

Childhood and adolescent development



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Watching children grow is one of life's biggest joys, especially when the children are yours and you can take certain notices of the milestones that occur from a personal perspective. But one thing people don't often acknowledge are the deep, inter-workings that actually occur during development, such as the psychological processes that take place.

In obvious developmental stages such as physical and mental, we can see a lot about children and adolescents - but it is the theories of development that explain the most, and give us better perception and understanding of what goes on during development, even when there are issues. To begin, one must be aware that there are three different ways in which development occurs; physical, cognitive, and psychosocial. Physical development adheres to development concerning strength, speed, coordination, traits, and other characteristics. Physical appearance and development is determined by the passing of genes from parents to child and " Physical development includes the biological changes evident during puberty and is also concerned with variables related to health and illness" (Mossler, 2011). Physical development also includes the term maturation - which refers to the course of development.

Cognitive development involves thinking, language, intelligence, problem solving abilities, memory and eventually the ability to plan for the future. Last but not least, psychosocial development pertains to that of personality, social interaction, understanding of emotion, identity, self-control and other self concepts, like self esteem. Moral behavior and styles of attachment also occurs during this domain of development. It is these three stages that one must consider not only separately, but together as well.

There are many theories that are centered around development that looks into how some of these entities play a role in development. Amid these theories lies the cognitive perspective, which appeals to the thinking process and the way information flows in and out along with the thinking patterns that are involved as well. This perspective also refers to intelligence and that which is contained, as well as that which can be learned - along with when and how. Two theorists who have worked and made notable mentions in the field of the cognitive perspective are Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. It was Piaget who believed that development happens at discontinuous stages. He also believed that “.

.. children learn as a result of the way they interact with and manipulate the world” (Mossler, 2011). Piaget stated that he believed there are four stages of progression, one preparing for the next and that it is biology which rules and predetermines this. Piaget’s Stages of Development are that of the sensorimotor stage, from ages of birth to age two, the preoperational stage from ages two to seven, the concrete operations stage from ages seven to twelve, and the formal operations stage, from ages 12 until, and throughout adulthood. Through this theory, Piaget attempts to map out the milestones by explaining first, the stage he called the sensorimotor stage which covers basic coordination, which can be explained by the connections that happen between the body and the brain.

Second, Piaget looks at the preoperational stage which is demonstrated through a child’s ability to pretend and play through the imagination. This moves us into the next stage, the concrete operation stage, and within this stage of development, Piaget believes that “... children become able to sort

using complex classification systems” (Mossler, 2011). It is in this stage that children also become able to see things from more than one perspective.

Lastly, Piaget speaks of the formal operations stage, and this includes abstract thinking, along with the ability to experience ideas like love and not only repeat them, but construct them as well. It is through Piaget’s cognitive theory that he tries to show how one cannot move through these stages without finishing the last, and moreover, that each stage prepares the developing child for the next. Within the cognitive perspective also lies Lev Vygotsky, who, unlike Piaget, believed that development is continuous. He did not focus on what children already knew, for he was more interested in measuring or focusing on what they are capable of knowing and learning.

He developed the Zone of Proximal Development which visually shows the range of skills or knowledge a child should have and what a child should be able to do, and/or learn with assistance. Thus instilling his interest in studying what children should know how to do and whether they do or not. Thus heralding only some of the possible precursors to help parents and psychologists determine as well as recognize when a problem is present or beginning to show its presence. Beneath the definition and construct of any theory, we also encounter the issues that take place and thus leads us to diagnose and treat psychological issues in different ways, according to different theories. Read also about the cognitive perspective itself uses the method of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to treat a “.

.. broad range of psychiatric conditions, including severe mental disorders such as bipolar disorder, refractory obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD),

substance abuse, suicide, personality disorders, and schizophrenia" (Rector, 2005). By using this therapy, the goal is to change the patient's way of thinking about something, or the way they perceive information. Hence, the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy working to change the cognition of the subject in hopes to correct, or at least, minimize the problem. Upon the discussion of developmental theory, it is important to take a moment to look at the psychoanalytical perspective which is centered around the subconscious as well as the unconscious and the individual's environment.

In this perspective we encounter the "father" of Psychology, otherwise known as Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that we are driven by the id, ego, and superego, as well as our inner most wants and sexual desires. He says that children "..

. learn to postpone immediate gratification by learning to use the toilet. Freud called this the anal stage. The phallic, latency, and genital stages focus on the genitals, sexual curiosity, and gender identity" (Mossler, 2011).

Freud also believes that our childhood development can lead to fixations as an adult. According to Freud, we encounter five stages of development, the first being that of the oral stage, which takes place from the ages of birth to one year. It is during this stage that learning about the world focuses on the act of children putting everything they can into their mouths. Following this, is the anal stage from ages of birth to age three, wherein children learn how to potty train, and their fixations are of the anal nature. Children also learn about, and how to deal with authority as well as discipline and the ways they interconnect.

Following this is the phallic stage in where children become aware of gender and sexuality, continuing onto the latency stage in which occurs between the age of six and twelve, where people children begin to have, appreciate, and become to be concerned with social as well as intellectual skills and traits. Last but not least is the genital stage which lasts from the age of twelve until nineteen and the developer can now focus on needs other than their own, sexual or otherwise. In Feuds theory, he believes most, if not all of our needs spawn from sexual needs and desires, giving Freud's theories the categorical name of psychosexual. Conversely, yet under the same theory, we meet Erik Erikson who instead of focusing on sexual drives, he focuses on social and emotional drives, referring to his theories as that of psychosocial. Erikson disputed Freud, claiming that personality is formed as well as affected and challenged by the environment. In Erikson's view, " A crisis develops when a psychological need and societal pressure intersect" (Mossler, 2011).

The essence of self as well as interaction with society is included within this developmental theory, and the instance of forming the feeling of " inferiority" when societal expectations are not met, or the individual feels as though they have not been met. Erikson's stages of development are quite explanatory, and are that of; trust vs mistrust from birth to age one, autonomy vs shame and doubt from one to age three, initiative vs guilt from ages three to six, industry vs inferiority from ages six to twelve, identity vs identity confusion from twelve to nineteen, intamacy vs isolation from ages twenty to forty, generativity vs. tagnation from forty to sixty-five, and integrity vs depsair, which starts at age sixty and carries through the lifestyle. These stages are used as a scale, and the healthy versus not

healthy development is gauged by assessing the developer to see where he or she may lie within each stage. Underneath the psychoanalytic theory, just as with the cognitive theory, problems are identified and treated under the psychoanalytic theory. To explain this type of therapy, one must understand the mind through the looking glass of a psychoanalytic.

Wherein, the best way to explain the human mind is to say that “ Embedded levels of illusion, common in the arts, are also frequently encountered in psychoanalytic work. Classical psychoanalysts, comparing nested frames of illusion to Prince Hamlet’s play within a play, concluded that the function of the inner frame is to protect and disguise deeper truths” (Hoge, 2008). That is to say that our “ outer frame” shields us from having to let people in the door and therefore seeing the parts of the self we would rather keep hidden. Even deeper into the puzzle, Psychoanalysis during therapy aims to reach even more past this into unconscious desire and emotion to help us solve our conflict in such a way that we understand it, rather than avoid it. This could even be said to relieve negative thoughts and/or views of ourselves that Erikson presented in his theories.

Some examples of a way to achieve this goal is through talking (psychotherapy) or hypnosis. In reference to art in Psychoanalysis, there are therapeutic uses such as outlet as well as a way to analyze and this helps reveal the inner most self. Regarding theories other than the cognitive and psychoanalytic perspectives, we can change gears and look at the learning perspective, also known as behaviorism and was brought about in challenge to Psychoanalytic theory with the idea that human actions can be tested

after mental events take place. Kept inside this theory, is that of Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner.

Pavlov himself, formed and presented his theories on classical conditioning, showing that if conditioned enough, the human mind will respond in a certain way to something the same way over and over again until taught, or conditioned differently. He also showed that these responses are, or can be learned and therefore changed as well. While Pavlov demonstrated with animals, John Watson came behind Pavlov's work and showed that conditioning works in humans as well. Adversely, what could be considered an embellishment to Pavlov's theory of conditioning, was B.

F. Skinner who Established the theory of operant conditioning. This theory showed that if certain behaviors are constantly reinforced, they will be repeated and if behaviors are not reinforced, or simply ignored – they will not be repeated. This include negative as well as positive behaviors and reinforcements. For example, “ If children are reinforced with a treat every time they wine, they are likely to whine next time.

.. ”(Mossler, 2011). Both types of conditioning are studied as well as used to this day and these days, there are more advances than ever, and there is a new technology that allows doctors and scientists to physically condition brainwaves.

Brain State Conditioning, also known as “ BSC utilizes a specific type of electrode, which includes a computer chip that eliminates other electromagnetic energy from producing interference in the brain energy signal being detected. BSC is the process of balancing and harmonizing the

<https://assignbuster.com/childhood-and-adolescent-development/>

brain" (Vijendra ; Gerdes, 2009). Herein, the process of BSC is literally conditioning the physical reactions the brain has to certain stimuli, especially those that may cause mental health issues. Within these theories, there are several similarities that can be found. For example, the psychoanalytic perspective is in line with the learning perspective as they both touch on the innate, or the ' un-thought' actions and behaviors that are acted out, or take place.

Abnormality in this case would give cause for both parties to alter the actions and behavior acted out by uncovering the subconscious thoughts or innate lessons that are present. Also, both Erikson and Piaget theorized that outside forces as well as the surrounding environment were huge factors in development as opposed to strictly the inner workings of the mind. Here, abnormality would be judged as well as adjusted by environmental stress or other environmental factors that may be causing or affecting the individual. Other similarities can be found between Pavlov and Freud who both focus on the id, the ego, and the superego even if it wasn't specified that way. Freud talked about the ways each can run, or overrule the mind while Pavlov looked for physical reactions when what Freud referred to as the id, ego and superego, were mentally in play.

For abnormality in this area, the lesson may be self-control when referring to the id, ego, and superego as well as deferring the reactions by using a type of conditioning. The issue is a change of behavior based on urges and control. Lastly, Vygotsky and Skinner both focused on the capabilities of children, as opposed to knowledge and abilities already existed. That is to say, they focused on what could be taught and achieved.

Here, each theorist focuses on capabilities, and thus it seems this is where physical disabilities along with mental disabilities come into play, for it is the ability to learn as well as teach a child how to reach his or her limits that would be taken into account here. The key in both of these theories, is that while encouraging or teaching children, their own abilities must be taken into account. Conversely, we also find if not obvious, then remedial differences in the theories as well. Therefore, we see that the learning and the psychoanalytic perspectives differ in the way that the psychoanalytic approach concentrates on innate thoughts or automatic reactions that can be explained by environmental factors.

The learning approach focuses on behavior as well as actions and learned behaviorism. Abnormalities would herald the Psychoanalytic to seek out these innate thoughts while the Behaviorist would seek to modify actions and learned behaviors. Also, Erikson in the Psychoanalytic approach and Piaget in the Cognitive, both believe that development has a lot to do with the surrounding environment, but Piaget is more concerned with the way the environment is manipulated and used, while Erikson is more concerned with how the individual fits in with society. When an abnormality arises, Piaget would be more interested in analyzing the way in which an individual interacts with and manipulates the environment while Erikson would look at the way in which society has affected the individual, as well as where, or how, the individual fits in with said society. He would also try to uncover and compare the psychological needs of the individual versus the societal he or she faces.

Furthermore, Skinner and Pavlov believed that conditioning and reinforcements were that which shaped the mind during development while Erikson seemed to focus more on the ways of society and the personal feelings we develop from our experiences within. In the presence of an abnormality, Erikson would be more interested in the ways which the individual has interacted with society and how those interactions have affected an individual, while Pavlov would be more likely to look into reinforcements that have taken place. Piaget, Skinner, and Pavlov each had theories that behavior and patterns of development psychologically could be changed and continue through adulthood, while Freud believed that this was set during child/early adulthood. When confronting an abnormality, a Psychoanalytic would be more focused on reaching into the inner conscious while treating a patient, whereas Skinner, Piaget and Pavlov would seek to modify behavior itself by conditioning. Overall, while there are many theories that lead us to understanding development, it is personal experience and observation that allows us to understand and interpret life events, just as we have seen these theorists do. From dreams, to societal events as well as interaction, to our own learning experiences - we are all of our own mold built from the genes before us.

Time has shown us which theories we can dispute and which ones we can take with us in order to help those around us reach their full potential, or even help them in the event of a crisis. In present day Psychology, the general question when it comes to development is a question of which theorist one chooses to follow, and it is from these studies and first hand encounters that we are able to choose for ourselves who to believe.