

Psychology in Health and Social Care

Assessment 1: Individual Presentation

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Acknowledgement of the use of AI

- I acknowledge the use of **Grammarly** (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) on **17th November 2025** to support checking my work using the prompt(s): *Please check the following text for readability, grammar and syntax.*
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Understanding Psychology in Health and Social Care

- Psychology helps us understand **how people think, feel, and behave** in different situations.
In health and social care, it explains why individuals may react differently to change, stress, or new environments.
- **Developmental psychology** focuses on how children grow and learn — emotionally, socially, and mentally — from birth onwards.
This knowledge helps carers support each child's unique needs and recognise when extra help may be needed.
- By understanding how a child's mind develops, care workers can create safe, caring spaces where children feel valued and ready to learn.
(McLeod, 2018; NHS Education for Scotland, 2023)

Early Childhood (Ages 3–5): Amira

- Amira is **three years old**. She becomes anxious when her parents leave, speaks very little, and finds it hard to play with other children.
- At this age, children are learning to **use language**, share toys, and express emotions.
According to the **NHS (2023)**, 3–5-year-olds develop quickly in speech, imagination, and independence.
- Amira's limited speech and anxiety show she might need **extra emotional reassurance** and support to develop communication and confidence in a group setting.
- *(Berk, 2021; NHS, 2023)*

Jean Piaget (1896–1980)

Jean Piaget was a Swiss psychologist known for his work on **cognitive development** — how children think, reason, and understand the world.

He believed that children are **active learners** who build knowledge through experience and interaction.

Piaget identified **four stages of development**: sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational.

At Amira's age, she is in the **pre-operational stage (ages 2–7)**, where children begin to use language, imagination, and symbols to represent things.

His theory helped teachers and practitioners understand that children learn best through **hands-on experience** and discovery (Piaget, 1952; Berk, 2021).



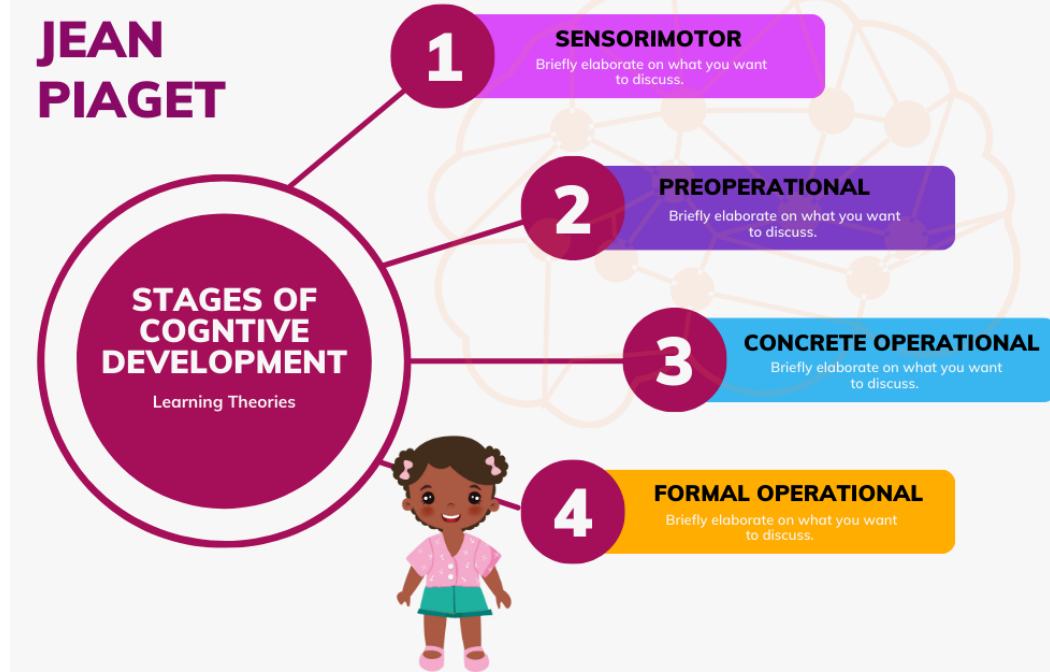
Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

Piaget showed that active exploration helps youngsters develop their mental skills. They do more than just receive information; they develop understanding via play, imitation, and curiosity. During the pre-operational period, children:

- Learn how to use language and visuals to represent items.
- They are extremely curious yet lack rational thinking skills.
- See the world primarily from their own perspective (egocentrism).
- Use your creativity and pretend play to make sense of life.

This means that children like Amira learn best when they are actively engaged in exploring their surroundings and have patient adults to guide them.
(Piaget 1952; Woolfolk 2020)

TEACHTHOUGHT



Applying Piaget's Theory to Amira

Amira doesn't say much and likes to play by herself, which suggests that she may still be working on her symbolic thinking. Symbolic thinking means being able to use words or pictures to communicate ideas. At this age, she probably finds it hard to share or play with other kids because she only sees things from her own point of view.

Piaget's ideas can help Amira's caretakers see that her behavior is not a "problem," but a normal part of her growing up. They can help her by encouraging her to use words, showing her how to behave in social situations, and giving her safe chances to try new things and make decisions.

Practical Strategies to Support Amira

To support Amira's growth, carers should:

- Use **play-based learning** — games, building blocks, and role play to help her learn new words and ideas.
- Encourage **imaginative play** where she can act out real-life situations safely.
- Ask simple, open questions to help her think and talk more.
- Use **pictures, stories, and songs** to build vocabulary and memory.
- Praise small steps and create a calm, predictable routine that reduces anxiety.

These strategies follow Piaget's belief that children learn best through **active experience and discovery** rather than direct instruction.

(Woolfolk, 2020; Papalia et al., 2021)

Nature and Nurture

Piaget's theory explains how we learn from both bodily development (nature) and experience (nurture).

Nature gives people the basic ability to think and reason, but what they do with these skills as they grow is up to them.

Amira's emotions and natural curiosity are part of who she is, but how she learns rests on how adults teach her and interact with her.

Her surroundings can help her feel safe, talk to more people, and think more clearly by giving her patient support and encouragement.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Strengths:

- Explains how children learn through experience and play.
- Encourages active learning rather than memorisation.
- Influenced modern childcare and education methods.

Limitations:

- Some children may develop faster than Piaget's stages suggest.
- Underestimates the role of culture and social interaction.

Conclusion:

Piaget's theory helps us see that Amira is a curious learner who needs time, encouragement, and playful experiences to grow.

With supportive adults, she can build language, confidence, and independence in her own natural way.

(Piaget, 1952; Berk, 2021; Woolfolk, 2020)

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