# PIAGET’S THEORY ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

## THE MORALITY OF CONSTRAINT
(Typical of SIX -year-olds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STOP</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Point of View
Single, absolute moral perspective (behavior is either right or wrong) and believes that everyone see it the same way.

### Rules
The conception that rules are sacred and unchangeable or “carved in stone.”

### Intention
Extent of guilt is determined by the amount of damage done by an action not for the motivation behind the actions.

### Punishment
Defines moral wrong in terms of what is forbidden or punishable. Child favors severe punishment. Child feels the punishment itself defines the wrongness of an act. An act is bad if it leads to punishment.

### Respect for Authority
Peer aggressions should be punished by an external authority figure. (The child runs to Mommy or Daddy for protection and/or justice. Unilateral respect leads to feelings of obligation to conform to adult standards and obey adult rules.

### Concept of Justice
Children should obey laws because they are established by those in authority (“I'm the Mommy—that's why!”) Child confuses moral law with physical law and believes that any physical accident or misfortune that occurs after a misdeed is a punishment willed by God or some other supernatural force. **

* Note that the first four differences call attention to the tendency for children below the age of ten to think of rules as sacred pronouncements handed down by external authority.

## THE MORALITY OF COOPERATION
(Typical of TWELVE -year-olds)

### Point of View
Awareness of differing viewpoints regarding rules. Children put themselves in place of others. They are not absolutist in judgments but see that more than one point of view is possible.

### Intention
Child judges act by intentions, not consequences. Consideration of the wrongdoer's intention when evaluating guilt.

### Rules
Child recognizes that rules are made by people and can be altered by people. Children consider themselves just as capable of changing rules as anyone else. **

### Respect for Authority
Mutual respect for authority and peers allows children to value their own opinions and abilities and judge other people realistically. Children should obey rules because of mutual concern for the rights of others. **

### Punishment
Child favors milder punishment that compensates the victim and helps the culprit recognize why the act is wrong, thus leading to reform. Punishment should involve either restitution or suffering the same fate as the victim of someone’s wrongdoing. Peer aggression should be punished by retaliatory behavior by the victim. *

### Concept of Justice
Child does not confuse natural misfortune with punishment.

* Beyond the age of 12, adolescents increasingly affirm that reciprocal reactions or “getting even” should occur in response to good behaviors—not just bad behavior.

** Note how these last three differences call attention to the tendency of the child above the age of 12 to see rules as mutual agreements among equals.

SEE: Kohlberg’s first stage (Punishment/Obedience Orientation)*