This long-awaited and ground-breaking book from cognitive scientist John Morton helps to clarify the nature of developmental disorders. It challenges the basis of standard behaviourally based diagnostic practice, showing how the role of biology and cognition is crucial to understanding the underlying nature of these disorders. It also sets out a clear method for assessing and comparing the many alternative theories.

An understanding of developmental disorders depends on being able to address the issue of cause and on making the link between disorder and normal process. These were the driving forces behind the emergence of the causal modelling methodology at the Cognitive Development Unit in London by the author and his colleague Uta Frith. John Morton elucidates this method and uses it ruthlessly to compare different theories of particular developmental disorders and to pinpoint their weaknesses. The result is a book that will have a profound impact on research and thinking in the fields of psychology, neuroscience and medicine.