In Sigmund Freud's Psychosexual Theory, he proposed that the behavior and development of a person are influenced by the interaction between the conscious and unconscious aspects of that person's mind.

There are three components of the psychic apparatus function on different levels of consciousness, and they interact with each other to generate behavior.

Id

The **Id** is present at birth and represents everything that we inherit from our parents. It comprises our needs that require constant fulfilment and operates on the pleasure principle, as well as the need for immediate gratification, without regard for consequences or realities.

Ego

The **Ego** develops as a result of our attempts to satisfy our needs through interactions with our physical and social environment. In other words, it arises from the Id. The Ego attempts to fulfill the Id's desire by serving as a negotiator that strives for a compromise between what the Id wants and what the outside world can grant it.
The Ego is also a decision-maker that operates on the reality principle, evaluating conditions of the real world which may or may not satisfy the Id's demands and seeking acceptable methods of fulfilling the Id's wishes.

Superego

The **Superego** arises from the Ego and develops as an internal representation of the moral values of the environment. The Superego judges what we should morally do or not do, and guides us about the shoulds and should nots of our lives. It rewards us with pride and positive feelings upon doing good, and punishes us with feelings of guilt, shame or fear for not abiding by values that we have set for ourselves.

According to Sigmund Freud's Psychosexual Theory, children develop as a consequence of the ways through which the Ego negotiates a compromise among:

- the Id and the Id's insistence on immediate gratification of wishes,
- the environment which imposes limits on the conditions under which wishes can be fulfilled and
- the Superego, which puts pressure on the individual to abide by a set of moral values.
  Freud believed that the unconscious aspect of our mind is a receptacle of ideas. We are not aware of this aspect of our mind, but it influences our behavior in equally powerful ways much as our conscious mind does. As such, one of the most significant contributions of Freud to the understanding of human behavior is enlightening us about the unparalleled role of the unconscious in directing and motivating our behavior.

Freud further stipulated that development is completed through a series of psychosexual stages that occur in a predetermined sequence.
The Freud psychosexual stages contain activities that revolve around a certain erogenous zone of an individual. By successfully moving from one psychosexual stage to the next, the individual will develop a healthy personality. Failure to resolve issues or getting stuck at any of the Freud psychosexual stages will result in a problematic personality.

The Freud Psychosexual Stages of Development

Oral Stage (0 – 1 year old)

A child derives pleasure from oral activities, such as sucking and tasting. Successful fulfillment of the child's feeding needs and proper weaning may result in the establishment of trust. Too much or too little gratification can bring about an oral fixation for the adult individual. This is represented by a preoccupation with oral activities such as drinking alcohol, smoking, over eating, or nail biting.

Anal Stage (2 – 3 years old)

The main source of gratification at this stage is the ability to control bladder movement and the elimination or retention of faeces. A positive and appropriate experience revolving around potty training can encourage competence, creativity and productivity in individuals. Contrarily, anal fixations can translate into obsession with perfection, extreme cleanliness, and control or the opposite which is messiness and disorganization in adulthood.

Phallic Stage (3 – 6 years old)

At this Freud psychosexual stage, the focus of pleasure is the genitals. Boys start to perceive their father as rivals for their mother's affections, while girls feel similarly towards their mother. Fear of punishment can lead to repression of feelings felt toward the opposite sex parent. Fixation at this stage may bring about sexual deviancy or weak sexual identity.

Latency Period (6 years to puberty)

At this stage, sexual urges are usually repressed and the individual spends most of his/her time interacting with same sex peers, engaging in hobbies and acquiring skills.

Genital Stage (Puberty onward)

The focus at this Freud psychosexual stage is on the sexual urges that are reawakened and are directed toward opposite sex peers, with genitals as the primary source of pleasure. Individuals who completed the earlier stages successfully become well-adjusted, caring and secure individuals.

One importance of Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory is the emphasis on early experiences in the development of personality and as an influence on later behavior. The relationships that children cultivate, their views about themselves and others, and their level of adjustment and well-being as adults are all influenced by the quality of experiences that they have had in each psychosexual stage.

Without doubt, Sigmund Freud's Theory of Psychosexual Development is one of the most complex and controversial theories of child development. Although his theory has been the subject of much criticism, we cannot discount the important ideas that Freud has contributed to the field of psychology and human development.

Stage	Age range	What happens at this stage?
Oral Stage	0-1 year old	Children derive pleasure from oral activities, including sucking and tasting. They like to put things in their mouth.
Anal Stage	2-3 years old	Children begin potty training.
Phallic Stage	3-6 years old	Boys are more attached to their mother, while girls are more attached to their father.
Latency Stage	6 years old to puberty	Children spend more time and interact mostly with same sex peers.
Genital Stage	Beyond puberty	Individuals are attracted to opposite sex peers.