

The Influence of Environmental Factors on the Psychological Growth of Children

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Abstract: Language is a skill that is naturally acquired by babies. From birth, toddlers are social beings attracted to communication. But over time, the child will emancipate himself from his parents, learning the codes of the outside world by himself, thus promoting his construction towards adult life. In this article we have tried to deal with the topic of the influence of the environment on language learning in children and different factors acting on their psychological development.

Keywords: development, impact, language learning, children influence, psychological growth.

INTRODUCTION. The psychological development of a child is inextricably linked with the surrounding environment. The interaction among physical settings, family interactions, and community frameworks influences their emotional and cognitive development to a great extent. Researchers and psychologists have repeatedly emphasized how harmful and nurturing environments influence developmental trajectories, which in turn affect not only the lives of children but also long-term mental health.

The influence of the environment on the future of children is crucial, particularly in precarious contexts. Children from difficult backgrounds, marked by instability and lack of support, are likely to develop emotional and behavioral disorders. However, early interventions, such as supporting the mother and improving living conditions, can radically change the development of these children. The social and cultural environment plays a determining role, capable of transforming an unfavorable destiny into a positive trajectory thanks to resilience and community solidarity. Boris Cyrulnik's¹ training highlights the fundamental impact of the social and cultural environment on the development of children and the intergenerational transmission of behavioral and cognitive traits. It explores how early interventions and community support can transform development prospects. The varied examples show that even children from precarious backgrounds can achieve remarkable fulfillment thanks to resilience tutors and an enriching environment. The crucial role of social rituals, emotional security, and cognitive stimulation is emphasized in promoting healthy and balanced development.

"The development of language in a child remains an unfathomable mystery." This sentence, uttered by the Belgian writer Stijn Streuvels, expresses in every way the wonder aroused by the learning

¹ Cyrulnik, B. (2001). Un merveilleux malheur. Editions Odile Jacob.

of language in our children. Thus, all babies (except in cases of severe disabilities) are born with the same cognitive abilities. It is during the first years of life that parents will have a leading role in the communication and development of their child's speech.

Physical Surroundings and Cognitive Growth

The physical environment provides the context for children's interactions with the world around them. For example, noise pollution can have a serious impact on cognitive processes. Children who are consistently exposed to noise - such as those living near airports or highways - show reduced reading comprehension, impaired memory, and increased stress levels. These types of environments make it difficult to focus and create challenges for learning that may lead to long-term educational problems.

Crowding in the living environment can have serious implications for child development. Homes with limited space often create disorganization, disrupting children's ability to settle or engage in contemplative play, both of which are conducive to intellectual growth. Studies have suggested that crowding can result in decreased parental responsiveness, because the stress of living under crowded conditions may exceed caretakers' coping resources. This loss of responsiveness contributes to the erosion of attachment security, further compounding developmental difficulties.

A major physical determinant is the exposure to environmental toxins. Even at low levels of concentration, lead exposure has been consistently linked to lower IQ, attention deficits, and behavioral problems. In urban and poor communities, children are often exposed to lead from decaying paints, contaminated water, and industrial waste. The effects of this are devastating and lead to a decline in cognitive abilities even after controlling for socioeconomic factors. Worryingly, these toxins possess the potential to exert transgenerational effects, with prenatal exposure adversely affecting the neurological health of the child prior to birth.

Social Environment and Emotional Health

The social environment exerts an influence that is equally significant as that of the physical environment. For example, family dynamics establish the fundamental context for initial emotional and psychological growth. Children nurtured in supportive environments characterized by attentive and responsive parents generally exhibit greater emotional and cognitive success. On the other hand, high levels of parental stress or disorganized home environments are associated with poorer language development and lower problem-solving skills. In extreme cases, neglectful or abusive environments can lead to persistent psychiatric disorders, including anxiety and depression.

Thirdly, communities play an essential role in the psychological development of a child. A safe community with parks, schools, and social services in walking distance creates an environment where children can learn social competencies and develop a sense of belonging. On the other hand, children who reside in neighborhoods marked by high crime rates or economic instability are at a higher risk of experiencing behavioral problems and suffering from chronic stress. It also increases resistance and the ability of children to cope with difficult circumstances through social support among peers and members of the immediate community.

Environmental Disparities and Developmental Consequences

Environmental disparities add insult to the challenge faced by children who reside in marginalized communities. In poorer neighborhoods, more residences have mold, limited ventilation, and less natural sunlight than in more affluent sections. These situations result in respiratory issues, disturbed sleep, and increased levels of stress, which all hinder cognitive and emotional development. Similarly, lack of access to green spaces denies children opportunities for outdoor activities that are crucial for their physical and psychological development.

International research also points out that environmental hazards are distributed unequally. In the economically developing world, exposure to lead and other toxins is still extremely high. A study

in Cairo, for example, estimated that about half of middle-class children had unsafe levels of lead in their blood. The consequence was cognitive dysfunction in a large percentage of the population. These facts point to the urgent need for environmental reforms, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Long-term Consequences for Mental Health

Detrimental environmental influences often have their impact even beyond the time of growth, influencing mental health even in adulthood. Initial exposure to noise, toxic chemicals, or variable social conditions may elevate the vulnerability to chronic stress, depression, and loss of cognition later in life. Conversely, children who grew up in stimulating environments that allowed them to receive good education and healthcare achieved better emotional stability and professional success. This indicates that nurturing environments-both at the level of the individual home and within the larger society-are crucial for optimal development. Socioeconomic inequalities in children's psychological development and mental health can be observed from an early age and tend to increase over time. However, there are important inter-individual differences in development, implying the possibility of resilience. Until recently, the physical aspects of the environment in which children grow up have been little examined, especially in a joint manner.

CONCLUSION. The environment is more than a backdrop in which the child develops; it forms the foundation for, among other things, the young child's psychological and emotional well-being. Addressing some of the environmental issues requires coordinated efforts from policymakers, educators, and community members themselves. By encouraging positive family dynamics, improving living situations, and providing opportunities for exposure to nature, a context can be fostered in which children will thrive. These interventions are not just economic investments in the health of individuals but also investments in the future of society as a whole.

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