

Presented by **Dr Joseph S Agbenyega**
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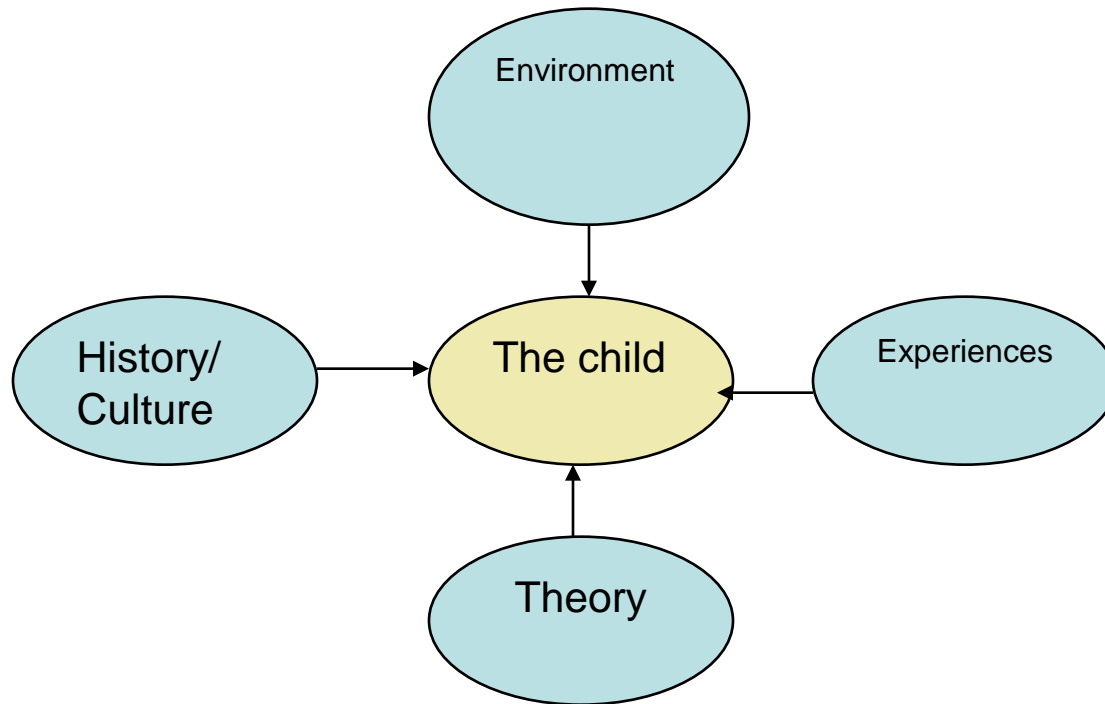
Understanding child development in a multicultural society through postmodern lenses

Order of presentation

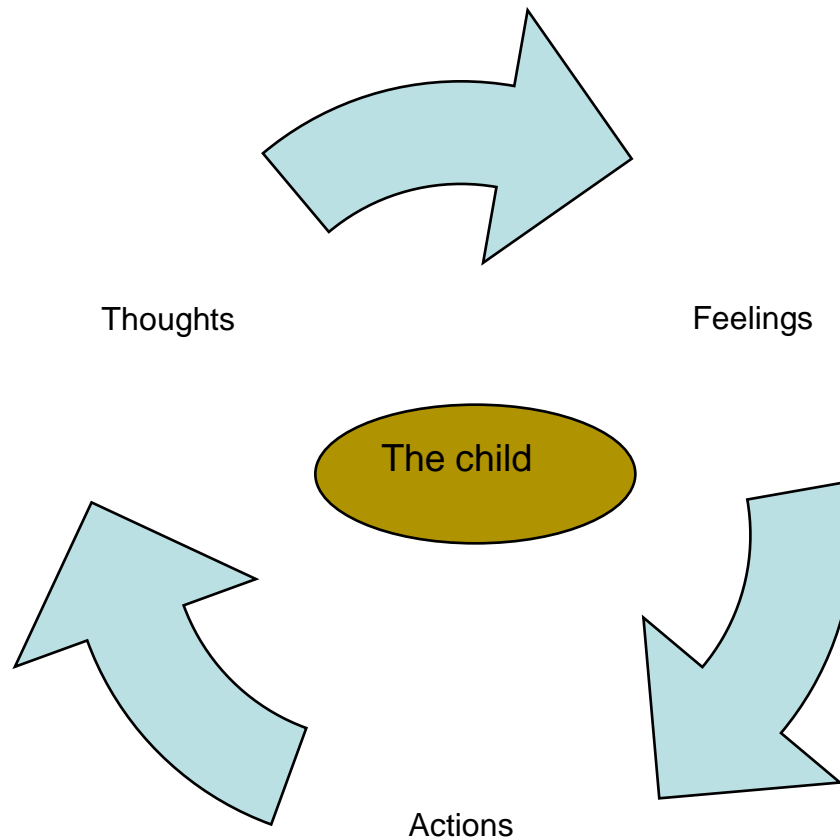
- Introduction
- The old stories about children
- Current perspectives
- Empowering the child
- Conclusion

Introduction

How we know about children



Introduction cont.



The old stories about children

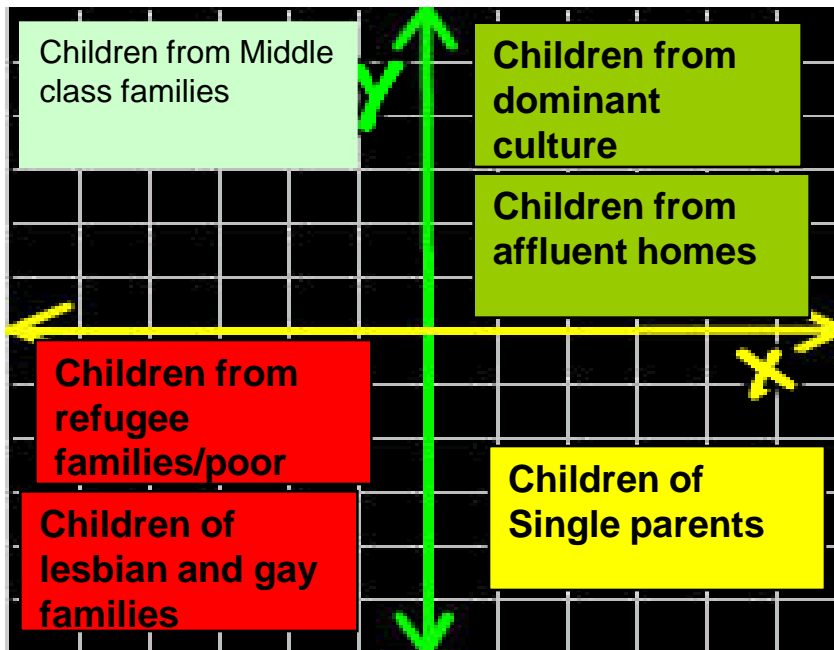
- Cartesian children
- **Universal development**
- **Child development decontextualised**
- Developmental sequencing
- **Children are fragile and egocentric**
- **Statistical scores produce the answers to how best children are developing**
- **Only professionals have answers to childhood problems**

Developmental sequencing

- **The developmental ladder**



Children in the Cartesian plane



The old stories about children cont..

- **Bad children are from poor neighbourhood and homes**
- **Poor parents are bad parents**
- **Children's maturation determine their task performance**
- **Standardised testing predicts future behaviours**
- **Only some children and families are intelligent**

Implications of the old stories

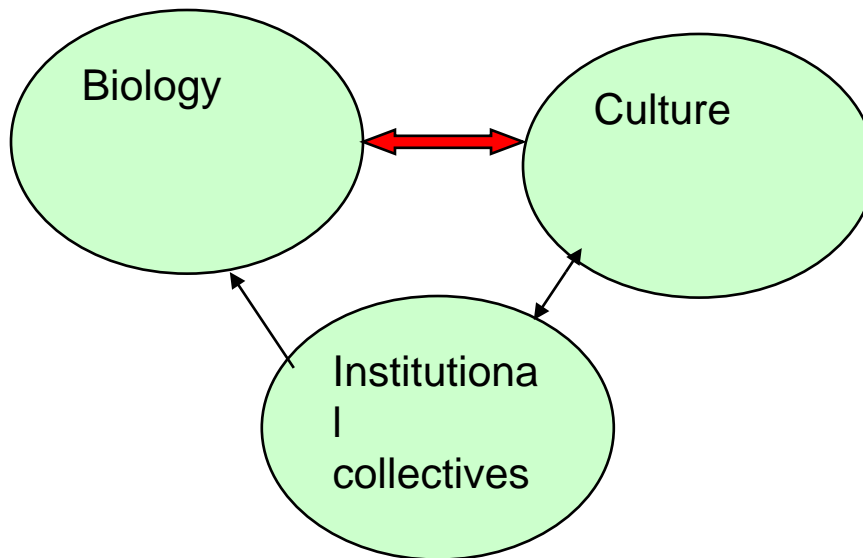
- **Categorisation**
- **Oversupervision**
- **Distrust**
- **Labeling**
- **Control and wholesale regulation**
- **Rejection**

Current perspectives

Ethno-centrism produces:	Ethno-relativism produces:
Denial	Acceptance
Assimilation	modification
Barriers	inclusion

Current perspectives cont..

- **Children's development is dialectical**



Current perspectives cont..

- **Every child is intelligent**
- **What counts as intelligent children is culturally and contextually specific**
- **Intelligence is what serves useful purposes**
- **Parents are capable beings**
- **Children are active contributors to knowledge**

Empowering the child and family

- **Look for potentials and desist from blame game**
- **Don't present yourself as the solution but as a facilitator**
- **All children and families are different, they can't be grasped and made into others**
- **Don't command, communicate**
- **A good communicator is a good listener**
- **Model what you want children to be with your own behavior**
- **Empowerment is not about sympathy, it is empathy and equity**

Conclusion

- **Development and family are complex and should not be placed on a universal Cartesian plane**
- **Attempts at cultural unification will destroy children, families and the nation state**
- **We can improve the status of families and children through plural meaning making and cultural relativism**