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Early Childhood Education

Sigmund Freud and John Bowlby have produced a theoretical base that is of significant value to Early Years Educators in their quest to meet children's holistic needs. Discuss

Early childhood education was mostly ignored throughout past, but then different scholars like Sigmund Freud and John Bowlby contributed and explained theory that assist in understanding child behavior. In my opinion these theories have helped in understanding child development stages. If these theories are properly utilized then educators can help a child in fulfilling their needs which will eventually aid in forming well balanced personality of a child by focusing on all the needs of a child.

According to Sigmund Freud, Child development starts from birth and this process continues as it grows old. Hence educators must understand this and start focusing right from the beginning and continue till a child grows up. However in the past it was mostly believed that child is just a smaller version of adult and hence no research was carried to explain them and to develop them. Understanding the child development process is the first step and its importance cannot be ignored as it assists in appreciating emotional, cognitive, social, educational and physical growth of child, which of course must be used by educators in early life stages.

Sigmund theory explains how personality of a child is developed overtime. He explained “psychoanalytic child development theories”, and stresses the significance of early childhood experiences and events that make a permanent mark in memory of child. However his major focus was on the mental disorders (Freud & Strachey, 1966). Child development as explained by Freud undergoes number of stages known as “psychosexual stages”. These stages include “oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital”. Each of these stages must satisfy desires of a person as it later has an impact on personality of child when he grows up. Furthermore he mentioned that if any of these stages is not properly satisfied as a child then later as an adult personality will not develop properly. In this way personality is affected and hence it proves that personality of a child starts developing at very early stage. As he mentioned various stages in childhood, these stages form personality by “id” which is energies that seek pleasure and it is the driving force that governs

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behavior of a child (Freud & Strachey, 1977). Furthermore personality of a child forms when a child is five years old, all the early life experiences play a significance role in developing personality and then in future they continue to influence behavior of child. As mentioned above if these stages are fulfilled properly a healthy personality is formed, however otherwise “fixation” may occur and that will not let child develop properly (Freud & Strachey, 1975).

Oral stage is the first stage and it is from birth till child is 1 year old, mouth is the most important organ and all interactions take place through it. Hence at this stage sucking reflex is particularly important, at this stage child seeks pleasure through oral interactions. Child will develop trust through oral simulations as he is dependent upon caretaker at this age. If at this stage fixation occurs then child will be aggressive later on and will not trust anyone easily. It can also cause issues like drinking, smoking and nail biting. Anal stage occurs till age of 3 years, at this age complete focus is on bladder movements. At this stage child had to control himself and learn toilet training, when he is able to do this a sense of achievement is felt and then child feel accomplished. The success at this stage is highly dependent upon the approach used by parents, by giving rewards at right timing the confidence level of child increases. At this stage child becomes productive and competent. However conflicts at this stage may also arise if parents are too lazy or too strict, result can be a personality that is rigid and messy. Phallic stage is between 3 to 6 years, and focus is on genitals, this is the time when child learns differences in males and females (Catatan, 2011). From age of 6 to puberty libido interest are reduced, and period of calmness come. At this stage a child gets busy in school and friends. Even at this stage sexual energy is present but because of focus on other things child suppresses these feelings (Oswalt, 2014). This stage is critically important in developing self confidence of child. From puberty to death, individual starts feeling sexual attraction towards opposite gender. This stage will only be successful if all previous stages were properly satisfied and in this way a person will remain balanced throughout rest of his life.

In my opinion if all of these stages mentioned above in child development are properly understood by educators and the role each stage plays in life of a child, then educators will be able to help child achieve his holistic needs.

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Attachment theory is famous and explains early social development of a child and relationship's later on. According to this children between age of 6 to 30 months give love and affection to those who give care and love to child. At this age child easily forms an emotional bond with people around him (Bretherton, 1992). Their emotional attachment is clearly evident when they feel secure with people whom they know and particularly in situation of stress they feel comfortable and like to explore world with people who they know well. These emotional bonds later contribute in formation of personality of a child and his behavior to all other people in life of a child. In cases where these attachments are disturbed for example if a close person suddenly goes away it disturbs child and his personality later on, it will have both short and long term impacts on life of a child. This theory is very comprehensive and clearly indicates that educators can utilize it in helping child achieving all needs of life (Bretherton, 1992). As children easily form emotional bonds they can be used easily to help child develop trust, self confidence and well balanced personality in life. By focusing on child needs and by providing care, he can be trained and easily he will become a complete individual (Ainsworth, 1963).

Frank and Horst (2010) explained attachment theory by considering social, cultural and scientific developments as well. They showed that child primary needs are love, warmth, affection and care (Bowlby, 1973). If a child is separated from his mother then it will have impacts on complete life. This lose can never be restored later in life; as it is potentially damaging for a child. According to them there was no strong evidence behind whatever theory says in fact it does not explain child development (Ainsworth, 1963).

The basic idea is that motivation derives a human being and his behavior; they feel more comfortable with familiar people, which can be used by educators in improving education of children (Holmes, 1993).

Sigmund Freud and John Bowlby have actually produced a theoretical base that is of significant value to early year's educators in their quest to meet children's holistic needs; however some people argue that both of above mentioned theories are not backed by significant evidence or research. Still in my opinion; the first step in child development understands the needs and wants of a child. Once those needs are understood only then they can be fulfilled otherwise they will

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remain unsatisfied throughout life of an individual and will also have negative impacts on the personality and behavior of a child. Furthermore since these theories are comprehensive and step by step explain each stage where child needs vary, similarly educators must understand these stages and then try to educate children accordingly by focusing on each need of each stage that child is undergoing through. These theories explain both positive and negative impacts on child and his personality and if properly psychology is understood it will assist in improving the life of a child and in these way positive impacts can be increased where as negative impacts can be reduced by reducing them as possible. Fundamentally these theories guide the behavior of adults with child, they clearly indicate the result of behavior, and hence attention must be given to these theories. Children give affection and care in return of care and are aggressive if not treated properly, educators need to understand that the way they treat children in early stages of their life have a long lasting impact on life of child, which eventually contributes by making personality of a child. It is also important that to develop properly all needs must be satisfied at each stage; even if one stage is ignored it will create issues, hence educators need to remain focused. Scholars including these two mentioned above and others have done research and explained child development methodology, which in my opinion clearly can assist educators in helping children developing to full potential and being successful in life ahead.

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