**Accommodation:** the process that accounts for modification in the assimilative schemata. Whenever a child applies an assimilative scheme, the scheme is adjusted to insure its appropriateness for any given situation. It is through these active adjustments that the assimilative schemes become differentiated and new schemes gradually emerge.

**Assimilation:** the process through which experiential data are incorporated into existing structures. Assimilations do not occur as a result of any external pressure. Humans are naturally active; therefore it is in their nature to seek new experiences or assimilable material from their environment.

**Conservation:** the understanding that certain aspects of a situation or an object are invariant even when they are physically transformed. In other words an object may change a property or aspect while "conserving (remaining invariant) in another aspect or property.

**Equilibration:** the self-regulatory process whose mechanisms (functional properties) are assimilation and accommodation. This process is designed to enable the person to adapt to and make understandable features of their environment.

**Disequilibration:** a state of cognitive disruption caused by new information that promotes a lack of balance between assimilation and accommodations. This state of cognitive contradiction forces a person to go beyond their current state of understanding and seek new understandings or equilibration.

**Operation:** an action that can be internalized or "thought about .and is mentally reversible. Operations imply the ability to conserve and an ability to perceive or understand things as they relate to systems and rules (groups of operations) and a total structure based upon logical rules. When performing an operation children impose logic and an understanding of a system of rules as it relates to an object or objects.

**Reversibility:** the essential aspect of an operational structure. Mental activity having identical paths leading to an from an end point. The ability to 'go back' mentally and see the process from the beginning of the mental operation.

**Scheme:** the term used to denote c structure ct the sensorimotor level. In early Piagetian theory this term conveyed the perceptual aspects of an action (usually motor movement). The intellectual "understanding. of a pattern or patterns of behaviors that develop. as the child matures. into more complex structures.

**Seriation:** the operation of putting in some order (short to tall, big to little. etc.) objects that differ in some physical characteristic but may be similar in others.

**Structure:** the sum total of what a child's mind is able to do. A mental operation is thought to have an underlying "structure that is responsible for performing that operation. A structure may be thought of as a neurological pattern that incorporates the necessary information (assimilations and accommodations) to deal with the operation. A structure may, however, be non corporeal and abstract but it is necessary for the child to understand objects, laws, and systems that exist in their environment.

**Symbolic function:** the means by which the child in the preoperational stage represent the world around them. These include gestures, language. symbolic play. imitation. mental imagery and pictures. The emphasis in upon the interiorization or the internal aspects of these symbols.