

A starting point → A developmental process → an adult state

Three ways for a child to get an answer wrong: The child might be

- 1) incapable of understanding
- 2) uninformed
- 3) misguided

Stage Theories of development (e.g. Piaget)

Alternatives to stage theories (and to Piaget)

domain general and domain specific accounts of development

Piaget's theory

**Sensory-motor (up to about 2 years)**

What is Object permanence

**Pre-operational (pre-school years)**

e.g. problems with

Conservation

Egocentrism

Animism

**Concrete Operational (starting around 5-7)**

**Formal operational (starting in adolescence)**

An extended example: Conservation: the M&M problem.

Karen Wynn says that 5 month olds can add and subtract  
Wynn, K. (1992). Addition and subtraction by human infants. *Nature*, 358, 749-750.

So why do they bomb the M&M problem?

Another example: Animism

Sue Carey asks children about the omentum.

Pre-school Physics

Elizabeth Spelke asks if ducks can pass through pigs

Executive function

Adele Diamond asks kids to hold two rules in mind.