

## Pre-course materials for BTEC Level 3 CPLD

The first unit of the course is based on the theories of well-known child psychologists and how their theories can be seen and used in practice when working with young children. The unit is assessed by a formal external exam.

**Issues when looking at theories of development.** A good starting point before looking at theories of development is to consider some of the issues that psychologists have found when looking at child development.

**Nature or nurture?** Is children's development tied closely to human instincts and genetics, or could it be that what happens to children shapes their learning and development? These are fundamental questions in psychology. Many of the early theories of development were influenced by the idea that we inherit skills, abilities and behaviours. Subsequent research has since shown that our behaviour can also be shaped. The issue for many psychologists is to define how much of our skills, personalities and so on is inherited and how much is influenced by our environment. Increasingly, the view that is being taken is that both cases apply, although we may be born with certain predispositions. This is sometimes called the nature versus nurture debate. Theories that come down in favour of nature can be described as **nativist**, and the theories that come down in favour of environment can be thought of as **behaviourist**.

### Task 1

**Research** the Nature/Nurture debate and ensure you understand both points of view. You will need to make notes as this information will be used in lessons.

**Reflect:** Many people decide to work with children because they wish to make a difference. Why might this viewpoint be considered behaviourist?

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**Starting at the beginning.** As well as theories on how children develop we also need to know the ages and stages of development. These are called expected milestones and you will be expected to learn them so you are able to recognise typical and atypical development.

### Task 2

Research the new-born baby, find out about their appearance and the typical features of the new-born. Again you may wish to make notes and record any sources you have used (books, websites). You will need this for the first lesson when you will be asked to complete an essay.

