Chapter 4
Developmental and Learning Theories
Theories of Development and Learning

- How do children develop?
- What do children learn, and in what order?
- What do people need to be ready to learn?
- What affects learning?
- Do all people develop in the same ways?
- What are the similarities and differences in growth and development?
Perspectives on Development

- Theories provide broad and consistent views of the complexity of human development.
- Hypotheses allow us to make educated guesses about children’s behavior and development.
Nature of Development

- Physical Motor Development
- Intellectual Development
- Affective Development
Major Issues in Development

- Is children’s development due more to maturation or experience?
- Is growth smooth and continuous, or is it more stage-like?
- What can theory and research do for early childhood educators?
Psychoanalytic Theory

- Freud’s Theory of Psychosocial Development
  - Unconscious motives
  - Early years influence later years
  - Libido
- Stages
  - Oral
  - Anal
  - Phallic
  - Latency
  - Genital
Erik Erikson

- Trust versus mistrust
- Autonomy versus shame and doubt
- Initiative versus guilt
- Industry versus inferiority
- Identity versus role confusion
- Intimacy versus isolation
- Generativity versus stagnation
- Ego integrity versus despair
Behaviorist

• Five theorists: Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike, Skinner, and Bandura
• Stimuli-responses—reinforcement
• Observable/verifiable
• Learned behavior—modeling
• Conditioning—learning process
Theory of Behaviorism and Learning

- Classical Conditioning
  - Reflexes simultaneously paired with responses
- Generalization
- Discrimination
Operant Conditioning

- Particular responses learned because of rewards
- Reinforcement
  - Stimulus $\rightarrow$ response $\rightarrow$ reinforcement
  - Positive or negative
- Punishments
Operant Conditioning (cont.)

- Shaping
- Behavior modification
- Voluntary
- Learn through reinforcement
- Modeling
Cognitive Theories of Piaget

- Schemas
  - Mental concepts
- Assimilation
  - Making information fit
- Accommodation
  - Changing information to fit
- Equilibrium
  - Mental balance of information
Cognitive Theories of Piaget

Stages

- Sensorimotor, zero to one-and-a-half to two years
- Preoperational, 2 to 6 or 7 years
- Concrete operations, 6 to 12 years
- Formal operations, 12 years to adulthood
Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development

- Dependent on both maturational and environmental factors
- Thinking and learning are a process of interaction of the child and the environment
- Children construct knowledge based on innate cognitive structure and experiences
Piaget’s Stages in Early Childhood

- Sensorimotor: birth to 18 months to two years
  - Use of inherent reflexes at birth
  - Object permanence learned by experience by age of one
  - Movement from accidental to intentional
  - Coordinates perceptual motor functions
  - Learns simple relationships of means to ends
  - Beginning symbolic behavior
Piaget’s Stages in Early Childhood (cont.)

- Preoperational: two to six or seven
  - Gradual acquisition of language
  - Symbolic play
  - Egocentric
  - Physical attributes of an object only
  - Ability to conserve is developing slowly
    - Quantity and size relationships
  - Inability to understand the whole and relationship to its parts
Piaget’s Stages in Primary Years

- Concrete operational
  - Begins to conserve
  - Can understand several attributes of an object
  - Understands rules
  - Can understand other points of view but is reality based
  - Mental representations of objects
Sociocultural Theory

- Zone of proximal development
  - Asking the right questions
  - Planning for experiences
- Scaffolding
  - Social collaboration interaction
  - Fantasy play
- Piaget and Vygotsky
  - Constructivist
Ecological Theory

- Based on the idea that the environment greatly influences a child’s development

- The four systems of Bronfenbrenner’s model
  - Exosystem (community)
  - Macrosystem (social conditions)
  - Microsystem (individual family or program)
  - Chronosystem (when the child lives)
Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences

- Human competence is a set of abilities and talents
  - Musical intelligence
  - Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence
  - Logical-Mathematical intelligence
  - Linguistic intelligence
  - Spatial intelligence
  - Interpersonal intelligence
  - Intrapersonal intelligence
  - Naturalistic intelligence
Maturation Theory

- Developed by Arnold Gesell
- Establishes norms for areas of growth and associated behaviors
- Provides guidelines for how children mature
- Used to develop Word Pictures
Maslow’s Humanistic Theory

- Motivation of people is hierarchy of basic and growth needs
  - Physiological
  - Safety and security
  - Love and belonging
  - Self-esteem and respect
  - Meaningfulness and self-sufficiency
- Basic needs of a child must be met before a teacher can address learning

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Key Developmental topics for Early Childhood Education

- Identity
  - Definition
Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity

Many children of one cultural group are being taught or cared for by members of another cultural group.

Four problems:
- Different languages
- Expectations based on culture
- Different behavior styles
- Insufficient recognition or respect for diverse cultural groups in standardized testing and assessments

General labels encompass critically different cultures (e.g., “Hispanic”)

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Gender Differences

- Gender is the concept of being male or female
- Sex is the physical male/female determination
- Gender identity around two to three years
- Sex-typed behaviors
- Research indicates no significant difference in intelligence between girls and boys
- Socialization accounts for most sex-typed behaviors
- Males grow larger, are less likely to develop physical or mental disorders, and show less self-regulation than females

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Attachment

- Bowlby and Ainsworth
  - Infants send signals to caregivers
  - Synchrony, or “dance”
  - Stimulation
  - Positive attitude
  - Emotional support
- Patterns of attachment
  - Secure attached
  - Anxious/ambivalent
  - Anxious/avoidant
Play

- Common factors that emerge from the definitions of play. Play is:
  - Relatively free of rules
  - Controlled and dominated by children
  - Carried out as if it were real life
  - Focused on the activity rather than the product
  - Dependent on the interaction and involvement of the children

- Play promotes learning for the whole child
- All play activity holds the potential for growth and learning
- Play is the cornerstone of children’s learning
- Through play, children learn about themselves, others, and the world around them, and how to solve problems
Types of Play

- Categories of play
  - Unoccupied
  - Solitary
  - Onlooker
  - Parallel
  - Associative
  - Cooperative

- Types of play
  - Dramatic
  - Superhero
  - Sociodramatic
Brain Function

- The brain almost triples in weight during the first year of birth
- Parts of the brain develop at different rates
- The brain stem and midbrain or subcortex are the most highly developed parts
- The cerebral cortex or outer layer of the brain is responsible for thinking and problem solving
Brain Growth

- As the infant grows, myelination occurs

Myelination: the nerve cells, or neurons, which transmit messages from the cerebral cortex to the rest of the body, become encased in myelin, a fatty insulation substance that helps messages travel faster and more efficiently
How Factors Effect Growth and Development

- Study of how children change over time
  - How, when, what, why

- Development is:
  - Universal
  - Regular
  - Orderly
  - Cumulative
Developmental Research
Conclusions- Applying theory to practice

- All have basic needs
- Development occurs in stages
- See world from own point of view
- Play is important to development
- Context affects development
- Many theories, and no one is “right”
Identifying Conditions for Learning

- Learning must be real
- Learning must be rewarding
- Learning must build on children’s lives
- Learning needs a good stage.