

# **Theoretic foundations of mental development**

**Cognitive development theory ( Piaget's •  
theory ,1896-1980)**

Cognitive development: refer to the manner in which people learn to think , reason , and use language . It involve a person's intelligence , perceptual ability , and ability to process information .It represent the progression of the mental abilities from illogical to logical thinking , from simple to complex problem solving

Cognitive developmental process is divided •  
into five major phase :

1-sensorimotor phase •

2-preconceptual phase •

3-intuitive thought phase •

4-concrete operations phase •

5-formal operations phase •

In each phase the person uses three primary abilities : •

1-Assimilation is the process through which human •  
encounter and react to new situations by using the  
mechanisms they already possess

2-Accommodation is a process of change whereby •  
cognitive processes mature sufficiently to allow the  
person to solve problems that were unsolvable before .

3-Adaptation or coping behavior , is the ability to •  
handle the demand made by the environment .

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**Piaget 's phases of cognitive development •**

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Phases and stages	Age	Significant Behavior
<p>Sensorimotor</p> <p>Stage 1 use of reflexes</p> <p>Stage 2 primary circular reaction</p> <p>Stage 3 secondary circular reaction</p> <p>Stage 4 coordination of secondary schemata</p> <p>Stage 5 tertiary circular reaction</p> <p>Stage 6 inventions of new means</p>	<p>Birth to 2 year</p> <p>Birth to 1 month</p> <p>1-4 month</p> <p>4-8 month</p> <p>8 to 12 month</p> <p>12to18month</p> <p>18 to 24 month</p>	<p>Most action is reflexive</p> <p>Perception of events is centered on the body .</p> <p>Acknowledges the external environment</p> <p>Can distinguish a goal from a means of attaining it</p> <p>Tries and discovers new goals and ways to attain goals.</p> <p>Interprets the environment by mental image</p>
Preconceptual	2 to 4 years	Use the egocentric approach to accommodate the demands of an environment
Intuitive thought	4 to 7 years	Egocentric thinking diminishes
Concrete operations	7 to 11 years	Solve concrete problem
Formal operations	11 to 15	Use rational thinking

# Moral development theory (Kohlberg's Theory 1927-1987 )

Moral development , a complex process not fully understood ,involve learning what ought to be and what ought not to be .Moral mean relating to right and wrong . Morality refers to the requirements necessary for people to live together in the society , moral behavior is the way a person perceive those requirement and respond to them , moral development is the pattern of changes in moral behavior with age .Kohlberg focused on the reason an individual makes a decision .



## **Kohlberg's levels and stages of Moral Development •**

Level	Stage	Average Age
1-preconventional	1-punishment and obedient orientation	Toddler to 7 years
	2-instrumental relativist orientation	Preschool through school age
2-conventional	3-interpersonal concordance orientation	School age through adulthood
	4-law- and- order orientation	Adolescence and adulthood
3-Postconventional	5-social contract legalistic orientation	Middle-age or older adult
	6-universal ethical principle orientation	Middle-age or older adult

**Separation-Individuation Theory of child •  
development(Mahler's theory, 1897-1985)**

. In her theory Mahler speculates that after the first •  
few weeks of infancy, in which the infant is either  
sleeping or barely conscious, the infant progresses first  
from a phase (Normal-Symbiotic Phase) in which it  
perceives itself as one with its mother within the larger  
environment, to an extended phase (Separation-  
Individuation Phase) consisting of several stages or  
sub-phases in which the infant slowly comes to  
distinguish itself from its mother, and then, by degrees,  
discovers its own identity, will, and individuality.

1-Normal Symbiotic Phase. According to • Mahler, this phase extends from the first signs of conscious awareness at four to six weeks until about five months of age. In this Phase the infant is now aware of its mother, but has no sense of individuality of its own. The infant and mother are as one, and there is a barrier between them and the rest of the world.

2-Separation-Individuation Phase. In this phase •  
the infant breaks out of its “autistic shell” and  
begins to connect with its environment and with  
the people in it. Separation refers to the  
development of limits and to the differentiation  
in the infant’s mind between the infant and the  
mother, whereas individuation refers to the  
development of the infant's ego, sense of  
identity, and cognitive abilities. This phase is  
divided into three sub-phases, which occur in the  
following order, but which often overlap in time:

**1) Hatching.** [5 to 9 months]. The infant • becomes aware of the differentiation between itself and its mother. It becomes increasingly aware of its surroundings and interested in them, using its mother as a point of reference or orientation.

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**2) Practicing.** [9 to 16 months]. The infant • can now get about on its own, first crawling and then walking freely. The infant begins to explore actively and becomes more independent of its mother. The infant still experiences itself as one with its mother.



**3) Rapprochement.** [15 months and • beyond]. The young child once again becomes close to his mother, but begins to differentiate himself from his mother. The child realizes that his physical mobility demonstrates psychic separateness from his mother. The toddler may become tentative at this point, wanting his mother to be in sight so that, through eye contact and action, he can explore his world

Mahler further divided Rapprochement into three •  
sub-stages:

**A) Beginning.** The young child is motivated by a desire to share discoveries with his mother.

**B) Crisis.** The child is torn between staying connected with his mother and venturing out from his mother and becoming more independent and adventurous.

**C) Solution.** The child resolves the above Crisis • according to the dictates of his own newly forming individuality, to his new use of language, and to his interaction with the temperament of his mother.

Mahler believed that disruptions in the fundamental process of separation-individuation could result later in life in a disturbance in the ability to maintain a reliable sense of individual identity.

