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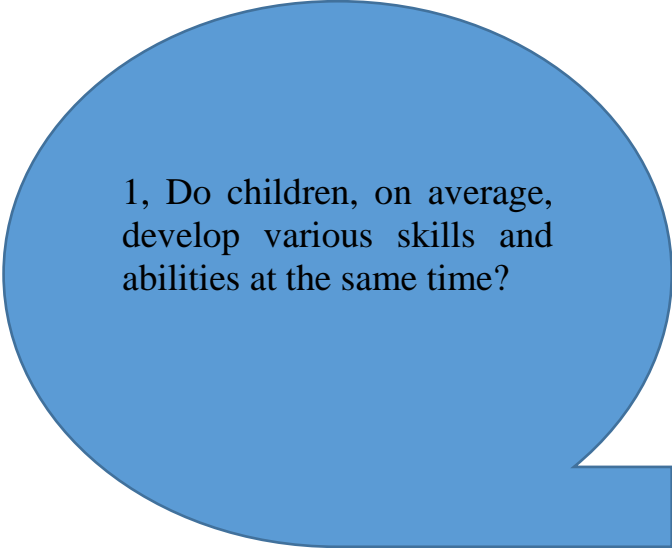
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Introduction

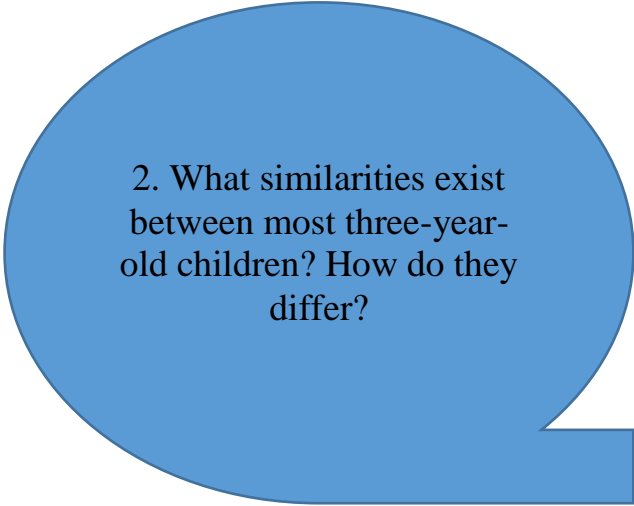
Childhood Development has been a multifaceted and fascinating topic of concern as it allows a person to fully understand how young children grow, develop and learn. In reviewing numerous academic literature on Child Development, the following concepts were often highlighted and discussed. These include:

- holistic development
- nature/nurture debate
- importance of the early years/life-course perspective
- critical/sensitive period
- pathways/ trajectories
- typical/delayed/atypical development

Hence, these thought-provoking questions come to mind as I attempt to write this essay.



1, Do children, on average, develop various skills and abilities at the same time?



2. What similarities exist between most three-year-old children? How do they differ?

3. What on average, should be expected from a child at different ages?

4. Is there a pattern in development by which one can expect a three-year-old to behave differently from a five-year-old?

Many studies in Child Development and Psychology answer these questions by scientifically examining the average changes in the behavior of children over time and explaining why and how their childhood develops in such a way. Child Psychology integrates the areas of physical, social, emotional, moral, language, and cognitive functioning Main (2022).

Therefore, the notion of Child Development has stemmed directly or indirectly from several disciplines within the social and natural sciences especially in the areas of Psychology, Sociology Medicine and Philosophy. Psychology has strongly influenced Early Childhood in terms of theoretical perspectives and backgrounds to what is known as ‘**Good Practice**’ Bruce (2006). Furthermore, the field of development, a subarea of the discipline of developmental psychology attempts to answer questions for example what accounts for the gradual but steady change in a child’s ability to understand and create complex patterns, to learn new information and to interact with a feeling of responsibility towards other people ?

Historically, Child Development has a rich historical background. Also, in the Renaissance, philosophical views were prominent, including the notions of original sin, tabula rasa, and innate goodness Berk (2008).

There are three (3) major buzzing themes of development, which often occurs in the academic literature these include biology versus environment, continuity of development versus discontinuity, and individual characteristics versus contextual and cultural influences Slavin (2005). Thus, modern research has impacted children's everyday experiences as well as Social Policy and legislation that involves children and families such as the establishment of compulsory schooling and improvement in health care and nutrition Main (2022).

Additionally, in the areas of Child Development and Psychology, researchers seek to identify specific childhood experiences that influence the child's ways of thinking and their behavior in adulthood. With this in mind, Martin (2003) states that development can be defined as progressive, orderly, and relatively continuing changes over time in a person's physical and neurological structure. The discipline focuses on the thought process and behavior transformations that typical humans undergo, from the beginning of their life to the end. Saracho (2021) Furthermore, Bruce (2006) expressed that Development is lifelong, multidimensional, multidirectional, plastic, contextual, multidisciplinary, and involves growth, maintenance, and regulation. Therefore, development is the pattern of movement or change that begins at conception and continues through the life span. Meadows (2018) adds that the pattern of movement is complex because it is the product of biological, cognitive and socioemotional processes and there are three important sociocultural contexts are culture, ethnicity, and gender.

Although research in Child Development plays an essential role in the field of Psychology, the sub-discipline is relatively new and it draws concerns about a century ago from scholars around the world. Moreover, today, contemporary psychologists often draw on a variety of theories and perspectives to understand how young children grow, behave, and think. These theories represent just a few of the different ways of thinking about Child Development. Also, Joinson (2019) posits that children develop in stages and it includes maturation which is an innately determined sequence of growth and change that is relatively independent of external events. All children go through the same stages in the same order and behavior organized around a coherent theme or set of characteristics. Additionally, the critical period is crucial in a person's life when specific events occur if development is to proceed normally Smith et. al (2003).

This essay seeks to define Child Development, especially focusing on early childhood (0-8 years old). Then, examine the nature/nurture debate and discuss the role of biology, environment, and early experiences in shaping a child's behavior. Next, it will briefly explore physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional development and investigate appropriate teaching strategies that can be used in Early Childhood Education to help pupils to grow learn, and develop well.

Definition of Childhood Development

In the words of Main (2022) Child development can be defined as a process by which a child changes overtime, This entails the whole period from conception (being dependent) to becoming a fully functioning adult (being independent). At this point It must be highlighted that a number of factors can affect the course and

progression of a child's holistic development. These include inborn or biological makeup of the individual child and external influences such as family, economics, society, culture and health. Thus, this growth and development are related directly to the child's affluence, nutrition, education, parenting styles and peers Berk (2008).

Therefore, Childhood Development in the early years refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of a child from the prenatal stage up to age eight Manas (2020). This early phase is pregnant with exploration and boundless curiosity. She further adds that this development occurs in a variety of settings, which include homes, schools, health centres, and community-based centres. The basis for a child's future achievement, health, and well-being is laid during this crucial stage. It has a significant impact on their social relationships, linguistic proficiency, emotional control, and cognitive capacities. Enhancing early childhood development can have a positive impact on long-term well-being, academic achievement, and school preparation. Consequently, providing a young child with a caring, stimulating, and encouraging environment throughout these formative years is crucial to his/her holistic development. It can have a long-lasting effect on their future.

Child Development is also holistic. It must be noted that clinicians and researchers tend to categorize development into different domains through an artificial approach because of aspects of a child's are interrelated. Thus, progress in one area affects in others for instance motor development affects early cognitive development Meadows (2018).

Early childhood development (ECD) has many dimensions and unfolds at a breathtaking pace. Measuring ECD is a complex task, and it is a new field, marked

by rapid evolution, great urgency – and significant gaps in our knowledge (Unicef). ECD has also become an important component of other global agenda, including Scaling Up Nutrition, the Global Partnership for Education, the Global Financing Facility for Every Woman Every Child, the Every Woman Every Child movement, the work plans of the World Health Organization (WHO), Unicef and the World Bank Group, the G20, international funding agencies, and philanthropic foundations Peter (2015).

Children’s development to their full potential is a fundamental human right. and from recent neuroscience research, it has been emphasized just how critical the early years of life is in the development of a child’s brain and in shaping their future. Meanwhile, economics has shown us the great benefits of investing in young children during this unique developmental window and the damaging costs, to children and societies, of failing to do so Meadows (2018).).

This implies that today, Early Childhood development and well-being of children capture the interest of the public, scientists, and also policymakers. Among the important contemporary concerns are family issues, parenting, education, sociocultural contexts, and social policy. Thus, to fully understand the scientific study of child development it is essential to appreciate the central themes of development that inspire current theory and research. It is also judicious to be familiar with the main theoretical viewpoints that guides research and also using the effective methodologies in teaching that will be successful in the early years.

Nature and Nurture Debate

According to Joinson (2019) a lecturer from the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom states in her article entitled *Developmental Pathways and Impacts on Development* asserts that the **nature/nurture issue** involves the debate about whether development is influenced by biology or the environment. Nature advocates claim that the most important influence on development is biological inheritance that is the idea that humans enter the world with an inborn store of knowledge and understanding whereas Nurture proponents on the other hand claim that environmental experiences are the most important influence. Knowledge is acquired through experiences and interactions with the world. According to John Locke a 17th century philosopher the mind is a *tabula rasa* or blank slate.

Additionally, according to the nature advocates, just as a sunflower grows in an orderly way— unless defeated by an unfriendly environment—so does the human grow orderly way. The range of environments can be vast, but the nature approach argues that the genetic blueprint produces shared aims in growth and development Bruce (2006) . Berk (2008) further declares that we walk before we talk, speak one word before two words, and grow rapidly in infancy and less so in early childhood, experience a rush of sexual hormones in puberty, reach the peak of our physical strength in late adolescence and early adulthood, and then physically decline. The nurture supporters acknowledge that extreme environments—those that are psychologically barren or hostile—can depress development.

However, it was proven by neuroscientists that basic growth tendencies are genetically wired into humans. By contrast, various psychologists emphasized the importance of nurture, or environmental experiences, in development. Experiences

run the range from the individual's biological environment (nutrition, medical care, drugs, and physical accidents) to the social environment (family, peers, schools, community, media, and culture). (Joinson 2019).

Therefore, it can be argued that Child Development is a product of the interaction of genes and environment. Biological underpinning is shaped by environmental factors and the differential impact of genes/environment on different outcomes for example blood type, eye color, weight, height intelligence quotient (IQ), personality, and depression. Slavin (2005).

Types of Development

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cited in World Bank and UNICEF (2016) approximately 250 million children under the age of five in low and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their full developmental potential. Moreover, The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that about 1 in 6 children in the United States have one or more developmental disabilities. This information is quite troubling so therefore intervention strategies should be in place to help these children. The types of development will be discussed briefly.

❖ *Physical Development*

From the earliest moments of life, children embark on a journey of physical growth and motor skill development. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children aged 2-5 should engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day to support their overall development.

Therefore, educators in the early years should pay special attention to milestones such as crawling, walking, and fine motor skills, recognizing that these contribute to a child's overall physical competency. Keeping in mind that creating an environment that encourages movement and providing age-appropriate activities promotes healthy physical development Joinson (2019).

❖ *Cognitive Development*

This includes the ability to think, learn and understand. Cognitive milestones, including language acquisition, memory development, and problem-solving skills, are critical elements of a child's intellectual growth.

Educators should be mindful of these milestones in order to develop memory, concentration, attention, and problem solving. Thus fostering an environment that stimulates curiosity, encourages exploration, and supports the development of critical thinking skills. Joinson (2019)

❖ *Language Development*

This involves the ability to communicate, listen attentively and comprehend. Language acquisition is a basis of cognitive development. Educators should be

aware of the typical language milestones, such as babbling, first words, and the progression to complex sentences. Joinson (2019).

By creating a language-rich environment, encouraging communication, and providing diverse language experiences are essential for supporting optimal language development in the early years. Communication: Establish open lines of communication with parents to share observations, and insights, as they collaboratively support each child's unique developmental journey, including language development.

❖ *Social emotional Development*

Building healthy relationships and understanding emotions are integral to social and emotional development. In addition during this development independence and self-esteem are developed. Children also learn to behave appropriately in different social situations.

Educators should create a nurturing atmosphere that promotes positive social interactions, emotional expression, and language use. This journey's key components are recognizing attachment patterns and guiding children in developing empathy and self-awareness Joinson (2019)

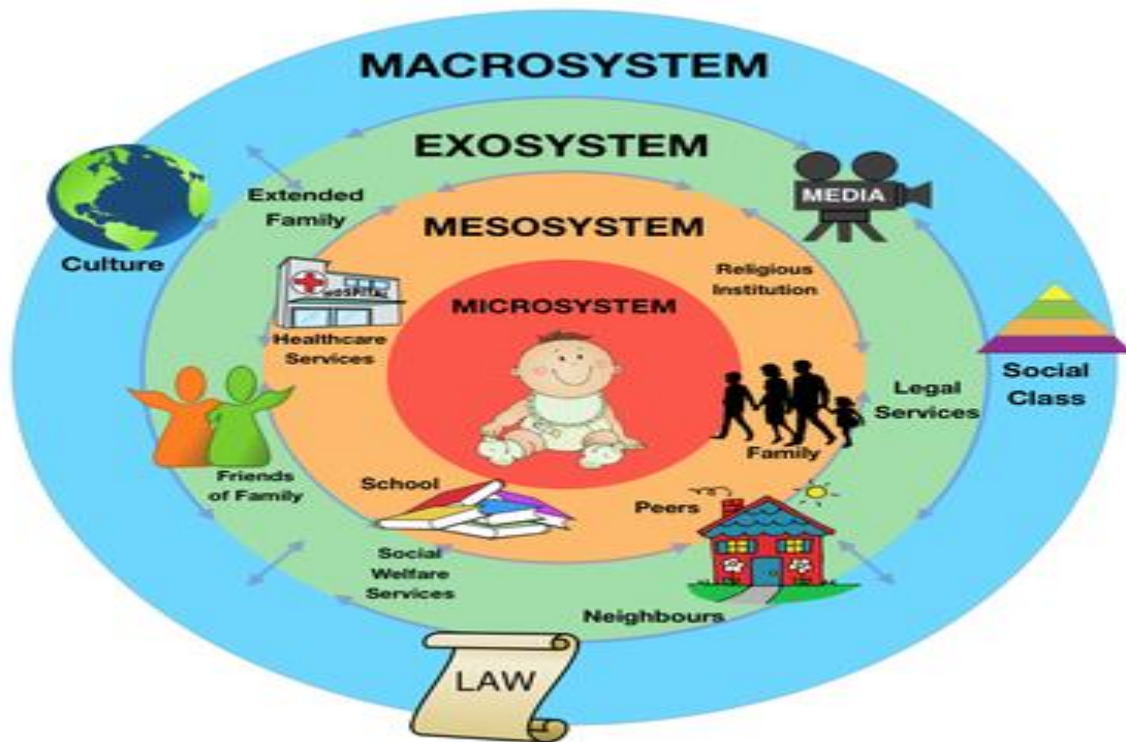
Theories of Child Development

There are many theories of child development, which include biological-maturation, environmental, learning, cognitive-developmental and socio-cultural theories. They generally fall within several broad theoretical perspectives. Each of these perspectives stress different kinds of developmental processes and have

differing views issues. Garcia (2016) expressed that these perspectives influence the questions researchers ask. The methods they use and the ways they interpret data. She firmly adds that in order to evaluate and interpret research it is essential to recognize the theoretical perspective on which it is based. It can be argued that although none of these theoretical perspectives has all the answers, each one has something to contribute to our understanding of child development.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory's is one of the theories used to assist to explain how children develop within the context of their world. Bronfenbrenner's include its comprehensive description of the various environmental influences on child and adolescent development. Bronfenbrenner's straightforward analysis shows how the development of children and adolescents may be enhanced has far-reaching implications Peter (2015). For instance, to encourage proper nutrition for young children parenting workshops should be done with parents, caregivers, and teachers which are focused on improving parenting/teaching skills respectively, the benefits will be seen in children's development cognitively and socio-emotionally. Bronfenbrenner, a founder of the Head Start Program which aims to develop cognitive and developmental outcomes in children and their families through poor socio-economic status via education ,nutrition, parenting efforts and health World Bank and UNICEF (2016).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems



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Additionally, in examining the above diagram Bronfenbrenner includes the effects values, laws, and customs of the greater society (i.e. country) has on children and adolescents' development (Berk, 2005). She also adds that this theory enlightened view that educating families about their strengths and needs empowers them to overcome stressful situations serves to maximize children's nurturing environments hence stimulating all aspects of their development. Bronfenbrenner has created a theory that is inclusive of the environments in which families are interweaved and recognizes their forceful nature thereby helping the professionals entrusted with working with family members increase their understanding of the intricacies of family function. Thus, if appropriately applied within a society, Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological systems would provide educators, professionals such as social workers, psychologists, and others with stronger

abilities and more experience to form more productive and effective helpful relationships with the families in their care. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is not free from criticisms as the lack of depth regarding detailed analysis of the specific biological contributors to development, references to which are difficult to uncover, even though he categorized his theory as a *bioecological* model (Berk, 2008). Another theory we will examine is Jean Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development.

Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Formal Operational Stage (12 – 18 years)

- Children form inductive and deductive reasoning. They can use abstract thought and general principles to develop increasingly complex hypotheses.

Concrete Operational Stage (7 – 12 years)

- Logical thought: children begin to see relationships between mass, time, space, etc.
- Conservation: Children discover that changes in appearance do not necessarily correspond with changes in weight, volume, etc.

Preoperational Stage (2 – 7 years)

- Symbolic Thought: Young children learn to use language to represent their thoughts. They develop imaginative play.
- Egocentrism: Young children struggle to see things from other perspectives

Sensorimotor Stage (0 – 2 years)

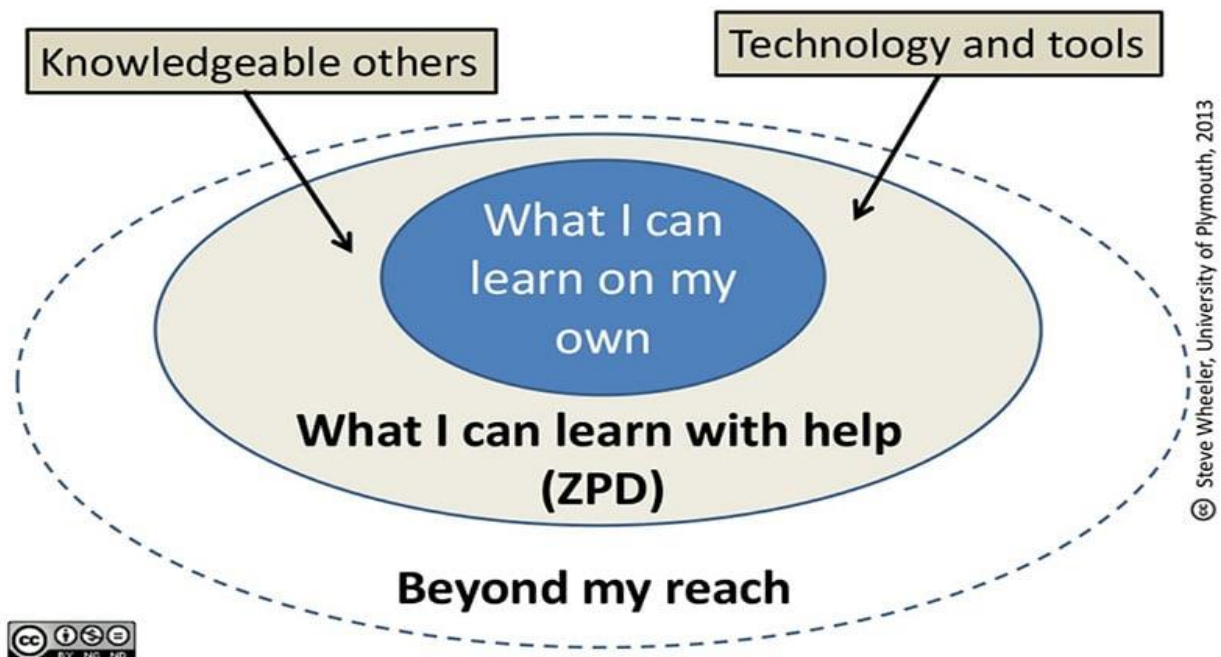
- Object Permanence: Babies learn that objects out of sight still exist.
- Goal Directed Action: Babies learn to act intentionally to achieve a goal.
- Deferred Imitation: Babies continue to imitate others after the event.

It can be seen from the above diagram Piaget's theory which proposed that children's cognitive skills progresses through a series of stages in which new information from their experiences is captured and understood. Piaget's theory of cognitive development's strength lies in the premise that young children do not think like adults and learn best by having "hands-on" play related educational experiences with familiar aspects of their environment, a concept not identified directly by Bronfenbrenner (Berk, 2008). Examples of this premise of Piaget's theory include discovery-based educational curriculum such as investigative field and applied studies within all subject areas.

Some weaknesses of Piaget's theory of cognitive development include underestimating the intellectual capabilities of infants, preschoolers, and grade-school children, whom all show greater problem-solving skills when offered tasks to complete that are more familiar and thereby allows them to demonstrate their competencies (Martin, 2003). One example is the ability of babies to learn simple sign language as a means to communicate their needs and wants. As well, Piaget viewed children's cognitive development more as a spontaneous process, one not necessarily dependent upon adult interaction contrary to Bronfenbrenner's research outcomes. Bjorklund also challenged Piaget's view that cognitive growth proceeds through a universal and invariant sequence of stages (Martin, 2003) & Piaget (1962). Another shortfall of Piaget's theory involves the exclusion of societal-cultural influences. For example, in societies where females are considered subordinate and refused the same rights as their male peers, cognitive development is stifled and stagnated. The opposite is true in societies where equality of the

genders in all aspects of life is the societal-cultural norm. In addition, Piaget's theory data, collected based on observations of his own four children, would be considered by conventional scientific criteria, to be invalid due to the limited sample size (Martin 2003).

ZPD and scaffolding



Lev Vygotsky brought a fresh perspective to child study. He has influenced the way in which education has been transformed and he has developed ways in which children can interact in their environment. Vygotsky's work showed that social and cognitive development work together and also strengthens each other. The world children inhabit is shaped by their own families, communities, socioeconomic status education and culture.

Hence, one of the useful concepts highlighted in Vygotsky's theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky's emphasized that the distance between the most difficult task a child can do alone and the most difficult task a child can do with the help of an adult or his/her peers. Vygotsky referred to the assistance a teacher or peer offers as **scaffolding**. An example of this is like a painter whose job is to skillfully paint a house that would have to use a scaffold to reach the hard to reach areas. In the same way adults and peers can help a child to learn a new concept or skill by offering supportive information. Vygotsky emphasized that that in order to scaffold well teacher needs to be observant to determine where the child's learning is going and in the meantime bearing in mind the child's individual needs and the social content that surrounds him/her. Additionally, Vygotsky believed that the gathering of information through observation is useful as teachers can support the child's knowledge of the world to help make sense of their learning experiences Sluss(2005).

There are some weaknesses associated with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which include the neglect of the biological aspect of development; details omitted by the theorist Bronfenbrenner as well though he acknowledged biological factors played an integrated role in development along with cultural-societal influences. Vygotsky also placed less emphasis on children's ability to influence the form of their own development (Berk, 2005). On a more positive note, Vygotsky's believed that children internalize the discourses they have with adults and expert peers regarding culturally meaningful activities. Furthermore, Vygotsky posited that children transform these interactions into internal self-talk, an idea that has been highly significant in supporting the implementation of

mentoring and peer tutoring support programs which have been very successful in Canada and the United States (Berk, 2005). Vygotsky also agreed with Piaget's view that children are active, constructive beings (Berk, 2005). Where Vygotsky and Piaget differ was in their views of children's dependence upon adult assistance. Piaget believed children to be independent explorers of their environment; whereas Vygotsky is of the view that children required adult assistance and intervention (Berk, 2005).

Moreover, Vygotsky's research finding shows that social interaction surrounding tasks that lead to essential competencies for success in cultures supports the importance of creating community supports to improve competency development outcomes, particularly for vulnerable children, adolescents, and adults. Martin (2003).

Hence, Piaget and Vygotsky both emphasized the importance of social interactions for increasing the outcomes of cognitive development. Piaget posited interaction between peers creates what he termed, *disequilibrium cognitive conflict*, which he believed motivates change. Therefore, overall, Piaget viewed children as scientists whereas Vygotsky viewed children as apprentices. However, Vygotsky's research findings that social interaction surrounding tasks that lead to essential competencies for success in cultures supports the importance of creating community supports to improve competency development outcomes, particularly for vulnerable children, adolescents, and adults Martin (2003).

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

Stage	Crisis	Description
Infancy (0 - 1 year)	Trust vs. Mistrust	Children who are treated with consistent love and care and have their needs met by their parent they should develop the capacity for trust.
Early Childhood (2 - 3 years)	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Children should be encouraged to exercise free will and try out new skills. Discouragement (or lack of encouragement) may lead to sustained self-doubt.
Play Age (4 - 6 years)	Initiative vs. Guilt	Children should be encouraged to be independent. If a child's independent initiatives and play activities are overly controlled, they may develop sustained guilt.
School Age (7 - 12 years)	Industry vs. Inferiority	A sense of industry is a desire to be creative and productive. A school child should be encouraged in their creative and productive endeavours. If belittled for incompetence, a sense of inferiority may set in.
Adolescence (13 - 18 years)	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Young people seek a sense of self and their place in the world. If they feel they lack a sense of belonging to any identity group, they may develop uncertainty about their identity that lasts into adulthood.
Young Adulthood (Early 20s)	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Young adults commit their efforts to developing intimate relationships with significant others. If they are unsuccessful, they will develop a sense of isolation.
Adulthood (Late 20s - Late 50s)	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Generative adults contribute to society and the raising of future generations through parenting. Self-absorbed adults stagnate and fail to contribute to the flourishing of their societies.
Old Age (60s onward)	Ego Identity vs. Despair	As people enter their twilight years, they reflect on their contributions to society. Those dissatisfied with their lives will develop a sense of despair as they face the looming end of their lives.

The detailed diagram above Erikson's work is of significance to early childhood because it shows how children develop the boundaries for emotional and social development and mental health. In Erikson's theory, one stage affects the next stage. His idea was that there is a task that must be completed at each stage of development. Successful resolution in each stage affects the next stage.

As people progress through each stage, they form personality strengths or weaknesses based on their development during the stage. Erikson skillfully coined

the term identity crisis which he considered to be inevitable that young people experience conflict as they grow, change and develop.

Erikson strongly felt that the early childhood years were critical in children 's development of trust, autonomy and initiative.

The strengths of Erikson's theory include his recognition that human development occurs over a lifetime, that development must be understood about cultural-societal factors, and that development is founded upon the competencies and skills valued within a person's culture and society (Berk, 2008). This harmonizes with Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Another strength of Erikson's theory is its emphasis on each "individual's unique life history as worthy of study and understanding" (Berk, 2008). Children with special needs require adults and "expert" peers, who are compassionate with highly developed socially inclusive behaviors and knowledge of when and how to provide accommodations, modifications and interventions. This will reduce actual risks as well as enhance protective relationships in inclusive environments at home, school, and in the community to strengthen their resilience and developmental capacities (Berk, 2008). I know this to be true through personal experience gained over twenty (20) years of raising a son diagnosed with mild dyslexia and advocating for educational and social inclusion with continuous improvement in his development. Consequently, the outcome of one stage is not permanent but can be modified by later experiences.

A flaw of Erikson's theory centers around the fact that his ideas were not obtained via any large-scale survey rather they were based on his observations, and his clinical practice and therefore may be somewhat skewed by socio-economic

factors. Evidence and support of quantitative experimental findings are needed to understand more deeply the onset of each stage Erikson describes. In contrast, Bronfenbrenner's theory strength is its dynamic nature. I also believe its strength is it takes into account the great influences on development that culture and societal factors exert on individuals, as does Erikson's theory Berk (2008).

The Early Years Practitioners are therefore task with the responsible for laying the foundation such as establishing relationships with children and their parent(s), spending quality time planning and preparing the learning environment and the curriculum thus supporting and extending children's play, learning, developing and accessing children's achievement plus planning the next steps towards progress. Bruce (2006).

Practical Strategies for Educators in Early Childhood Education Development:

Considering child development is 'crucial' for early years educators working with young children. Having a knowledge of child development and the theories can benefit young children in the teaching and learning process: The following practices outlined by Bruce (2006) & Goswani (2011) should be considered when thinking about child development in schools:

1. Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)
2. Meeting Children where they are at in their learning
3. Brain Development and Learning
4. Adversity and Stress

Educators in the early years should engage in ongoing professional development to stay informed about the latest research and best practices in the area of child development. They should also consider the following:

1. **Collaboration:** Foster collaboration with parents, colleagues, and specialists to gain diverse perspectives and insights into the child's development.
2. **Differentiated Instruction:** This is the ability to tailor teaching methods to accommodate diverse classroom learning styles and language developmental levels.
3. **Flexibility:** The educator should adapt lesson plans and activities based on the developmental stage of Language, Mathematical, Science and Social Studies skills to ensure relevance and engagement.
4. **Play-Based Learning:** The educator should incorporate play in all content areas as numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of play-based learning in child's development and academic performance.

Joinson (2019) & Britto (2016)

Reflection

Doing this course was indeed an eye-opener and learning curve for me. As an educator for many years in the Primary School setting in Montserrat I am always eager to learn more about the development patterns of young children although they are unique and have individual differences. By thoroughly researching academic journals and reports which covered historical and contemporary information I was focused on finding out about the importance of sensory, physical, social and emotional development from conception to early childhood. I was able to review

many literature with an emphasis on child development theories, domains and stages of development and learning taking into account young children. It was also highlighted that the importance of play is vital for a young child and his/her development. Although that the area of Child Development is a not-so-old area of study since the beginning the 20th century I was fascinated to discover that much interest was shown in this interesting field of Child Development as some theories from the field of Psychology were used, and concepts, strategies, and approaches have been explored.

I have learned that psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioral, maturation, environmental, and constructivist theorists have brilliantly paved the way for scholars and other researchers in the field to examine and come up with new, innovative ways to understand the development of a young child. As an experienced educator who has interacted with many young children in the education system, I have realized that childhood development is determined by both biological factors and sociocultural experiences. Furthermore, there is a developmental window (rapid brain development) during early childhood as the genes and environment interplay with each other.

Hence, child development is not just about the children who are developing properly (typical development) but also intervening and identifying children who are not developing as expected (delayed development or atypical development). Hence finding intervention strategies to provide for their needs is essential as child development do matter. It can be strongly argued that developmental milestones do not capture the likely variability between individual children in their developmental course Berk (2008). So, we cannot assume that all children will show the rate/pattern

of development. She also adds that there are wide variations in rates of development between children and it does not allow for variety in different cultures. Therefore children with disabilities are defined by their failure to reach milestones on time, rather than their strengths.

Therefore, a solid understanding of child development should be used to inform educators' practices, ensuring that teaching and learning experiences are **'developmentally appropriate,'** responsive, and conducive to lifelong success bearing in mind the ideas of inclusiveness and diversity.

Early Development determines physical health, emotional wellbeing, educational attainment and economic participation for the rest of life and life course perspective is critical to understanding why individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds have higher rates of poor health Woolfolk (2009). To this end, a set of core developmental concepts have emerged from decades of rigorous research in neurobiology developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation, and it is therefore important in considering their implications for a range of issues in policy and practice.

Another area that I had a glimpse of when reviewing the literature is Developmental Assessment such as the Denver Developmental Screening Test, Griffith's Developmental test and Baley Scales of Infant Development. Echoing loudly from the academic literature Joinson (2019) & Sluss (2005) emphasized that early diagnosis and referral are most effective in altering a child's development trajectory and improving outcomes. Early intervention can and does make a difference in enhancing the health and quality of young children's life. Not only can early intervention improve practical outcomes, but it may also improve the psychological

and emotional well-being of both the child and the family. As a student doing my Master's Degree I am anxious to delve into more information via recent research and watching YouTube videos about this area of Child Development assessment as it will allow me to be more effective as I study Child Development as an educator who is also in a managerial position at my school on Montserrat. With this knowledge, I will be in an appropriate position to screen children, conduct training and workshops for the teachers and teacher assistants at schools on island. As the Vice Principal, I can also conduct parenting workshops for the Teachers Parent Association (PTA).

Conclusion

In conclusion, since Early childhood is the most important phase for overall development throughout the lifespan and the brain develops rapidly between 0-8 years old it can strongly be argued that having a clear knowledge of child development is an essential foundation for effective teaching/learning as young children grow, learn and develop intellectually and healthily.

Therefore, by integrating this knowledge into educational practices with a mixture of child development theories, educators can contribute vastly to the holistic growth of their pupils. Hence, it is important to create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates individual developmental milestones and ensure that every child receives the support needed to thrive physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically and even morally. I am reminding all educators to let us firmly embrace our role as facilitators of growth, fostering the love for learning and development that lasts for a lifetime as child development and psychology matters.

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