

Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development and Its Application in Health and Social Care

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Introduction

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) Swiss psychologist known for his cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1972).

Children learn actively through interaction with their environment. Four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, formal operational (Lourenço, 2016).

In health and social care, Piaget's ideas guide age-appropriate communication and care planning (Lefay et al., 2025).

APPLICATION OF PIAGET'S THEORY IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Tailoring Care to Cognitive Stages

STAGE-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS



Concrete Operational (7-11 Yrs)

- Logical reasoning with concrete events.

Formal Operational (12+ Yrs)

- Tangible explanations for treatment
- Discussions on chronic disease & prevention

LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



Experiential Learning

- Active, context-based models.



Technology Integration

- VR simulations for compassionate care

OUTCOME

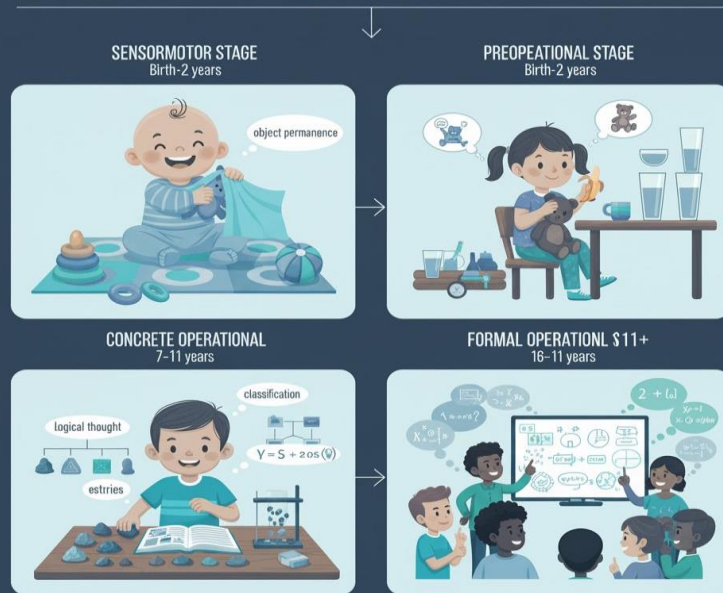


Enhanced Care Results

- Deeper understanding
- Increased engagement

****Person-Centred Care.**

PIAGET'S FOUR STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



Criticisms and Limitations

- Rigid stages: Assumes everyone develops through fixed stages, ignoring cultural and individual
- Social factors ignored: Underestimates social and environmental influences.
- Lacks inclusiveness: Not flexible or culturally adaptable.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Jean Piaget identified four stages showing how children's thinking develops as they grow:

- Sensorimotor (0–2 yrs): Learn through senses and movement; develop object permanence.
- Preoperational (2–7 yrs): Use language and symbols; thinking is egocentric.
- Concrete Operational (7–11 yrs): Think logically about real things; understand conservation.
- Formal Operational (12+ yrs): Think abstractly and hypothetically; use logical reasoning.

References

- Piaget, J. (1972). The psychology of the child. New York: Basic Books.
- Lourenço, O. (2016). Piaget and Vygotsky: Many resemblances, and a crucial difference. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 40, 52–62.