

Children's behaviour is shaped by a wide range of interacting factors, including their early relationships, environmental influences, cognitive development and exposure to stress or trauma. Understanding these influences is essential for educators, as behaviour is often a form of communication that reflects a child's emotional state, needs or past experiences. Theories such as attachment theory, behaviourism, social learning theory and ecological systems theory each offer valuable insights into why children behave in particular ways and how adults can respond effectively. By drawing on these perspectives, practitioners can develop a more holistic understanding of behaviour and create supportive environments that promote positive development.

Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby (1969), highlights the importance of early relationships in shaping a child's emotional security and ability to regulate their behaviour. Children who experience consistent, responsive caregiving are more likely to develop secure attachments, which support resilience, confidence and the ability to manage emotions. In contrast, children who experience inconsistent or neglectful care may struggle with trust, emotional regulation and forming positive relationships. These difficulties can manifest as challenging behaviour in educational settings, particularly when children feel overwhelmed or unsafe. Understanding attachment helps educators respond with empathy and consistency, rather than interpreting behaviour as deliberate defiance.

Behaviourism also offers important insights into children's behaviour. Skinner (1938) emphasised the role of reinforcement in shaping actions, suggesting that behaviour is learned through the consequences that follow it. Positive reinforcement, such as praise or rewards, can encourage desirable behaviour, while negative reinforcement or punishment may reduce unwanted actions. In educational settings, behaviourist strategies are often used to promote routines, encourage participation and support classroom management. However, critics argue that behaviourism does not fully account for internal processes such as emotions, thoughts or motivations, which also influence behaviour.

Social learning theory, introduced by Bandura (1977), builds on behaviourism by recognising the importance of observation and imitation. Children learn not only through direct reinforcement but also by watching others, including parents, peers and teachers. This means that adults play a crucial role in modelling positive behaviour, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. However, exposure to aggression, conflict or inconsistent responses can contribute to behavioural difficulties. Social learning theory highlights the importance of creating positive role models and supportive social environments.

Trauma can also have a significant impact on children's behaviour. Experiences such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence or instability can affect the developing brain and lead to difficulties with emotional regulation, attention and impulse control. Van der Kolk (2014) explains that trauma can activate the body's stress response, making children more reactive and less able to manage strong emotions. In educational settings, this may present as aggression, withdrawal, hypervigilance or difficulty concentrating. Trauma-informed approaches emphasise safety, predictability and strong relationships, helping children feel secure enough to engage in learning and develop healthier coping strategies.

Studies show that screen time is another factor that can influence children's behaviour, particularly when it is excessive or used before bedtime. High levels of screen use can disrupt sleep quality, which affects a child's energy levels, mood and ability to concentrate the following day. Excessive digital stimulation can also lead to overstimulation, making it harder for children to focus on tasks that are not technology-based (World Health Organization, 2019). These effects can contribute to irritability, reduced attention span and difficulties with emotional regulation.

There are many apps designed for children that can support their development. These tools can encourage speech and language skills as well as help children practise core subjects such as literacy and numeracy. The Department for Education (2020) highlights that well-designed online educational tools can be beneficial, as they provide immediate feedback, use visually engaging formats and make learning more enjoyable, helping children stay focused and supporting those who may find traditional teaching methods more challenging.

Digital technology is now a routine part of modern life, and children are introduced to it from a very young age. This early exposure can influence attention span and shape how effectively children develop social and emotional communication skills. Depending on the type of content they engage with, digital media can reduce a child's ability to stay focused on slower or more mundane tasks, as they become accustomed to fast-paced and highly stimulating digital environments (ICTE, 2021). For example, children who regularly use apps or games that offer instant rewards may find it more difficult to tolerate delayed gratification or engage in activities that require sustained concentration, such as reading or extended writing tasks. Digital influence also extends to children's social development. While online platforms can support communication and help children maintain friendships, they may also limit opportunities for face-to-face interaction. These real-world interactions are essential for developing empathy, turn-taking and the ability to read non-verbal cues. When children spend large amounts of time interacting through screens rather than in person, they may have fewer opportunities to practise these important social skills. This can affect how they

manage conflict, express emotions and build relationships with peers. However, digital technology also offers meaningful benefits when used purposefully. The Department for Education (2020) highlights that well-designed online educational tools can be beneficial, as they provide immediate feedback, use visually engaging formats and make learning more enjoyable. These features can help maintain children's attention and support those who may find traditional teaching methods more challenging. Digital tools can also be personalised to meet individual needs, which is particularly valuable for children with additional learning needs or those who require differentiated instruction. Overall, digital influence is neither entirely positive nor negative. Its impact depends on factors such as the type of content, the level of adult supervision and the balance between online and offline experiences. Understanding these influences helps educators and caregivers make informed decisions about how technology is used to support children's development and behaviour.

Children's development is an ongoing and deeply individual process, and it is important to recognise that no single approach or theory can fully explain every aspect of their behaviour. Each child brings their own experiences, strengths and challenges into the learning environment, and this diversity requires educators to remain flexible, observant and responsive. By taking time to understand the whole child, practitioners can build stronger relationships and create learning spaces where children feel valued, supported and able to thrive.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how multiple environmental layers influence behaviour. The microsystem, including family, school and peers, has the most direct impact. Positive, consistent relationships within this system support secure attachments, self-esteem and emotional regulation. The mesosystem reflects the connections between these environments, such as communication between home and school. The exosystem includes wider influences such as parental employment or community resources, while the macrosystem encompasses cultural values, social norms and economic conditions. This theory emphasises that behaviour cannot be understood in isolation but must be viewed within the broader context of a child's life.

In conclusion, children's behaviour is shaped by a wide range of interacting factors, including their early relationships, environmental influences, cognitive development and exposure to stress or trauma. Theories such as attachment theory, behaviourism, social learning theory and ecological systems theory each offer valuable insights into why children behave in particular ways and how adults can respond effectively. Understanding these perspectives helps educators recognise that behaviour is often a form of communication rather than deliberate defiance, particularly for children who have experienced trauma or inconsistent caregiving. Modern influences, such as

screen time and digital technology, also play an increasingly significant role in shaping behaviour. While excessive or poorly timed screen use can negatively affect sleep, attention and emotional regulation, technology can also provide meaningful benefits when used purposefully. Educational apps and digital tools can support speech, language and core academic skills, offering engaging and accessible learning opportunities for children who may struggle with traditional methods. Overall, adopting a holistic and informed approach enables educators to respond to behaviour with empathy, consistency and understanding. By considering the full range of biological, psychological and environmental factors, practitioners are better equipped to create supportive learning environments that promote positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and long-term development.

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bowlby, J. (1969) *Attachment and Loss: Volume 1 – Attachment*. London: Hogarth Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Department for Education (2020) *Realising the potential of technology in education*. London: DfE.

ICTE (2021) *The impact of digital technology on children's learning and behaviour*.

Skinner, B.F. (1938) *The Behaviour of Organisms*. New York: Appleton-Century.

Van der Kolk, B. (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score*. New York: Viking.

World Health Organization (2019) *Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5*. Geneva: WHO.

Comments & Feedback From Unit2

FINAL GRADE

51/100

ECIE4001

GRADEMARK REPORT

GENERAL COMMENTS

All marks are provisional subject to external examiner consideration.

Engagement with Literature Skills (08/20)

You use a small range of reputable sources. Your reference is almost non-existent as in text citations are missing.

Knowledge and Understanding Skills (10/20)

You show good understanding of humanistic theories and approaches and limited understanding of WG policies. You demonstrate good awareness of the relationship of trust between learners and support staff..

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills (10/20)

Structure and flow are varied, the first section of the essay does not work well, as it is about therapy., and then it improves. Although paragraphs could be improved by restructuring some of the paragraphs.

You might have gone into more detail about policies.

There is a little supporting evidence in your text, you need to build on that..

Practical Application Skills (13/20)

There is good practical application of theory
throughout with relevant examples.

Transferable Skills for Life and Professional
Practice (10/20)

Your writing is not always cohesive and formal. Work
is presented neatly. Ensure all your sources are cited.

Action Points:

1. Work on the overall structure and merging
paragraphs so your work is more coherent.

2.

Rewrite overly long sentences

3. Book a Study Skills Session to learn how to
reference consistently and how to use quotes.

A reasonable first essay, with many good points,
well done Lisa!

PAGE 1

Text Comment. the essay is supposed to be about support in schools.

Text Comment. You need to write an introduction for your es

Text Comment. the essay is supposed to be about support in schools.

Text Comment. You need to write an introduction for your essay with a focus on the
essay question. This is not on focus. PAGE 2 Citation Needed Cite Source: Please use
the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles:

<https://www.plagiarism.org/article/citation-styles> Citation Needed Cite Source: Please
use the link below to find links to information regarding specific citation styles:
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Text Comment. Good points. capital This is a name. Use a capital letter.

QM

year?

Text Comment. You need to focus on education!

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Text Comment. This is a very long sentence!

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Text Comment. Another very long sentence!

Text Comment. Link to policy.

capital

This is a name. Use a capital letter.

PAGE 3

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contraction

Avoid contractions in academic writing.

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Text Comment. Good examples, however, there is no supporting evidence.

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informal

Avoid using informal language.

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Comment 1

be specific to Wales

PAGE 4

Text Comment. A basic list, however, these do not appear as citations in your text.

Text Comment. Always put a space after a full stop/comma.

Improper Citation

Improper citation:

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specific citation styles: <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/citation-styles>