

# **DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY**

## IN THE CONTEXT OF DISABILITY

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# Developmental Theories

“Contemporary developmental theories have generally either ignored disability or conceived of disability from a pathology framework. To affirm lives with disabilities, a shift in perceptions that considers the implications of living with a disability as a normal part of life is needed” (p. 65).

Theorist	Theorist	Theory Focus
Freud	Psychoanalytic Theory	Psychosexual development throughout childhood
Piaget	Cognitive Theory	Cognitive rather than emotional development from birth to
Erikson	Ego Psychological Theory	Psychosocial stage development from birth through old age
Kohlberg/Gilligan	Moral Development Theory	The use of cognition and reasoning involved in moral judgments from
Fowler	Spiritual/Religious Theory	Stages of faith development through the life span

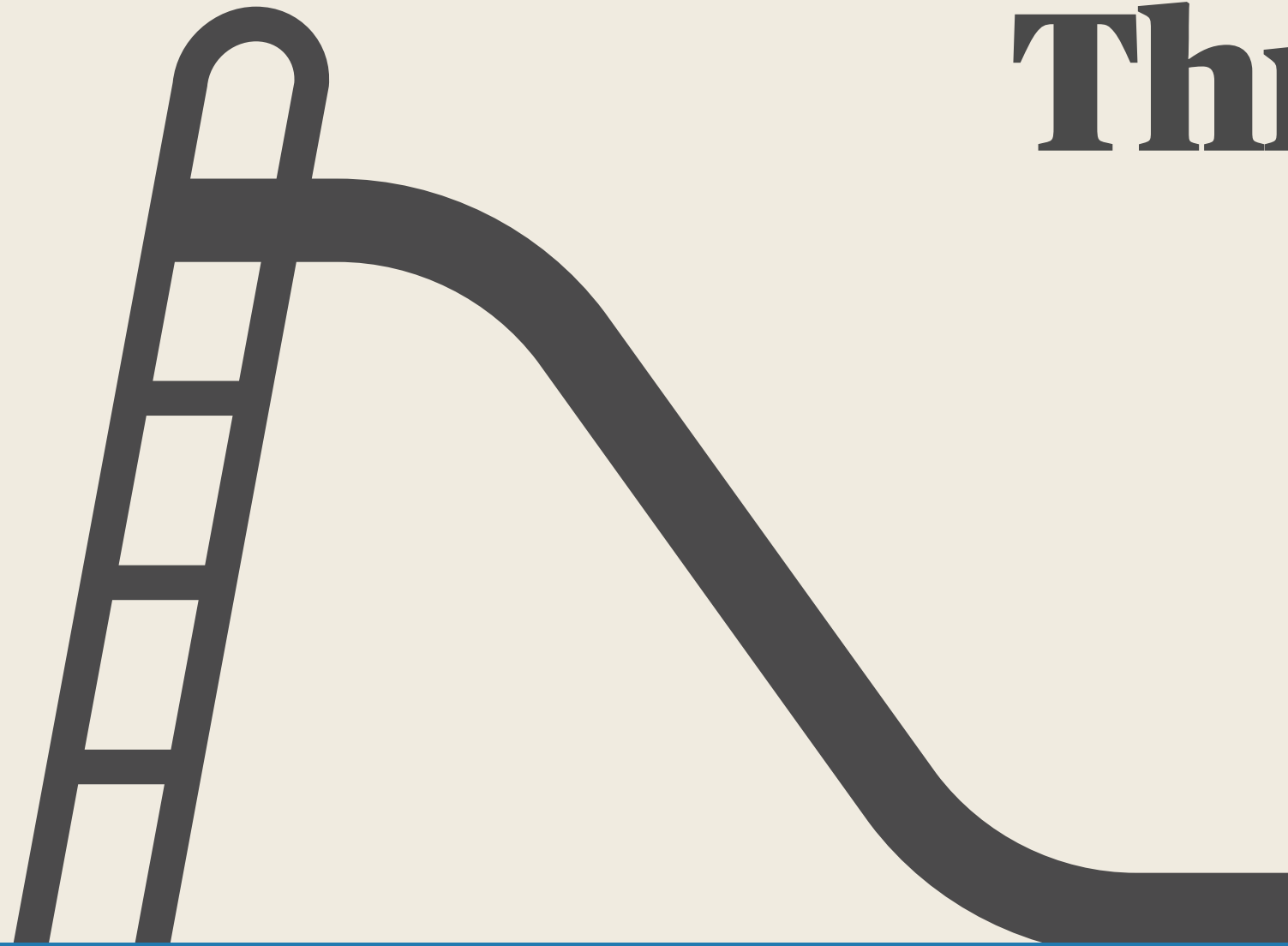
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(MACKELPRANG & SALSGIVER, 2016)

# DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF DISABILITY

- Birth to Three Years of Age
  - Three to Six Years of Age
  - Six to Twelve Years of Age
  - Twelve to Eighteen Years of Age
  - Young Adulthood
  - Middle Adulthood
  - Older Adulthood
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# Three to Six Years of Age



“Children with intellectual disabilities may experience delays in verbal language skills. They may rely on alternative ways of communicating, such as gestures, nonverbal vocalization, and pictures, developing verbal mastery later than children without intellectual disabilities” (p.55).

“Expanding the environment for disabled children is as important as it is for nondisabled children. It is critical that they have the opportunity to interact with others with and without disabilities” (p. 55)

“Exposure to peers and role models with disabilities can permit the sharing and cultural development on which they can build throughout their lives. Playing and interacting with children and others with and without disabilities can provide a foundation for later in life, when disability takes on increased meaning” (p.55)

# Six to Twelve Years of Age

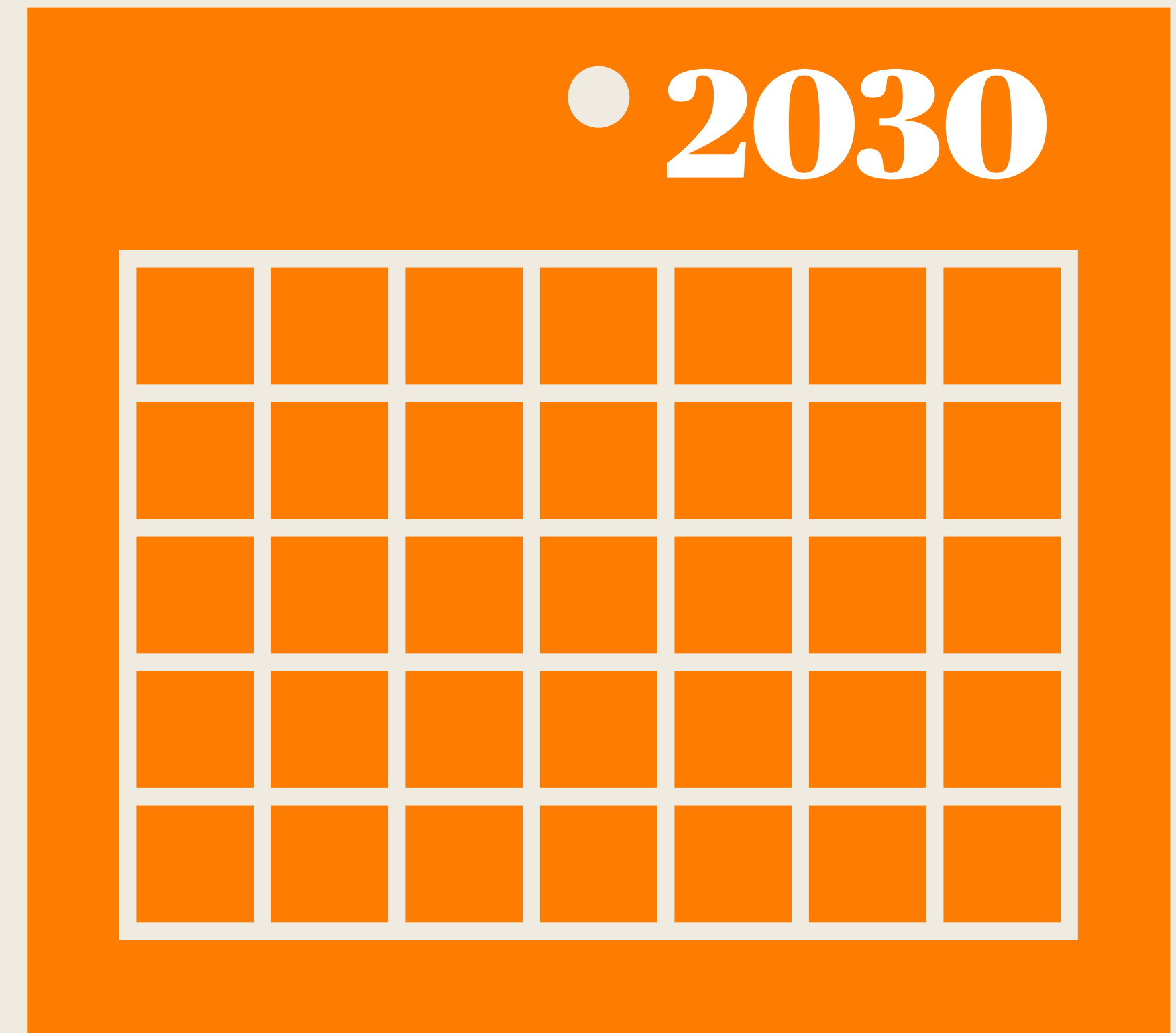


The world of most children expands greatly at this age. Schools and increased numbers of peers expand their world socially and geographically. Increased concrete problem-solving skills help children deal with new situations. Many children with disabilities are already accustomed to having more people in their lives, especially when they have had ongoing professional involvement (p. 56)

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# Twelve to Eighteen Years of Age

“People in the lives of all adolescents, including families, friends, counselors, and teachers, can all be resources in helping adolescents with disabilities reject the images, stereotypes, and limitations of an ableist society. Supports that facilitate future educational, employment, and living options can provide a sense of hope for the future” (p. 59)



# Young Adulthood



“At this time of life, people search for intimacy with others. Historically, people with disabilities have been denied opportunities for intimate relationships. For example, people with intellectual disabilities have been legally enjoined from marrying. Some have been forcibly sterilized, sometimes without their knowledge. People with disabilities living in institutions, including persons with mental health and physical disabilities, have been denied access to intimate relationships with others.” (p. 62)

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# Middle Adulthood

“Persons with disabilities, whether newly acquired or long term, can be a great asset to the community. The maturity and stability that come at this time of life provide them greater opportunities to influence communities and society. As the number and visibility of persons with disabilities in middle adulthood increase, so can their societal contributions and legacies to the disability community as well as society in general” (p. 64)





# Older Adulthood



“Social policies can be critical to the well-being of older persons who acquire disabilities and their families. Policies that allow people who need physical assistance to live in the community rather than being relegated to nursing facilities are important. Too many older Americans are institutionalized because resources that could help them live in the community are targeted for high-cost institutional care that allows residents little self-control. Policies that foster independent living contribute to high-quality lives” (pp. 64-65)

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# Reference

Mackelprang, R., & Salsgiver, R. (2016). Chapter 2 - Human development and disability. In *Disability: A diversity model approach in human service practice* (3rd ed., pp. 37-96). Oxford University Press.

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