

Lifespan Development Presentation

Applying Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory to Isaac's Development

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Isaac's current Situation

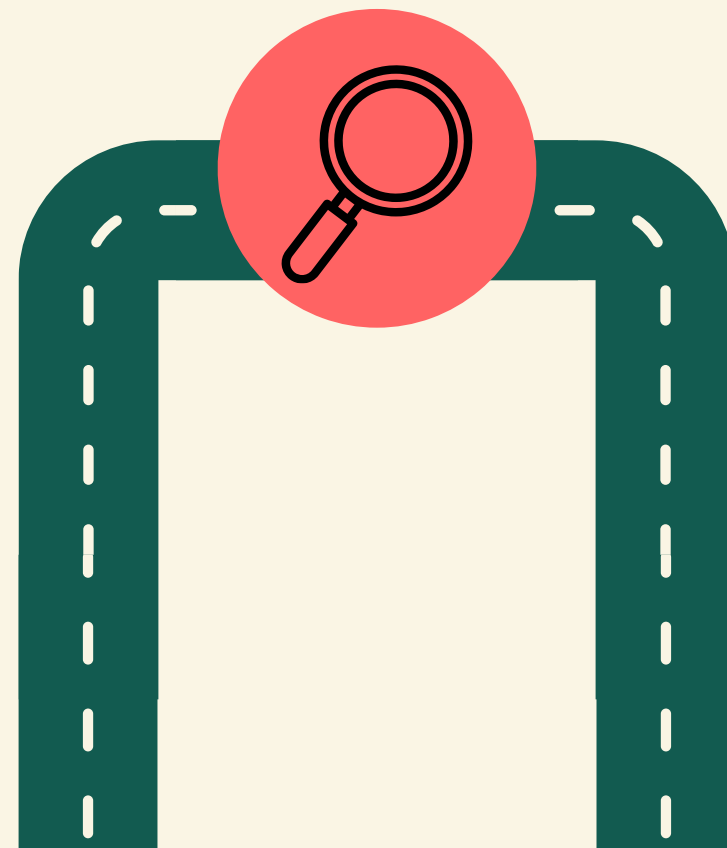
Technical Foundation Review

Isaac is a 4-year-old boy in a Children's Centre in London. Staff have noticed that he has some concerns in his emotional, social and communication development.



Key Observations

- Retreats and is quiet in free play.
- Distress when separated from his mother.
- Delayed language development.
- Trouble participating in group activities.
- Restricted independent play at home.
- Sleep difficulties and clingy behavior.



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Isaac's mother is a single parent, suffering from postnatal depression, with low social support. Also, the family recently moved to London and Isaac has had multiple changes to childcare.

> Mother's Experiences

Isaac's mother suffers from post natal depression and cannot access many supports.

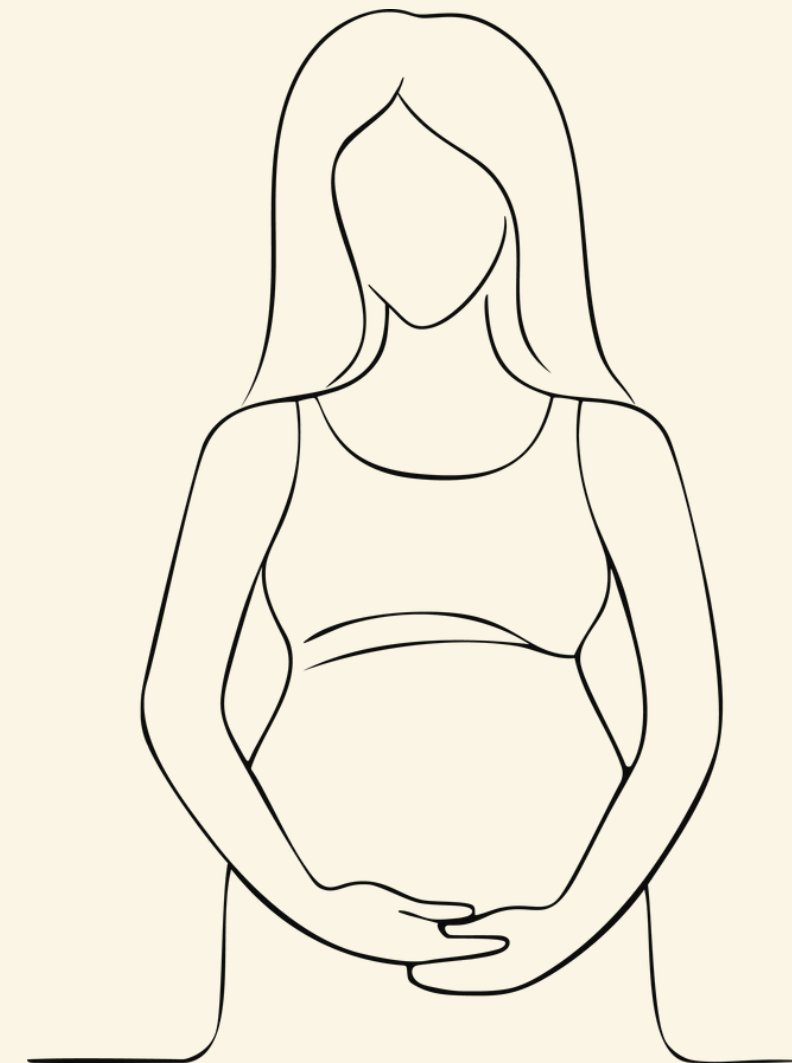
> Vygotsky Analysis

Vygotsky emphasized that adults are important to children's development as they offer guidance, communication, and learning opportunities (Lanjekar et al., 2025).

> Possible impacts

- Poor engagement with others.
- Reduced verbal communication at home.
- Few opportunities for co-operative play.
- Less exposure to peers outside family.

Impact of Maternal Mental Health and Limited Social Support



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Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

(Main Concepts)



Social Interaction

Learning is a process that happens in the process of communication and relationship with others (Malik et al., 2025).



Language Development

Children's thinking, learning, and comprehension of the world is mainly using language (Malik et al., 2025).



Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

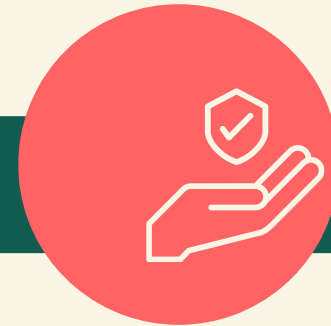
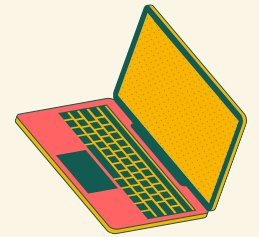
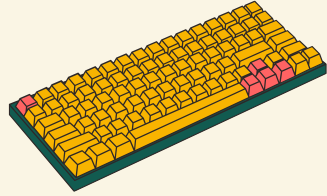
The difference between the child's actual capacity and the capacity they can reach with help.



Scaffolding

Support given by adults or competent peers to teach children a new skill (Veraksa, 2022).

Why Vygotsky's Theory is Appropriate for Isaac?



Isaac's experiences

- Frequent childcare disruptions.
- Limited chances to establish secure relationships.
- Little opportunity for peer interaction.
- Maternal mental health issues which impact on communication.
- Recent move and social isolation.

Why?

Vygotsky's theory is very applicable, as difficulties that Isaac faced are in direct connection with the lack of opportunities for social interaction and communication.



Reason to chose theory

Vygotsky believes that regular interactions with supportive adults and peers help children to learn language, social skills, and confidence. If these interactions are restricted, growth can be retarded (Veraksa, 2022).

Impact of Childcare Disruption on Development



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Isaac has been in a different placement for his care every six weeks for the last two years.

A sociocultural perspective may have been impacted by:

Social Development

- Trouble making friends or with relationships.
- Decreased self-assurance when meeting strangers.
- Challenges participating in group activities (Hellyer et al., 2025).

Emotional Development

- More nervousness when being separated.
- Decreased sense of security in new environments.

Learning Opportunities

- Decreased opportunities for guided play.
- Decreased access to language-rich contexts.

Therefore, it is possible that Isaac may have not had the opportunity for learning experiences that would have contributed to his development during the early years.

Nature and Nurture Influences

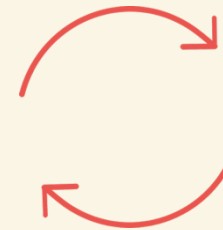
Biological and environmental factors are involved in development.

Nature (Biological Factors)

- Individual temperament.
- Genetic influences.
- Early brain development.
- A tendency to adapt to new environments and situations.

Nurture (Environmental Factors)

- Maternal depression.
- Childcare disruptions.
- Social isolation.
- Limited peer interaction.
- Recent relocation.



Nature

Versus



Nurture



Isaac is likely to be a more cautious child who needs extra help when presented with new situations.



Vygotsky stresses on nurture because social experiences greatly influence learning and development.

What Isaac is facing now is probably due to a combination of nature and nurture.

Support Plan Based on Vygotsky's Theory



Create a Language-Rich Environment

- Daily storytelling sessions.
- Activities involving singing and rhyming.
- Open-ended conversations.
- Promoting expression of thoughts and feelings in Isaac.



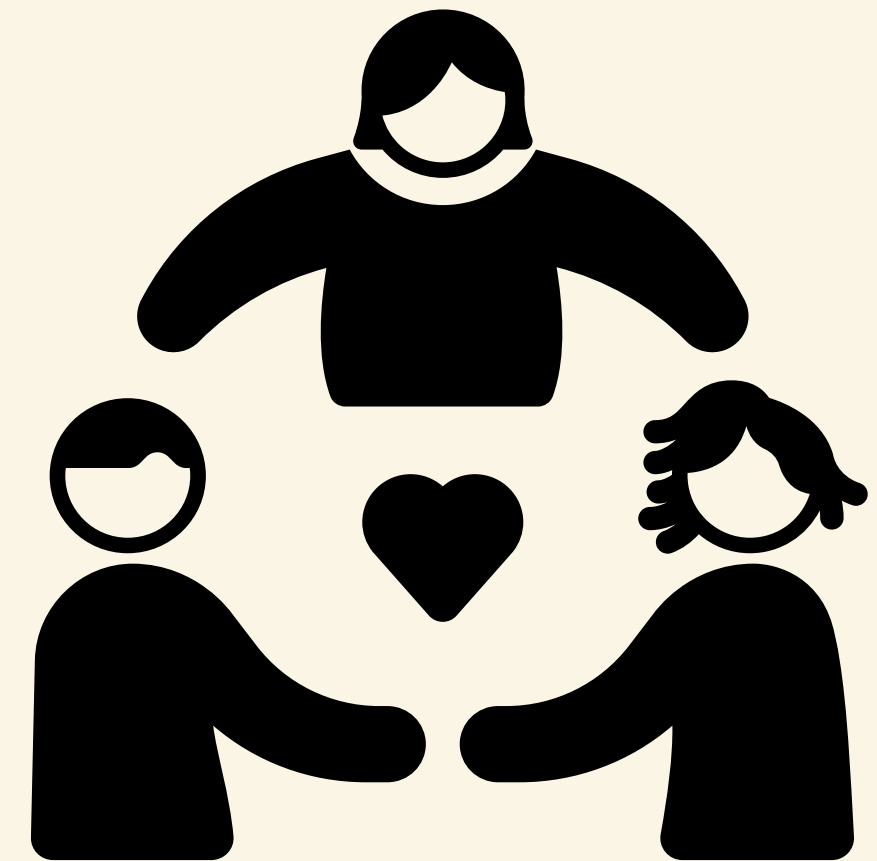
Use Scaffolding

- Encourage and support Isaac when playing.
- Divide activities into manageable tasks.
- Phases out support as confidence increases.



Encourage Peer Interaction

- Small group activities.
- Cooperative play sessions.
- Buddy systems with other confident peers (Dionisio et al., 2023).



Additional Multi-Agency Support



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Family Support Services

Assist Isaac's mother to
build confidence and
wellbeing.

Speech and Language Therapist

Evaluate and encourage
communication skills in
Isaac.

Early Years Practitioners

Provide consistent
routines and targeted
learning activities.

Parent Workshops

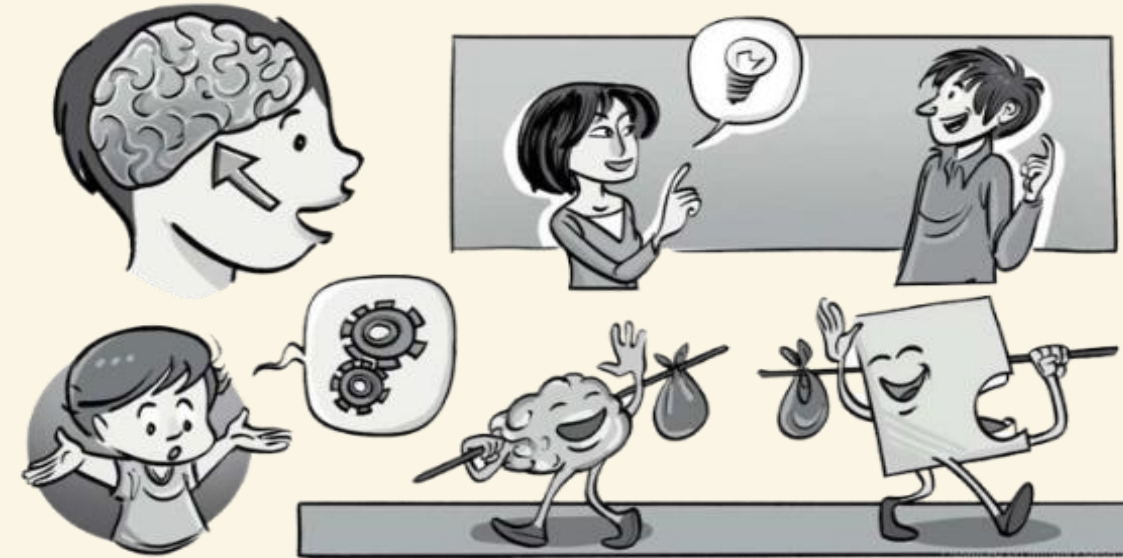
Encourage positive home
communication and play
learning.

The combination of these
professionals can help develop a
cohesive plan to meet Isaac's
emotional, social and language needs.



Critical Evaluation of Vygotsky's Theory

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Strengths

- Points out the value of social interaction.
- Describes the development of language appropriately.
- Widely used in early years education.
- Offers real-life ideas for helping children.
- Sponsors inclusive and cooperative practice.

Limitations

- Takes less account of biological influences.
- Fails to adequately account for differences in personal characteristics.
- Concepts that are not easily measurable like the Zone of Proximal Development.
- May underestimate the effect of emotional attachment on development.

Relevance to London's Diverse Communities

The theory acknowledges that the children's learning is shaped by their culture, family values, language, and community experiences (Malik et al., 2025).

Conclusion

- The Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky is of great help in understanding Isaac's developmental challenges.
- Restricted socialization, negative childcare experiences, and maternal mental health problems are possible factors in his language delay, social withdrawal, and anxiety.
- Practitioners can support Isaac's development and enhance his future outcomes through scaffolding, peer interaction, language-rich environments, and involving multiple professionals.

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