

# 2022 School Safety Conference

“Understanding Developmental Engagement ”

Tony Cruz, Psy.D.

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Tiyan High School

Guam

# Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Jean Piaget Stages of Cognitive Development
3. Engagement Styles
4. How to become more assertive
5. Conflict Resolution
6. Anger

# Jean Piaget' Stages of Cognitive Development

- ▶ Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children move through four different stages of learning. His theory focuses not only on understanding how children acquire knowledge, but also on understanding the nature of intelligence.
- ▶ Piaget believed that children take an active role in the learning process, acting much like little scientists as they perform experiments, make observations, and learn about the world. As kids interact with the world around them, they continually add new knowledge, build upon existing knowledge, and adapt previously held ideas to accommodate new information.

## Piaget's Four Stages

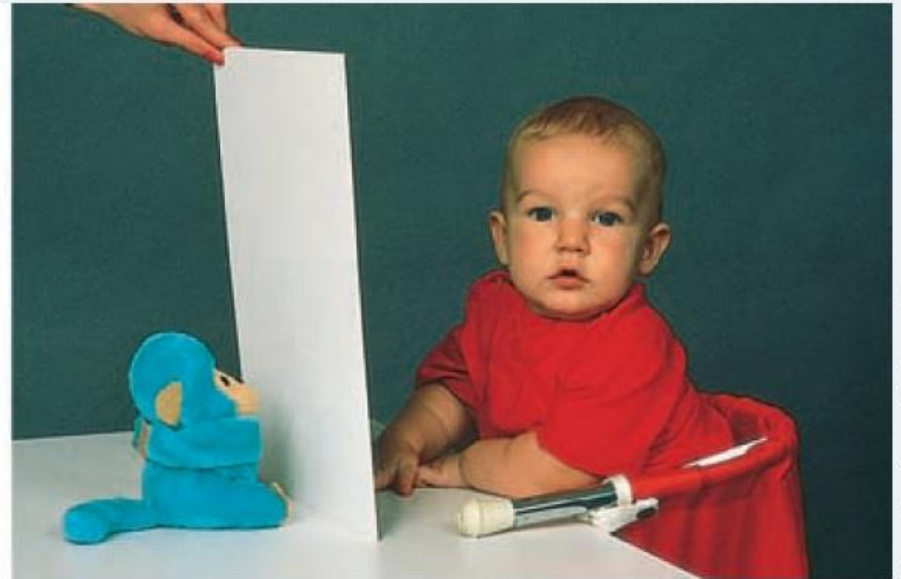
Stage	Age	Goal
Sensorimotor	Birth to 18-24 months	Object permanence
Preoperational	2 to 7 years old	Symbolic thought
Concrete operational	Ages 7 to 11 years	Logical thought
Formal operational	Adolescence to adulthood	Scientific reasoning

# Sensorimotor Stage of Cognitive Development

- ▶ The sensorimotor stage is the first of the four stages in Piaget's theory of cognitive development.
- ▶ It extends from birth to approximately 2 years, and is a period of rapid cognitive growth.
- ▶ During this period, infants develop an understanding of the world through coordinating sensory experiences (seeing, hearing) with motor actions (reaching, touching).
- ▶ From birth to about 6 months, infants can not make representations
- ▶ The main development during the sensorimotor stage is the understanding that objects exist and events occur in the world independently of one's own actions ('the object concept', or 'object permanence').

# Figure

## Object Permanence, or Not? Out of Sight, Out of Mind?



Doug Goodman/Science Source

# Sensorimotor Stage of Development

**Reflex Acts (first month of life).**  
Infant responds to external stimulation

For example, if you brush a baby's mouth or cheek with your finger it will suck reflexively.

**Primary Circular Reactions:** The baby will repeat pleasurable actions centred on its own body.

For example, babies from 1 - 4 months old will wiggle their fingers, kick their legs and suck their thumbs. These are not reflex actions. They are done intentionally - for the sake of the pleasurable stimulation produced.

**Secondary Circular Reactions:** It typically lasts from about 4 - 8 months. Now babies repeat pleasurable actions that involve objects as well as actions involving their own bodies.

An example of this is the infant who shakes the rattle for the pleasure of hearing the sound that it produces.

# Sensorimotor Stage of Development

**Co-ordinating Secondary Schemes:** The fourth substage (from 8 - 12 months). Instead of simply prolonging interesting events, babies now show signs of an ability to use their acquired knowledge to reach a goal.

For example the infant will not just shake the rattle, but will reach out and knock to one side an object that stands in the way of it getting hold of the rattle.

**Tertiary Circular Reactions:** These differ from secondary circular reactions in that they are intentional adaptations to specific situations. The infant who once explored an object by taking it apart now tries to put it back together.

For example, it stacks the bricks it took out of its wooden truck back again or it puts back the nesting cups - one inside the other.

**Symbolic Thought:** This is transitional to the pre operational stage of cognitive development. Babies can now form mental representations of objects.

This means that they have developed the ability to visualise things that are not physically present. This is crucial to the acquisition of object permanence - the most fundamental achievement of the whole sensorimotor stage of development.



# The Preoperational Stage

## Ages: 2 - 7 Years

- ▶ Begin to think symbolically and learn to use words and pictures to represent objects.
- ▶ A child's thinking is dominated by how the world looks, not how the world is. It is not yet capable of logical (problem solving) type of thought.
- ▶ The child's development consists of building experiences about the world through adaptation and working towards the (concrete) stage when it can use logical thought. During the end of this stage children can mentally represent events and objects (the semiotic function), and engage in symbolic play.
- ▶ Infants at this stage also demonstrate animism. This is the tendency for the child to think that non-living objects (such as toys) have life and feelings like a person's.

# The Preoperational Stage

- ▶ **Egocentrism** refers to the child's inability to see a situation from another person's point of view. The egocentric child assumes that other people see, hear, and feel exactly the same as the child does. Children's thoughts and communications are typically egocentric (i.e. about themselves).
- ▶ **Play:** At the beginning of this stage you often find children engaging in parallel play. That is to say they often play in the same room as other children but they play next to others rather than with them.
- ▶ **Symbolic Representation:** The early preoperational period (ages 2-3). This is the ability to make one thing - a word or an object - stand for something other than itself.
- ▶ **Pretend (or symbolic) Play:** Toddlers often pretend to be people they are not (e.g. superheroes, policeman), and may play these roles with props that symbolize real life objects. Children may also invent an imaginary playmate.
- ▶ **Animism:** This is the belief that inanimate objects (such as toys and teddy bears) have human feelings and intentions. By animism Piaget (1929) meant that for the pre-operational child the world of nature is alive, conscious and has a purpose.

**Table 9.1****Examples of Preoperational Thought**

Type of Thought	Sample Questions	Typical Answers
<b>Egocentrism</b>	Why does it get dark out? Why does the sun shine? Why is there snow?	So I can go to sleep. To keep me warm. For me to play in.
<b>Animism</b>	Why do trees have leaves? Why do stars twinkle?	To keep them warm. Because they're happy and cheerful.
<b>Artificialism</b>	What makes it rain? Why is the sky blue? What is the wind?	Someone emptying a watering can. Somebody painted it. A man blowing.

# The Concrete Operational Stage

- ▶ Ages: 7 - 11 Years
- ▶ During this stage, children begin to thinking logically about concrete events. The child is now mature enough to use logical thought or operations (i.e. rules) but can only apply logic to physical objects (hence concrete operational).
- ▶ Children begin to understand the concept of conservation; understanding that, although things may change in appearance, certain properties remain the same.
- ▶ During this stage, children also become less egocentric and begin to think about how other people might think and feel.

## Tests of Various Types of Conservation

Type of  
Conservation

Initial  
Presentation

Transformation

Volume

Two equal glasses of  
liquid.



Pour one into a taller,  
narrower glass.



Number

Two equal lines of  
checkers.



Increase spacing of  
checkers in one line.



Matter

Two equal balls of clay.



Squeeze one ball into  
a long, thin shape.



Length

Two sticks of equal  
length.



Move one stick.



## Figure 9.5

### Conservation: Is it the Same or Is It Different?



A.



B.



C.

# The Formal Operational Stage

- ▶ Ages: 12 and Over
- ▶ Adolescents gain the ability to think in an abstract manner by manipulating ideas in their head, without any dependence on concrete manipulation.
- ▶ He/she can do mathematical calculations, think creatively, use abstract reasoning, and imagine the outcome of particular actions.
- ▶ Hypothetico Deductive Reasoning: the ability to think scientifically through generating predictions, or hypotheses, about the world to answer questions.
- ▶ Abstract Thought: Concrete operations are carried out on things whereas formal operations are carried out on ideas. The individual can think about hypothetical and abstract concepts they have yet to experience. Abstract thought is important for planning regarding the future.
- ▶ They can follow the form of an argument without having to think in terms of specific examples.



# Communication

- ▶ Communication styles are learned and reinforced in childhood
- ▶ Shaped by culture, the environment, and situation
- ▶ Being able to clearly communicate is a value in both interpersonal and business relationships



# Assertive Engagement

- Taking responsibility for direct, honest communication
  - Appropriate expression of feelings
- Making choices and decisions that respect your needs and rights of others

# Assertiveness

- ▶ Assertive engagement is a way to develop self-worth and self respect.
- ▶ Assertiveness training relates to communication and social skills training.
- ▶ In order to be clear about what assertive communication is, it is important to look at the alternative communication styles.

# Passive Engagement

- ▶ Passive (Submissive) - Yielding to someone else's preferences while discounting your needs and rights.
- ▶ Not expressing your feelings or let others know what you need.
- ▶ This behavior also involves feeling guilty- or as if you are imposing - when you do attempt to ask for what you want.
- ▶ Some people are submissive because they are overly invested in being “nice” or pleasing others.

# This sounds like...

- ▶ Long, rambling sentences
- ▶ Beating around the bush
- ▶ Frequent throat clearing
- ▶ Filler words such as “maybe”, “um”, “sorta”
- ▶ Sing-song or whiny tone
- ▶ Apologies
- ▶ Tone often drops away

# Aggressive Engagement

- ▶ Engaging in a demanding, abrasive, or hostile way with others
- ▶ Are insensitive to others' rights and feelings
- ▶ Obtain what they want through coercion or intimidation
- ▶ This engagement style puts others on the defensive and causes others to withdraw or fight back instead of cooperate

# This sounds like...

- ▶ Sarcastic or condescending tone
- ▶ Abrupt, clipped tone
- ▶ Sexist/racist remarks
- ▶ Put downs (i.e. “you’re crazy”; “don’t be so stupid”)
- ▶ Opinions expressed as facts
- ▶ Threatening questions (“aren’t you done yet?” “why on earth did you do it that way?”)

# Passive-Aggressive Communication

- ▶ Feelings are expressed covertly rather than openly.
- ▶ People who use this communication style usually feel powerless, “stuck”, and resentful.
- ▶ Often appear friendly on the surface, but sabotage others behind their backs.
- ▶ People with this communication style seldom get what they want because they are not clear about their needs.

# This sounds/looks like...

- ▶ Sarcasm with a hint of victimization (“don’t worry about me - I’ll figure it out like I always do)
- ▶ Deliberately procrastinate or perform poorly at work
- ▶ One word answers
- ▶ Silent treatment
- ▶ Talking “under the breath”



# More about Assertiveness

- ▶ Assertiveness is imperative for healthy relationships.
- ▶ Reduces stress
- ▶ Earn respect from others
- ▶ Improve decision-making skills
- ▶ Increases your self-confidence

# How to become more assertive

- ▶ Assess your style
- ▶ Begin using “I” statements
- ▶ Practice saying “no”
- ▶ Rehearse what you want to say ahead of time
- ▶ Use body language
- ▶ Keep your emotions in check
- ▶ Start small

# Assertiveness Guidelines

- ▶ Be DIRECT - get to the point as quickly as possible
- ▶ Be BRIEF - less is more
- ▶ Provide REASONS
- ▶ ASK questions
- ▶ Make good EYE CONTACT - culturally appropriate and always with a friendly gaze
- ▶ Keep good POSTURE - no slouching

# Conflict Resolution

- ▶ Conflict is a normal (and healthy) part of relationships - people cannot be expected to always agree
- ▶ Utilizing conflict resolution skills requires maturity, empathy, and self-control
- ▶ Fear and avoidance of conflict is unhealthy and can lead to health issues
- ▶ Conflict resolution skills are skills we all need to constantly work on

# Conflict Resolution Skills

1. Make the relationship your priority - rather than trying to “win” the argument, maintaining and strengthening the relationship is key.
2. Focus on the present - focus on what can be done in the here and now rather than past hurts/blame
3. Pick your battles - decide whether the issue is really worth your time and energy
4. Be willing to forgive - let go of the urge to punish
5. Know when to let something go - if you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree.

# Anger

- ▶ Anger is a completely normal emotion
- ▶ Anger is accompanied by physiological and biological changes (increased heart rate, BP, etc.)
- ▶ Instinctive, natural way of expressing anger is to respond aggressively
- ▶ The aim is to convert your anger into more constructive behavior
- ▶ Anger turned inward can cause hypertension, high blood pressure, or depression

# Closing Thoughts

- ▶ Being assertive is healthy for your self esteem and relationships
- ▶ Conflict resolutions skills are important for emotional maturity
- ▶ Managing anger is important for mental and physical health