overcome. Having the knowledge that women have certain body parts that boys do not have was hard to explain to a five year old. The next stage is called latency. Freud states this stage begins at the age of 6 and should end around twelve. The main focus during this age is on social and intellectual skills. The last stage is genital.

This stage in my opinion is when a woman becomes a woman and a man becomes a man. Freud describes this stage as when one sees beyond their selfish needs and focuses on others desires. This stage molds a husband, wife, mother and even father. This stage occurs between the ages of twelve and nineteen. Mr. Erick Erickson was the next author of developmental theory. Erik Erikson (1902-1994) was a neo-Freudian who argued that Freud misjudged an individual's interaction with society and themotivationfor

humans to be immersed in social customs. (Mossler, 2011) Erickson believes that one's surroundings can help form and challenge development.

Erikson also believes that a crisis forms when psychological need and societal pressure intersect. Rather than focusing on psychosexual urges as Freud did, Erikson emphasized the process of psychosocial development. (Mossler, 2011) In comparison of Freud & Erickson they both believe that in development one must go through different stages. Freud's theory only states five psychosexual stages in the first five years of life, while Erickson believes one goes through eight lifelong stages. Erikson's first stage was trust versus mistrust and it occurs from zero to 18 months. The goal of this stage is to establish trust.

A baby is dependent upon their parents to eat, be changed, and feel loved. When the baby gets and feels this from their parent they develop a sense of trust. Also, if the baby is neglected of the necessities to develop trust they result in developing mistrust. The second stage is autonomy versus shame and doubt. This occurs from about 18 months of age to 3 years old. This stage is important for toddlers, because they gain a sense of independence. Once the baby has developed a sense of trust they easily transition into the next stage of wanting to do everything for themselves.

It is important for parents to allow their children to explore this stage of independency. On the other hand, if parents are too demanding or do not let children perform tasks on their own; they may develop a sense of shame and doubt. (Mossler, 2011) Initiative versus guilt is the third stage of psychosocial development. It takes place between three to six years of age.

This stage is developed through exploring their independence. When a child utilizes their independence and fix their own cereal, but wastes all of the milk, a sense of guilt may overtake them due to their parents reaction. This stage is critical

Around the ages of six to eleven the fourth stage will take place which is industry versus inferiority. Children develop an increasing sense of competence by taking the initiative, expanding their opportunities, and feeling a sense of accomplishment; they become productive. (Mossler, 2011) As part of their developing personality, children must balance independence of actions with possible negative consequences of those actions. (Mossler, 2011) In the fifth stage of psychosocial development, identity versus confusion occurs. This stage should happen between the ages of twelve to eighteen.

As a teenager matures, they must establish themselves in society. When children are allowed to explore, create, and accomplish, they develop the competence necessary to define goals and forge a unique sense of self. (Mossler, 2011) Conversely, if teenagers feel a sense of inferiority, they do not develop feelings of accomplishment and purpose. Current and future roles remain undefined. (Mossler, 2011) The next stage Erickson describes is the intimacy versus isolation, which occurs from the ages of twenty to forty. In this stage one develops close intimate relationships and some experience marriage, or one can become isolated and shut down.

Generativity versus stagnation is the next stage. It occurs from forty years old to sixty-five years old. This stage allows one to think of how they can give

back. Erickson states that one wonders how they can provide for the next generation. The other option one may have is to turn inward and not think of helping anyone in the future. The final stage in Erikson's psychosocial stages of development is integrity versus despair. A person will dwell in this stage from sixty-five years old to their death. This stage allows the person to reminisce on their life, whether they are pleased with their actions or some may be disappointed.

Erikson's stages of psychosocial development were deep, but yet simple. It is something everyone will go through and experience. Every stage is relatable whether it is applicable to one's life now, or to a child one may be raising.

The last theorist is Mr. Jean Piaget. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a Swiss developmental psychologist who remains perhaps the most influential figure in the study of child development. (Mossler, 2011) Piaget regarded himself as engaged in genetic epistemology, the study of what knowledge is through an empirical investigation of how our epistemic relations to objects are improved. (Cambridge, 1999) Piaget theorized that children progress through four stages of development that are initiated by biology and governed by the principles of organization and adaptation. (Mossler, 2011) The four cognitive development stages that Piaget believes children go through are sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operation, and formal operation. The cognitive system of the adult is neither learned, in the Skinnerian sense, nor genetically preprogrammed.

Rather, it results from the organization of specific interactions whose character is shaped both by the features of the objects interacted with (a process called accommodation) and by the current cognitive system of the

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child (a process called assimilation). (Cambridge, 199) The first stage is sensorimotor. This stage occurs from birth until about the age of two. In this stage Piaget states that infants gain understanding through their movements and sense which are coordinated by reflexes. Infants learn to grasp for things when an item is placed in their hands.

When a baby is born their hand opens and closes and when an adult places their finger in their little hand, the infant's hand automatically reflexes with behavior, which is how a baby knows to combine the sucking behavior to the grasp reflexes. As they continue to grow they continuously apply behavior with reflexes, which prepares them for the second stage. The second stage is preoperational which takes place between the ages of two through seven. In this stage children begin to connect words, images, and objects. Their imagination allows them to use objects to represent real life things that they have seen before.

For instance they may use blocks to make buildings in a town. My sons have used all of their play cars to make a parade and utilize stuffed animals to give the impressions of the ones who ride in the vehicles. These cognitive limitations are readily evident in the child's lack of conservation, the ability to understand that properties of objects do not change with alterations in the object's form. For example, using a typical Piagetian conservation task, a child at this stage believes the amount of water changes because the liquid is poured from a short, wide bottle into a tall, narrow container. (Encyclopedic, 2006)



Throughout the concrete operational stage (7-11 years), school-aged children develop mental abilities for logically thinking about, as well as systematically classifying, concrete objects and events. (Encyclopedic, 2006) This stage begins when the child can perform mental operations on concrete objects actually or imagined to be physically experienced (Green and Piel 2002). Children in this stage do more than just the imagination of the prior stage. Thought is guided by logic as children become able to sort using complex classification systems. (Mossler, 2011). This stage prepares them for the final stage. The last stage is formal operations, which begins at the age of eleven and continues throughout their adolescent years. Adolescents apply logical thinking and abstract reasoning to ideas and hypothetical possibilities. (Galotti, 1999) Hypothetical reasoning occurs with outcomes attached. As adults we are all faced with problems but have to hypothetically figure out the outcomes so we may know how to react. This is an ongoing process once you reach this stage and continues through the duration of life.

The three main theories Sigmund Freud, Erik Erickson, and Jean Piaget had a lot in common and also a lot different in their theories. We all cross each stage at one time or another, whether it was psychosocially or physically. Taking this class helped me realize each stage and compare it to my own life and my children's lives so I can see which stage each one of them are in. Each age that the theorist states they go through are the exact age they are in the stage. In this paper I have compared and contrasted different theories from each while explaining each theory from each theorist.