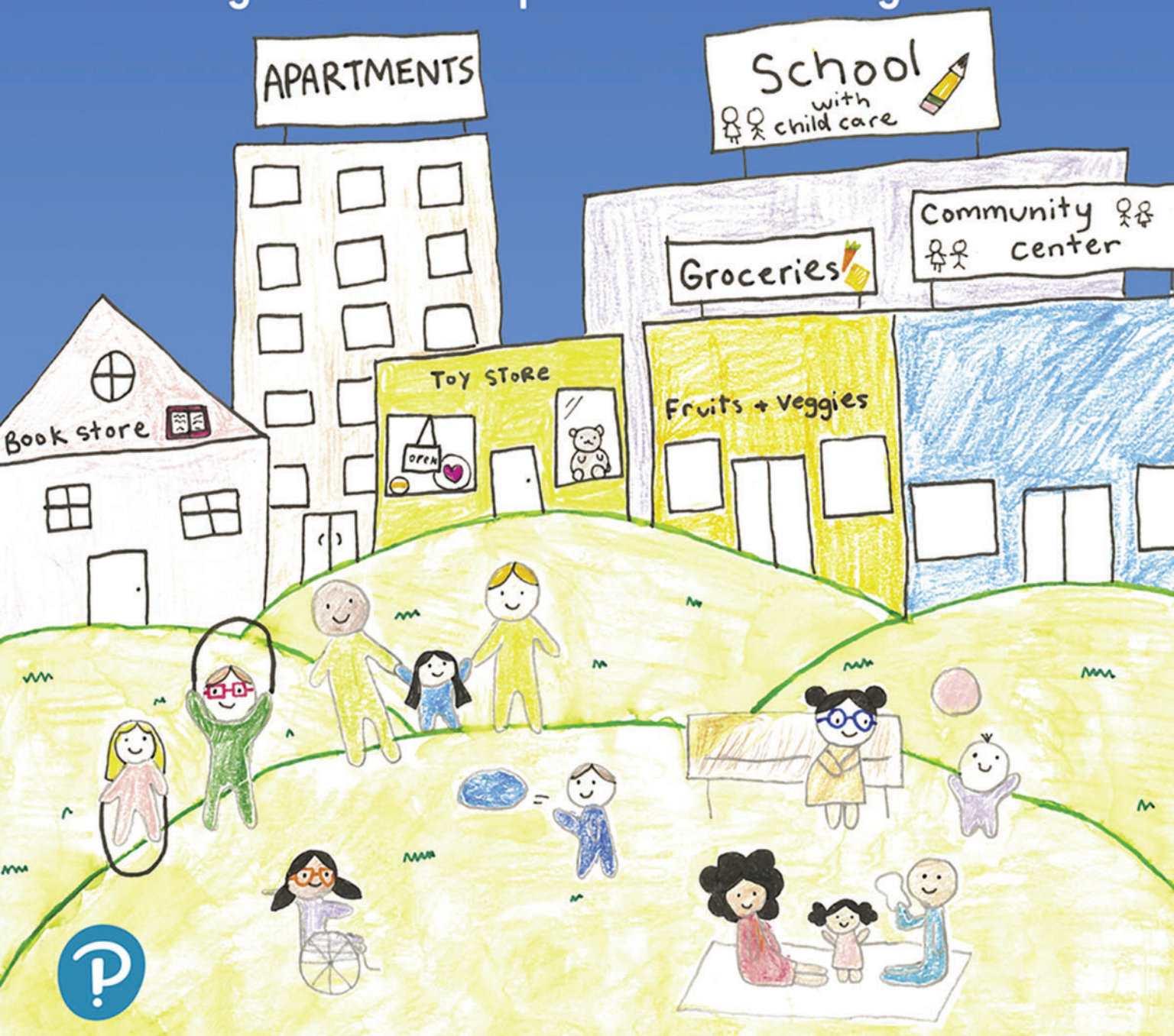
SEVENTH EDITION

Families, Schools, and Communities

Building Partnerships for Educating Children



Patricia A. Scully | Michele L. Stites | Hilary Roberts-King | Chandler Barbour

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Families, Schools, and Communities

Building Partnerships for Educating Children

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I dedicate this edition to Mary Rivkin, colleague, friend, and boon companion for over 25 years.—PS

I dedicate this edition to my husband, Brian, and daughters, Caroline and Charlotte. Thank you for always loving and supporting me.—MLS

I dedicate this edition to my husband, Byron, who bravely enters each new challenge with me.—HR-K

I dedicate this edition to the memory of my wife, Nita Hale Barbour, who left a superb legacy to all of us working in early childhood education.—CB

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Patricia Scully has worked in the field of early childhood education in a variety of roles for over 45 years. In addition to teaching in child-care and elementary school settings, she has worked as a child-care center director and as education director of several nonprofit agencies. Dr. Scully is an associate professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, where she directs the early childhood program. Her areas of expertise include early literacy, relaxation and stress reduction for children and teachers, and parent and community involvement in education.

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Chandler Barbour is a retired professor of Education from Towson University, and now lives in coastal Maine. He worked as a teacher and administrator in elementary schools and universities over a period of 42 years. He and his late wife, Nita Barbour, conceived of and developed this text, which is now in its seventh edition. Dr. Barbour is co-author of three books on teacher and school partnerships.

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PREFACE

The challenging world of 21st-century America presents new developments that emerge and affect educators' daily work. Our communities and therefore our children and their families experience unemployment and financial crises, health-care changes, immigration issues, an opioid epidemic, and global crises as well as gender issues and racial concerns. The continuing and ever-expanding influence of technology and media use affects almost everything we do.

But the critical task of nurturing, raising, and educating children remains at the front of our professional agenda. Our unchanging view is that it must be done well and humanely in spite of the changes and challenges we find around us. Additionally, it means developing very strong connections with children's caregivers and with the communities in which they live.

If you are preparing to work as a teacher, child-care professional, or in some other educational role, you will find this text valuable. While we use and refer to the school curriculum, structures, and administration context, the main thrust of our work is on how those conventional school elements link with the everyday lives of children. Our big argument is our belief that bringing about successful collaborations and partnerships among families, schools, and communities will make learning experiences more productive and positive for all concerned.

In getting ready for collaboration and partnerships you will need to understand a great deal about the context of children's lives as well as the lives of their caregivers. We devote a lot of space to presenting the social–cultural framework in America into which education and development must fit. Then we show routes and models for how families and educators can thrive and prosper in that context. To this end, we have brought several new and improved features to this text that will help teacher candidates as well as experienced educators.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- *Check Your Understandings* quizzes are aligned with *Learning Outcomes*, and are included at the end of every major section of text in every chapter. These multiple-choice and short answer quizzes support student learning and understanding by helping readers' self-check comprehension.
- A new chapter, *Communication Strategies for Collaboration*, has been added to the text, and offers many practical suggestions with multiple examples, such as a sample handbook for classroom or child care that can be adapted for individual use.
- The text has been streamlined with the subtraction of the chapter that detailed the history and philosophy of parent and community involvement in education. The most essential information from that chapter has been inserted strategically into other chapters of the text.

- *Why This Topic Matters* continues to open each chapter, but now strengthens the connection between each chapter's focus and its relationship to partnerships among the three settings.
- *Learning Outcomes*, which open each chapter, have been streamlined and are more closely aligned to headings, formative assessments, and activities to ensure consistency throughout the chapter.
- The latest statistics on population diversity are highlighted to emphasize variations in gender issues, ethnic factors, spiritual beliefs, and political motivations.
- Newly constructed and revised figures, graphs, and tables expand text information in a graphic mode.
- Military families and their special challenges have expanded coverage as an understudied population.
- Outdoor classrooms, PlayPods, and nature education highlight new areas that match the thrust of this text.
- Vignettes have been updated to promote student engagement with real-life stories that help strengthen understanding of chapter content. Other features—*Media Matters, Ideas for Your Classroom*, *Examine Your Beliefs and Practices,* and *Perspectives on Diversity*, have been updated to promote additional application strategies.
- *How Learning about this Topic Will Help You Become a Better Teacher* is a new feature that concludes each chapter by helping the reader connect the chapter content to their professional goals.

Education of children is one of the biggest concerns in the United States today. Political figures at all levels, the general public, and many social agencies wonder if our schools are going in the best direction. This concern is not new, of course, and questions about educational reform have existed for generations. But in addition to academic concerns, today's schools face challenges related to evaluation and management issues, protection and child health measures, and curricular matters.

Our text presents the argument that strong educational programs are best achieved when school personnel work carefully with children's families and the surrounding community. Too often, the social settings of school, home, and community pull in different directions when successful collaboration on agreed-upon objectives provides a more successful outcome.

The idea of agency collaboration in many ventures has moved to the forefront in the past few decades. We now find partnerships emerging in welfare and health programs, in environmental and urban development programs, and in courts and incarceration programs. Former President Barack Obama's administration moved the issue of cooperative and collaborative action to center stage. While the direction of education under President Donald Trump seems to be veering in the direction of increased focus on vouchers and charter schools, hopefully it will remain a good time to forge new relationships between schools, families, and communities—so many seem ready to accept collaboration.

In this book, we acquaint our readers with the many influences focused on young children and how these factors affect the child's interests and readiness to learn. We also present a case for the beyond-the-school curriculum that so often gets lost in our concerns for school objectives. We are convinced that with good planning, teachers can make education more effective for children by uniting and using the reservoir of outside help in homes and communities. In other words, this book makes a case for a "school and beyond" curriculum for young children.

Significant steps for improving children's education through collaboration and partnership are already being taken in schools and communities across the United States. Research studies, controlled assessments, and personal accounts support new

partnership approaches. The authors salute all these efforts. We are convinced that teachers can make big impacts on the children in their classes through their efforts to involve parents and community members in their classrooms. We also maintain that most schools do not need to reconceptualize curricula or change their current teaching practices. The big job now is to study and adapt the amazing examples that already exist to fit the needs of individual programs, schools, and communities. This text aims to help readers learn how to do just that.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS TEXT

The beginning chapter of this text, *Home, School, and Community Influences on Children's Lives*, provides a clear introduction to the three social settings—home, school, and community—discusses how these social settings interplay to affect children's lives, and the importance of collaboration between the three. It also establishes the theoretical framework of the text (Bronfenbrenner's human ecology theory), offers an overview of the philosophical perspectives of education, and introduces many of the issues that will be dealt with in greater detail in later chapters of the text.

Chapter 2, *Viewing Family Diversity*, presents information about the various family configurations present in the United States. In reviewing different family patterns and clarifying the many ways in which families function, we hope to help prospective teachers better understand the children they will teach. This information also helps prospective teachers grasp the range of situations that professionals encounter as they work with children in a diverse society. Our hope is that readers will appreciate our urging of more collaboration in light of this diversity.

Chapter 3, *Understanding Roles and Experiences of Parents*, focuses on how caregivers meet children's needs through various nurturing practices. We explore how cultural patterns, interaction styles, and outside influences may differ from family to family, emphasizing that there is no "ideal" family form. Understanding that most families, no matter how they are constituted, provide appropriate care for their children will help prospective teachers connect more easily with all kinds of families.

Chapter 4, *Early Learning and Child Care: Infancy through School Age*, is devoted to the exploration of out-of-home care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and young school-age children. We make the point that teachers working in any setting for young children need to understand how child care contributes to children's development and family stability. Through discussion of various child-care arrangements and practices, we explore the benefits of quality child care on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development as well as stability for the family.

Chapter 5, *Working with Families of Children with Disabilities*, focuses on the need in both schools and communities for an inclusive program for children with disabilities. Research and information about the federal laws that mandate inclusive practices have been updated to reflect current requirements and regulatory language. Practical suggestions and sample materials are included to demonstrate ways in which teachers may support families of children with disabilities. Ensuring the optimal growth and development of children with disabilities is a responsibility shared by their families, schools, and community agencies, and in this chapter, we examine the issues from the perspectives of parents, teachers, and other professionals.

Chapter 6, *Protecting and Safeguarding Children*, is an extension of family and school issues, and provides essential information about teachers' responsibilities for recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse. In this seventh edition, we have updated the research on bullying and included increased coverage of issues related to nutrition and childhood obesity. We have also added content on helping children cope with the

effects of violence and other traumatic events in their communities, including issues related to substance abuse.

Chapters 7 and 8, *Influences of the Home* and *Community Influences on Children's Development*, respectively, deal with the extensive but informal curricula in homes and communities. Curricula surrounds children, and although we do not always take notice of it, much of what children learn comes from the world outside the classroom. In Chapter 8, we make a stronger connection to the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's model but continue to provide practical information about place-based education, nature preschools, outdoor classrooms, and the many community opportunities for children's learning.

Chapter 9, *Communication Strategies for Collaboration*, uses Epstein's School–Family–Community Partnership Model as the framework for this chapter, with each area of involvement addressed with suggestions for communicating with families in each of these domains. A hallmark of this new chapter is its focus on establishing welcoming schools and classrooms with strong communication through many channels. Many practical ideas for implementing the ideas in this chapter are included, making it very useful for potential teachers.

Chapters 10 and 11, *Establishing and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships* and *Building School Partnerships with Families and Community Groups,* respectively, focus on the possibilities for collaboration among the three social settings. Chapter 10 offers additional practical suggestions for ways teachers, parents, and others can work together. Chapter 11 examines the demanding and often difficult process of merging the efforts of people interested in collaboration. In this final chapter, we present several successful models from around the country that demonstrate collaboration. We believe these time-tested programs can provide helpful examples for agencies and communities that seek to establish healthy partnerships.

The Appendix presents an extensive and reorganized bibliography of current and classic children's books to help illustrate the family, school, and community diversity presented in this text in a realistic and child-friendly manner. Additional sections have been added on gender identity, expression, and expectations as well as on refugees, immigrants, and migrant workers to reflect current developments in those areas.

SPECIAL FEATURES

To assist instructors and students using this text, we have included several pedagogical aids.

Learning Outcomes, Summaries, and Questions

Concise statements of each chapter's main ideas serve as *Learning Outcomes* for the content that follows. We have started each chapter with an overview paragraph—*Why this Topic Matters*—to set the stage, and an ending *How Learning about this Topic Will Help You Become a Better Teacher* helps readers connect this content to their professional goals. The chapter also ends with questions and activities that align with the *Learning Outcomes*. For students, the activities will help apply concepts presented, and stimulate reflection and discussion on the reading as well as on their own experiences.

Classroom Applications

While we have maintained many of the *Examine Your Beliefs and Practices* features, we have replaced some of them with additional *Ideas for Your Classroom*. These provide additional strategies that readers can take to the classroom. Our idea is to help readers find personal application for the material being presented.

Vignettes

Stories of real-life events that we have encountered will clarify many concepts presented throughout the chapters. The children in the vignettes represent families from a wide range of ethnic and socioeconomic groups who live in a variety of geographic areas. These personal stories (except the names used) are all from our personal experiences, and give a human connection to each chapter's information and purpose. New vignettes that relate to timely issues have been added for the seventh edition.

Resources

No text can give comprehensive coverage of the diverse topics included here for either community workers or teacher candidates. All instructors will supplement this content with their specialized knowledge, particular readings, and projects. We provide a small list of key organizations and agencies that relate to our profession, as well as websites that give current information and status reports for our chapter features.

Figures and Tables

Throughout the text, we have encapsulated text content in a table or a figure for review or, in some cases, to translate pieces of information. These are expanded and updated from US Census Bureau data and research studies.

Bibliography of Children's Books

The selections in the Appendix present examples of children's stories from different family arrangements in a variety of settings. This updated bibliography provides instructors, in-service teachers, and other professionals with curricular material to illuminate the chapter content. Two additional sections on gender identity, expression, and expectations as well as on refugees, immigrants, and migrant workers are new to this edition, and reflect current developments in those areas. The bibliography will be particularly valuable for Chapters 2 through 8.

Glossary

Readers will find the Glossary helpful in defining the specialized terms we have used. The bolded terms in the text—if clicked on in the eText—will direct the reader to the Glossary definitions.

SUPPLEMENTS

The following instructor tools supplement, support, and reinforce the content presented throughout the text. All supplements are available for download for instructors who adopt this text. Go to pearsonhighered.com, click on "Educators" under "Our Customers," register for access (if you have not already), and download files. For more information, contact your Pearson representative.

Online Instructor's Resource Manual

The Instructor's Resource Manual extends the activities, questions, and overviews from each chapter to provide professors with additional practical application.

Online Test Bank

The Test Bank includes essay, multiple-choice, and true/false test questions to assess student understanding of chapters. An Answer Key is provided.

Online PowerPoint® Slides

The PowerPoint® slides can work in conjunction with the Instructor's Manual to summarize key chapter concepts.

TestGen

Test Gen is a powerful assessment generation program available exclusively from Pearson that helps instructors easily create quizzes and exams. Install TestGen on your personal computer (Windows or Macintosh), and create your own exams for course testing for both print or online use. It contains a set of test items organized by chapter and based on the text's contents. The items are the same as those in the Online Test Bank. The tests can be downloaded in a variety of Learning Management System formats.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors have received help and support from a number of individuals. We wish to acknowledge in particular Harper King, Merriwether King, Jane McLoughlin, Margaret McLoughlin, Beatrice McLoughlin, Caroline Stites, and Charlotte Stites for creating the attractive and charming illustrations that enhance the beginning of each chapter. Special thanks to Merriwether King, who also designed our cover art.

We would also like to thank the following individuals who reviewed the previous edition for their valuable input, which helped make this seventh edition a success:

BRIEF CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

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CHAPTER 1

Home, School, and Community Influences on Children's Lives

WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS

As a beginning professional in the field of early care and education, you have undoubtedly studied child psychology, curriculum, and teaching methods to enable you to work successfully with the children in your future classroom. To succeed as a teacher, however, you also must develop skills in working with families and discover how to connect with the larger community. We know that teachers and schools influence children's growth and development in significant ways. But their learning, behaviors, and viewpoints are also affected by their families, members of the immediate community, and forces in society. It is important for you to understand these other influences so you can provide the most appropriate education for the children you will teach.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Discuss how the three social settings—home, school, and community—affect children's perceptions and attitudes about learning and their success at school.
- Explain how these three social settings have greater or lesser impact, depending on the child's age, the child's stage of development, and the social context.
- Compare *nativism*, *behaviourism*, and *constructivism* and the modes of instruction that stem from each approach, and what teaching and learning are like in classrooms that embrace these philosophies.
- Identify the challenges affecting education in the 21st century, and how collaboration among the social settings is helping address them.

At one time, the family was the main socializing and educating agent for children. Home and school were one, and children learned from their parents, siblings, and others within the context of work at home and in the surrounding community. Over the years, however, school and community influences have increased dramatically. The purpose of this text is to help you understand how the social settings of the family, school, and community influence children in the 21st century, and how you, as an educator, can help promote **collaboration** among the three settings. The authors are convinced that strong collaboration is needed to resolve the challenging issues facing children in our increasingly diverse country.

This chapter provides an overview of the three social settings and their influences on children's development as well as an introduction to topics covered in depth in the succeeding chapters. You'll find some of these influences appearing in the following vignette.

Zach was waiting impatiently at the child-care center for his mother to pick him up. He looked in his "cubbie" for the superhero figure—a gift from his father during last week's visit. Zach took his Marvel Super Hero Masher figure of Wolverine from his backpack, where he had left it on arriving at the center, and approached Kelsey, who was also waiting for her mother. He grinned, and in his deepest voice, said, "I'm warning you, Magneto, I will destroy you," as he lunged at Kelsey. "No, you won't, Wolverine. I will destroy you!" said Kelsey with a giggle, entering into the play and raising a fist to Zach as he lunged Wolverine toward her. The children ran around and jabbed playfully at each other until Zach accidentally struck Kelsey's head, and Kelsey began to cry. At that moment, Zach's mother and the teacher entered the room. While calming Kelsey, the teacher said to Zach's mother, "We don't allow aggressive play here at the center. I really wish you wouldn't let Zach bring toys like that."

In spite of Zach's attempt to explain what had happened, his tired mother informed him that he couldn't play video games that evening. When they reached home, she let Zach select The Three Billy Goats Gruff *and* Max's Dragon Shirt *to read while he waited for his father to pick him up. When Tom, Zach's mother's boyfriend, arrived, Zach asked him to read. As Tom got to the first little goat crossing the bridge, Zach exclaimed, "Oh, let me read the troll part." Pulling the book closer, he asked, "Is this where the troll speaks?" "Yeah, how did you know?" Tom exclaimed.*

Zach replied, "Dad told me," and then, in a gruff "pretend read" voice, demanded, "Who's that tramping on my bridge?" At each goat's passing, his voice got gruffer, and he clenched his fist as he told the goats he was going to eat them up. When the third goat passed, Tom, in character, gave Zach a gentle push, hugging and tickling him as the "goat" pushed the troll into the river. Zach giggled and said, "Let's read it again, and I'll be the goats this time." When Zach got to the third goat part, he butted Tom, who pulled Zach off the couch with him, "falling into the river." A bit of horseplay ensued. Zach then got up and said, "Now, let's read Max's Dragon Shirt. *You know, I'm gonna ask my dad to buy me a dragon shirt like that. Isn't it cool?"*

The messages children receive from their surroundings are not always consistent, but they still influence attitudes and values. One can't be sure, for example, exactly what Zach is internalizing in this late-afternoon episode. His father bought him a Wolverine figure that represents aggression, but the child-care center bans violent toys. In spite of the ban, his friend Kelsey seems to share in his "aggressive-acting behavior," at least until she is hurt. Zach's mother attempts to reinforce the school's nonaggression policy by forbidding him to play video games temporarily and by suggesting a more passive activity. Still, Zach finds acceptance of his need to express aggression by reenacting a story with his mother's boyfriend and engaging in horseplay.

Like Zach, children may receive very different messages from the adults in their lives about issues such as violence. The media also play a role in the development of toys for young children, many of which are based on movies with PG-13 ratings that are not appropriate for young children. Zach's dad even took him to the new X-Men movie, a

movie that his mother was not comfortable having him see because it contained a lot of violent content. Conflicting messages from family members, teachers, peers, and society underscore the complexity of influences on children as they grow and develop.

HOW HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY AFFECT CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT SCHOOL

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) offers a good model for a deeper understanding about the various influences on children's development. According to Bronfenbrenner, five systems (see Figure 1-1) are the primary elements that impact the biological potential of children. In other words, children do not develop in isolation but within their relationships to family, school, community, and society. The interplay between the child's inborn characteristics and the social settings causes changes in the child, which in turn produce other changes. In addition, his theory holds that these cascading changes have ever-increasing effects, both positive and negative, on a child's development.

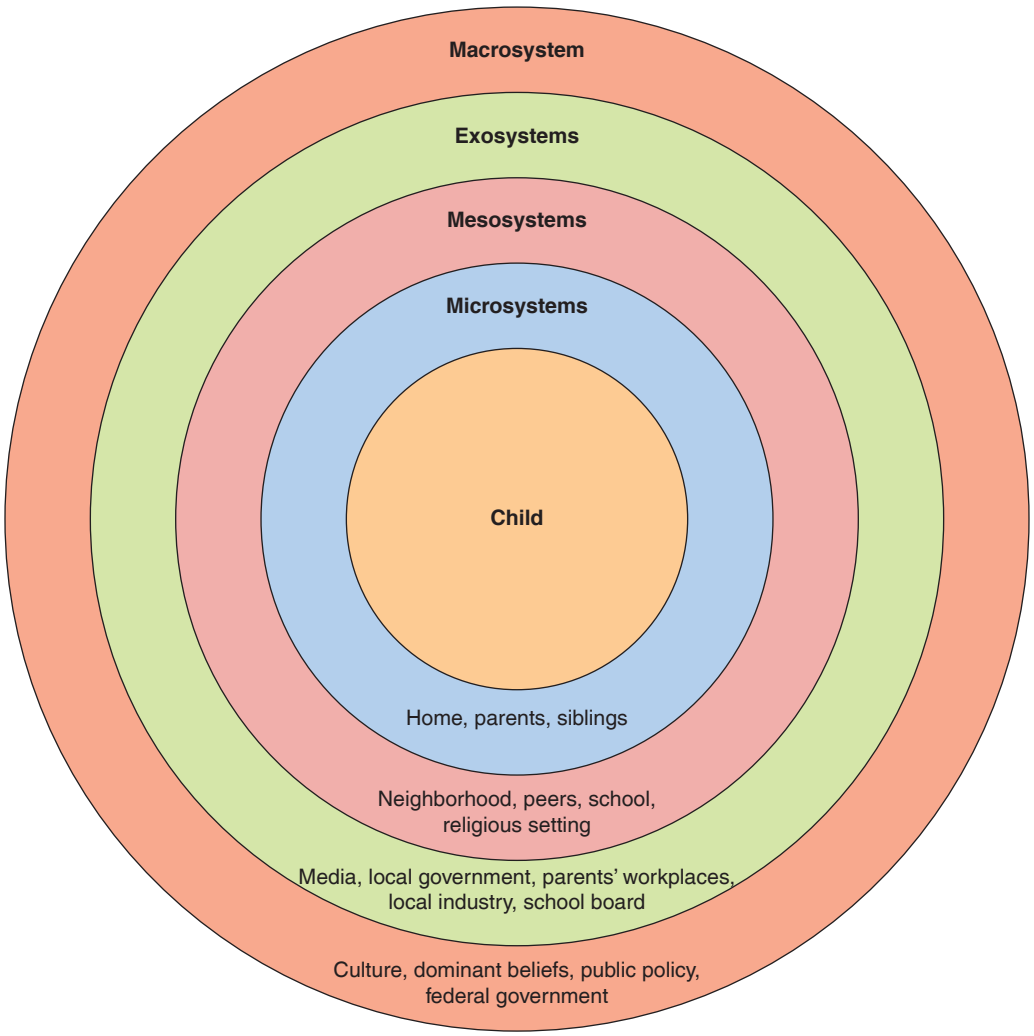


FIGURE 1-1 Bronfenbrenner's Model of Ecological Systems
Source: Based on Bronfenbrenner (1979).

As a teacher, you cannot ensure that all the influences impacting children are positive or consistent, so you must be sensitive to the idea that children's learning will be affected both positively and negatively by many factors beyond your control. You must also be attuned to your own feelings and reactions, as these too affect children's growth. As you identify the strengths of **family**, media, and community influences, you should strive to build on these qualities. Figure 1-2 shows you the influence of home, school, and community experiences on the typical young child today.

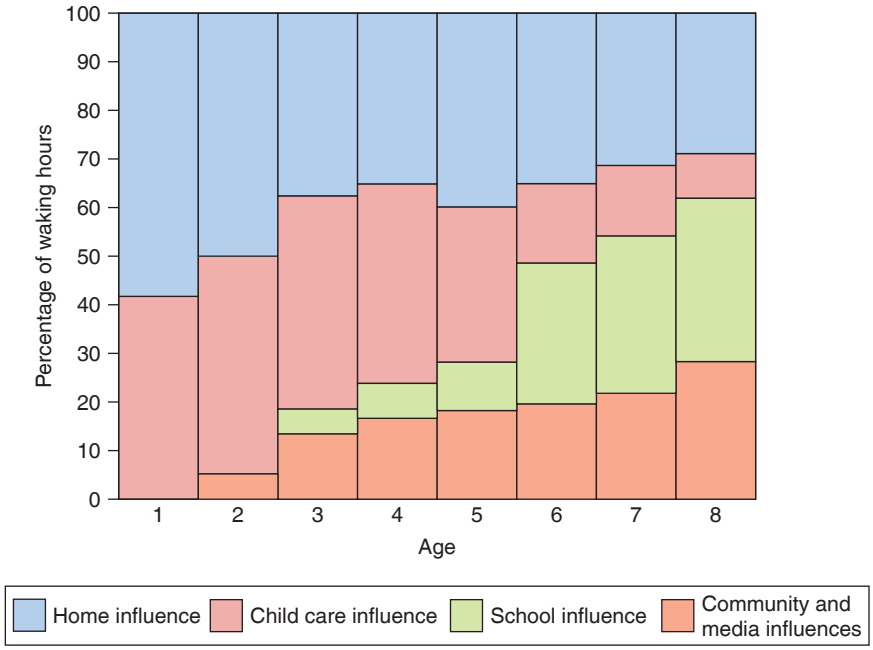


FIGURE 1-2 Social Setting Influences According to Age

Note: Percentages show the waking-hours experience of composite American children. The increasing influence of school and community relates to other factors in addition to age—for example, stage of development, location, family socioeconomic status, and extent of contact.

Source: Based on Berns (2012), Swim (2014), and Woolfolk (2009).

Parents, teachers, and community members all play essential roles in helping socialize children to the values and customs of the larger society (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, at early ages, children are aware of their family's and community's attitudes regarding education, other cultures, racial or religious groups, and roles that males and females play in society (Fiske-Rusciano, 2012). As you will learn later in this text, the cultural background, family configuration, and economic situation of the family are all important factors in determining a child's perceptions and attitudes.

Attitudes determine what individuals attend to in a situation, how they perceive the situation, and even their response to the event. Therefore, children acquire certain attitudes by hearing words, observing actions, and inferring the feelings of significant others in their environment. These attitudes then become more firm when children are encouraged to express such beliefs. However, as children become aware of different values and beliefs, they may modify their attitudes, and can even help change those of adults. This shows us that through social interaction, both adults and children can influence each other's perceptions and attitudes.

Home Influence on Attitudes and Perceptions

Children's attitudes and perceptions emerging from home influences develop early. Family members communicate verbally and nonverbally to their young children how they feel about themselves and their neighbors, schools, and communities.

Mrs. Kohl was astonished when her 3-year-old, Brittany, spat at Mrs. Foster, an older woman living upstairs in their building. Mrs. Kohl didn't remember that when Mrs. Foster knocked at the apartment door the day before, she had told her husband not to answer, saying, "I'm tired of the old bat coming around, nosing in our business, and always borrowing something. I feel like spitting, she annoys me so." When Brittany's mother took her to her room as punishment, the child said defiantly, "I spit. She old bat."

At this point, it may be just Mrs. Foster for whom Brittany has antipathy, but continued negative attitudes expressed by her parents and others toward older persons will affect the child's acceptance of and attitude toward the presence and authority of older persons. If Mrs. Foster displays friendliness and kindness toward Brittany, however, she may modify the child's perception of her and perhaps influence Brittany's mother to feel differently as well.

Parents' attitudes and feelings toward school will influence their children's feelings in a similar way. The annual Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Richardson, 2016) over the past 48 years show that on the whole, Americans value their local schools and have confidence in them. On the other hand, the poll uncovered that Americans disagree on a number of important issues in public education, including educational goals, standards, priorities, and funding. While almost half of the respondents see preparing students academically as the main goal of a public school education, about a quarter say the schools should mainly be preparing students for work, and another quarter see preparation for good citizenship as the main goal. The survey also found that Americans are shifting away from valuing higher-level academics and toward work skills. With these differing attitudes toward the purpose of education, parents communicate their confidence in the schooling their children are receiving and influence how their children react to their teachers, their learning experiences, and even attending school, as the following vignette illustrates.

Jules Selmes/Pearson Education Ltd.

Children become aware of school, family, and community attitudes at an early age.

A few years later, Mrs. Kohl and her neighbor, Mrs. Reed, received letters stating that their daughters would be in Mrs. Owens's kindergarten class. Reactions in the two households differed, and each affected the children's feelings about school. Mrs. Reed was delighted. Turning to her daughter, she said, "Oh, Sammie, you're going to love school! Mrs. Owens was my teacher, and you'll just love all the fun things you'll do in her class."

Mrs. Kohl, on the other hand, felt quite different. She expressed her thoughts to her husband in her daughter's presence: "Rats, Brittany has that old biddy, Mrs. Owens. I was hoping she'd get the new young teacher." It was no wonder that the two children reacted differently when they met at the bus stop on the first day of school. Samantha jumped up and down, and grabbed Brittany's hand as she ran toward the stopped bus, saying, "Oh, we're going to have so much fun." Brittany, however, pushed her away and refused to get on the bus. No amount of cajoling from the adults could convince her to board. Mrs. Kohl was forced to drive Brittany to school for several days before the child would take the bus with her friend.

Initially, both children appeared to be embracing their parents' attitudes as they viewed and responded to schooling. It is difficult to determine what caused the change in Brittany. School may have been fun, and she may have started to enjoy her teacher, or perhaps her peers influenced her thinking on "how one ought to go to school."

It stands to reason that children whose parents stress the importance of school have greater academic success. In her classic study on early readers, Durkin (1966) noted the commonality of influences on early readers relating to the effect of home environment and parental perceptions of **literacy development**. Her work and later studies indicate that parents' attitudes toward reading and their modeling of reading with their children are critical factors in children's development. A fuller examination of parenting and its influence on children's development and learning is presented in a later chapter.

PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY

Challenges of Differing Home Values

When children's attitudes and perceptions are in sync with the values of the school, it tends to be easier for teachers to establish relationships with the family and consider them cooperative parents. For example, children whose parents stress good work habits, punctuality, and task completion tend to do better in school. But these values may not be stressed in families who are struggling economically or whose cultural backgrounds may lead them to regard time as more fluid and relationships as more essential than completion of a particular job. Not all parents read to their children at bedtime. Perhaps they are unable to read English, are working the night shift, or tell their children stories instead. So, a big challenge for you as a teacher is trying to understand and appreciate attitudes and perceptions that are different from those that match school values.

As a teacher, you will need to develop interpersonal competence and intercultural competence as you work with families from various backgrounds who may have attitudes that are new to you. Teachers who have interpersonal competence cope effectively with the unfamiliar, quickly establish rapport with others, sense other people's feelings, connect with people from various backgrounds, and work to clear up miscommunication (Evans, 2013). Those with intercultural competence have similar traits that allow them to recognize and respect cultural differences while seeking ways to build understanding (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012). As you think about yourself as a developing professional, keep these qualities in mind, and work to cultivate them in yourself. They will prove invaluable to you as a teacher in our diverse society. As the next section indicates, the attitude of school personnel toward families can have a great impact on children's perceptions of school and success in that setting.

School Influence on Attitudes and Perceptions

As we have noted, parents' attitudes have a major effect on children's learning and acceptance of school. The attitudes of school personnel also affect how children learn. Research on educators' attitudes toward teaching in low-income schools (Halvorsen, Lee, & Andrade, 2009) indicates that educators need to improve their expectations for the achievement of these children. Furthermore, many teachers do not expect low-income parents to be productive participants in their children's education, and do not seek out their involvement. Children internalize attitudes of disrespect, and their self-worth is diminished or enhanced as they sense how school personnel view the lifestyle and culture of their families.

In the following vignette, Camille and Helen reacted differently to a bus driver's careless words, although both were distressed.

Camille and Helen arrived at their homes upset over a comment their bus driver had made. There were empty cans on the bus, and the driver said, "Don't touch them cans. I just drove a bunch of Black kids on a trip, and they aren't clean." Camille exclaimed to her mother, "But I ride the bus every day. Does he think I'm not clean 'cause I'm Black?"

Helen's distress was similar, but from a different perspective. "We had to ride the bus after a bunch of Black kids today, and they left dirty cans. Ugh!" Both Camille and Helen could have misinterpreted the bus driver's words, but their attitudes about self and others were affected by the driver's careless speech.

Teachers can't prevent what happened to Camille or Helen. They can only be alert to problems and provide an emotional climate that accepts all children regardless of their ethnic or social class standing. They must be aware of how their words and actions can bring to pass the **self-fulfilling prophecies** noted long ago by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968).

Rosenthal and Jacobson's classic study indicates that teachers' expectations of children result in self-fulfilling prophecies. For example, the children whom teachers perceive to be capable and intelligent will do much better than will those children whom teachers do not perceive to be capable and intelligent. Studies conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s continued to show that children are affected by their teachers' perceptions of them, and react both behaviorally and academically according to their teachers' expectations (Marzano, 2010).

ETHNICITY ISSUES Because of their ethnically based preconceived expectations of performance, teachers tend to treat children of certain minority ethnic groups differently. For example, teachers make less eye contact, smile less, make less physical contact, and engage in less playful interactions with children for whom they have low expectations (Marzano, 2010). Teachers are also likely to call on these students less frequently, ask them less challenging questions, and reward them for less rigorous responses. In contrast, teachers give majority-culture and other children for whom they have high expectations more opportunities to respond, more praise, and more time to formulate a response. Such differential treatment over time lowers children's involvement in school, and may prevent them from developing confidence in their abilities. Minority children whose teachers perceive them as exerting less classroom effort than White children have less chance to realize their academic potential (Wildhagen, 2012). A particularly troublesome outcome of this discrimination is the low number of men of color who attend postsecondary programs.

EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Recognizing that your own attitudes and perceptions can be a powerful force in helping children succeed in school is an important step in your professional development. During your teaching career, you will undoubtedly work with children who are very different from you. Their family situations may be much more complex than the one you experienced as a child. Their religious or cultural beliefs may be unfamiliar to you. The amount of money available in their homes may be much greater or much less than in that of your family. It is essential that you accept children and their families as they are and not use your own experiences as the norm, with other situations considered as deviations. Work on becoming a teacher who believes that all children are capable of success, and actively try to make connections with their families (Nieto, 2012). Not only will you be making a great contribution to the lives of the children you teach, you may also be creating connections between the family and school that might not have been made without your efforts toward understanding and acceptance. It takes only one person to create the bridge between school and home.

GENDER ISSUES Gender expectations limit both boys and girls. In the past, girls performed better academically than boys in elementary school, but their performance dropped in middle and high school. Today, however, girls are achieving higher grades than boys throughout their school years, and are more likely to complete college degrees and enroll in graduate school. Boys still score significantly higher in math on the **Scholastic Aptitude Test** (College Board, 2015), and one consequence of this is that women and girls continue to lag in their participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. Boys, on the other hand, are lagging in literacy skills, and that has led to lower college admission and graduation rates for males (Voyer & Voyer, 2014).

Some researchers suggest that these gender gaps are the result of continued gender stereotyping, with reading seen as something girls do and math and science more for boys (Whitmire, 2010). There is also evidence that boys are less engaged in school, and that this lack of engagement has led to weaker academic preparation (Diprete & Buchmann, 2013). Boys do best in schools where academic effort is expected and valued. High expectations for all students in settings that break down gender stereotyping will help close the achievement gap between the sexes.

A more recent gender issue emerging in children relates to gender identity. Gender identity, which develops in early childhood, refers to a person's inner, deeply felt

sense of being male or female, whereas biological sex is assigned at birth and based on physical characteristics. As scientific research expands our understanding of the origins of gender, some individuals have determined that their gender identity differs from their biological sex. While most children's gender identity aligns with their biological sex, sometimes it does not. Teachers who accept children's gender identity and recognize that all children have different strengths and learning styles will avoid gender stereotyping, which shortchanges both girls and boys (Ehrensaft, 2016).

Noam Armonn/Shutterstock

Traditions and cultural celebrations play a part in children's development.

Community Influence on Attitudes and Perceptions

Both **formal** and **informal community structures** (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1993) influence children's attitudes toward learning and schooling. Formal structures include political and social systems, health and recreational services, businesses, entertainment, and educational services. Informal structures are the social networks that each family establishes with people outside the home. The range of influence in these structures can be complex because of the different perspectives held by the organizations within a community and the interactions of individual citizens. Nevertheless, members of many communities hold common positive attitudes toward their local schools. This is shown by the community-wide political support for school activities, linkages established with other community organizations, and news coverage by local media.

It is difficult to measure the actual effect of community attitudes on student achievement, but we know that children quickly assimilate attitudes expressed by adults around them. Research suggests that a community's **social climate** and the personal relationships that children form within the community influence their attitudes about learning (Sadowski, 2013). For example, if school sports activities are highlighted in media coverage and the teams get money for trips but the school librarian can't buy children's literature for the library, children soon get the message that being a good athlete is more important than being a good reader. When community businesses display the poems, stories, and artwork of local primary-school children, children understand that the community values their academic achievements. Primary-school children are less likely to make such direct connections to community attitudes toward their schools, but they get excited about winning a pizza for reading a certain number of books. Eventually, they get the message that reading is important.

Businesspeople often provide support for various school programs. The support may be given as money, contributions of goods, or volunteer activities. When children witness that support, they learn that important people value learning. When children hear the local grocer, businessperson, or politician comment on the positive qualities of teachers, they learn that others value the learning experiences these teachers provide.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

Focus on the "Community Orchard"

There are many ways to connect with both the informal and formal communities to support your work with children and their families. At the beginning of the school year, get to know each family and the important people who make up their community. At back-to-school night, for example, you could have each family make up a "community orchard" rather than a family tree. In their orchards, families might place neighbors, extended family members, close friends, a child-care center, a religious group, and/or other organizations with which they have important connections. This information will help you learn about the child and also give you sources for resources, volunteer help, or service opportunities for your class.

You can help influence community attitudes toward your school when you plan field trips to local businesses, invite workers to school to talk about their jobs and read to children, and include officeholders and other community workers in school-sponsored assemblies. Make certain that children write thank-you notes, and offer children's work for display in public places and commercial spaces. One teacher's display of her first graders' artwork outside a department store led to a countywide art show in a large regional shopping mall the following year. When businesses are thanked by parents for their contributions to the school, the connections between home, school, and community are further strengthened.

Peer Group Influence

In ways similar to the community, the **peer group** influences how children learn the values, habits, and behaviors of their own cultural group and those of others. Even very young children develop a sense of self from their perceptions of important people in their surroundings, including relatives, teachers, and peers. Socioeconomic status, ethnic identity, and parents' occupations affect how families view themselves and the process by which they socialize their children (Graham, Taylor, & Ho, 2011). Later, as children leave the home setting, their self-perception and socializing skills are influenced by how their peers view them.

When children move from home to the child-care center, the school, and the community at large, they begin to form attachments, and friendships emerge through their play. These relationships will, of course, influence behavior. Even infants and toddlers are observed reacting to other infants and toddlers by touching them, by crying when they cry, and later by offering nurturance or comfort. By about age 3, early friendships begin to form, and children's peers begin to have a more lasting influence (Howes, 2011).

We find that peer influence on children gradually becomes more important as they move into middle childhood (9 to 11 years old). Peer relationships contribute to children's development in important ways, and are an essential aspect of development (Rubin, Bukowski, & Laursen, 2011). Gradually, children discover that others can share their feelings or attitudes, or have quite different ones. The perspectives they gain from other children can affect how some children feel about their own families.

It is often difficult for children to adjust to the idea that other families can function radically differently from their own, yet hold many of the same attitudes and beliefs and be equally nurturing and secure. Children usually have a "family" view of their own culture and that of others. So, when confronted with the perspectives of peers, they often need to rethink their own viewpoints. You can think of the peer group as a barometer for children when they examine themselves and their feelings about self and family.

The peer group will, of course, influence the development of children's socializaion skills. These early friendships help children learn how to negotiate and relate to others, including their siblings and other family members. They learn from peers how to cooperate and socialize according to **group norms** and group-sanctioned modes of behavior.

The peer group can influence what the child values, knows, wears, eats, and learns. We find that the extent of this influence, however, depends on other factors, such as the age and personality of children and the nature of the group (Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2011). Socialization is particularly important for children with disabilities, and is the reason many programs include peers who are typically developing in special education programs or include children with disabilities in general education classrooms.

In its most acceptable form, the peer group is a healthy influence in which children develop negotiating skills and learn to deal with hostility and solve problems in a social context. In its most destructive mode, the peer group can demand blind obedience to a group norm, which can result in socially alienated gangs and experiments with addictive substances. As children enter the primary-school years, peers will exert greater influence. When this influence is problematic and harmful, professionals will want to modify it. Counteracting negative peer influences is very difficult, however. Still, becoming aware of these influences gives you some background while you continue to show an accepting attitude and model positive interactions with all people.

Media Influence

Print and analog broadcast models of television and radio were the principal media until the 1990s, but digital technologies have revolutionized communication in recent decades. Increased speed, volume, and interactivity of communication are characteristics of media today, and the internet can be accessed by computers, tablets, cell phones, and other hand-held devices. Digital television, online publications, and satellite radio are transforming the older forms of media so that they too have many of the interactive characteristics of newer media. Today, all members of our society are influenced, both directly and indirectly, by powerful media vehicles. See Figure 1-3 for a summary of media influences on children's lives.

TELEVISION, NEW MEDIA AND THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY The entertainment industry has a tremendous influence on American society. Whereas a few movie and TV stars, musicians, and sports figures were the entertainment models for generations during the 20th century, today the visual and auditory stimuli of various forms of media pulsate in most homes and communities. Some of this exposure is educational, positive, and directed at an appropriate level for young children. A considerable amount, however, is violent, provocative, and presented in ways unsuitable for children's level of maturity. With the rapid expansion of electronic transmission devices and exposure beginning at increasingly younger ages, children today are experiencing both good and bad influences of media.

Television's substantial impact on children began in the 1950s with the proliferation of TV sets. Television viewing has changed dramatically in the 21st century, however, and now includes traditional viewing either live or time-shifted (DVR), through TV-connected devices like game consoles and DVD players, on PCs, and on smartphones and tablets through the use of apps and sites specific for viewing video such as Netflix and HBO GO. In 2016, more than 96% of American households contained at least one television set receiving traditional TV signals via broadcast, cable, DBS or Telco, or having broadband internet. Additionally, over 90% of American adults have cell phones, and the majority of households have computers, tablets, and other devices (Anderson, 2015). The pervasive availability of video on all these devices makes it difficult to define exactly what it means to "watch" TV. Increasingly, the term **screen time** is used to characterize time spent using digital media for entertainment purposes. Today, children start the screen viewing process early—often well before they are 2 years old (Barr & Linebarger, 2017). A survey of US parents commissioned by the American Speech and Language Association (2015) of technology use by young children reported that 68% of 2-year-olds

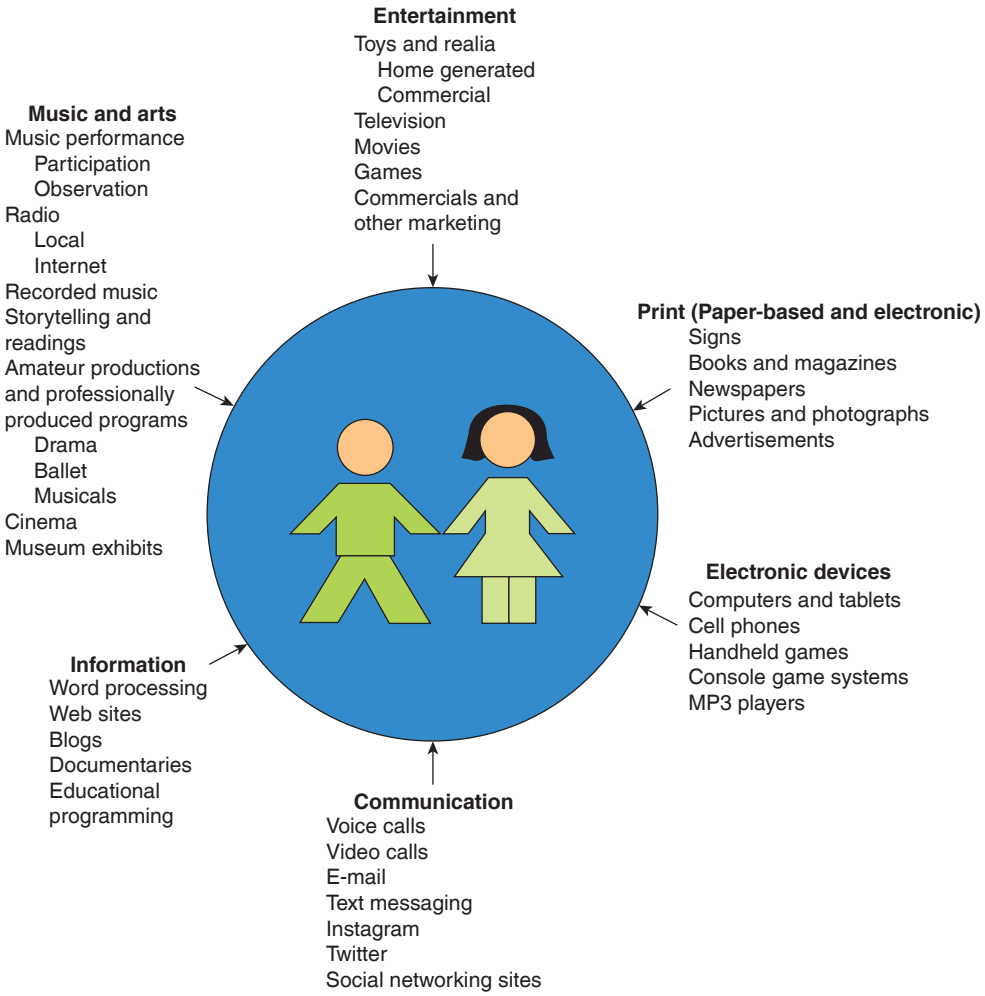


FIGURE 1-3 Media Influence on Children's Lives

use tablets, 59% use smartphones, and 44% use video game consoles. Not unexpectedly, the percentages of use of these devices increased through the age of 8.

The internet is now the world's largest source of information. As of 2013, over 70% of American homes had high-speed internet access, and 87% of Americans used the internet. Most elementary and secondary schools in the United States also have broadband internet access, but additional bandwidth will be needed in many school districts in the country in coming years. Because internet access in the United States is provided by the private sector and there is little competition within areas, there is a wide range of forms, a variety of technologies, and variations in speed and costs. Consequently, internet access is more expensive in the United States than in many other nations in the world.

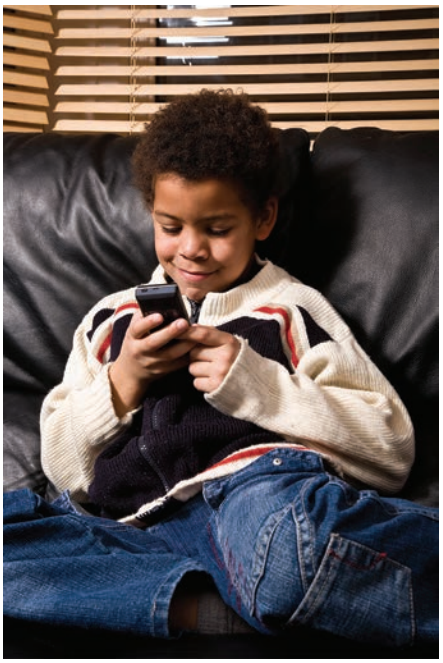
EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Consider how much TV you watched while growing up and how much time you spent on video games and other electronic entertainment. Reflect on the positive and negative influences these activities had on how you worked, how you dressed, and what you ate. In what ways have these influences on children changed during your lifetime?

Television and other digital entertainment influence children in direct proportion to both the time spent viewing and the overall effect of what is viewed. Certainly, eating habits, family interactions, and use of leisure time are considerably influenced by technology. Advertisers try to influence viewers with all types of consumerism. Not all advertising is negative, of course. There have been efforts through TV to modify behaviors such as smoking, drunken driving, and poor nutritional habits. How children are affected by both positive and negative advertisements also depends on such factors as parent–child interactions, how children are disciplined, and, to some degree, socioeconomic factors (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2013).

Producers and advertisers expand the financial gains of successful films and television shows by producing associated toys, clothing, and DVDs. Similar marketing comes from developers of video and computer games. These games influence individuals' values, compete for children's attention, and certainly reduce the amount of reflection and interaction time children have with both adults and peers (Valkenburg & Calvert, 2011).

When parents and other adults share **screen time** with children, the children benefit more from the experience, and the adults learn more about the children. Adults discover what children know and what interests or bores them. The adults may then act to enhance their children's learning. Adults may introduce children to the original stories from which the TV programs or movies were adapted, helping them learn to make comparisons and develop better discrimination skills about stories and presentations. Children today must develop media literacy so that they have the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in all its many forms.



Lisa Payne Photography/Pearson Education Ltd.

Despite the problems with overuse, electronic media provide children with opportunities to use their creativity and connect to a larger world.

Electronic media provide children with opportunities to practice skills, solve problems, use their creativity, connect with others with similar interests, and expand their knowledge base. For example, some primary-school children use the internet to practice chess, communicate with faraway relatives and friends, post photos and creative writing for others to view, and retrieve information. When children's internet access is appropriately monitored by parents and teachers, it is a rich resource for children's lives and learning (Donohue, 2015).

MEDIA MATTERS

Entertainment Sources and Children's Learning

The entertainment industry influences the actions, dress codes, and values of many adults. It also captures and holds children's interests for a large part of each day (see Figure 1-2). As a teacher or community worker, you must understand that this influence on children both enhances and inhibits their growth as human beings. You should not underestimate the effect of this influence but rather try to incorporate it into your teaching so that children assimilate it in a healthy context with the rest of their education. For example, knowledge that children pick up from TV can be startling but relevant, and schools, communities, and families can reinforce the unexpected learning in positive ways. Consider the following vignette:

The teacher in Amanda's kindergarten class was introducing the letter–sound relationship of the letter J. When soliciting words children could recall, Mrs. Pineo got "judge" from Juan. So, she asked if anyone knew what "judge" meant. Children responded, "It's someone who would send you to jail if you did something wrong … especially if you murdered someone, he'd be sure to send you to jail!" When asked how they knew this, the class as a whole replied, "It was on television!" That evening during dinner, Amanda announced to her family, "A judge would put you in jail if you did something really bad—like murder." The give-and-take of the subsequent table conversation between Amanda and her parents provided further clarification on how Amanda was assimilating information from school, the media, and home.

PRINT MATERIALS The internet and other information and communication technologies have begun to alter our understandings about literacy (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013), but even in the digital age, traditional printed books continue to be an important part of young children's lives. The kinds of books and other print media that children read and have read to them influence and support their emotional, social, and intellectual development both directly and indirectly. Books and magazines reach the child indirectly through parents, caregivers, and teachers, and directly, such as when children participate in a library presentation or select particular publications to buy or borrow. Increasingly, printed material is based on television shows, computer games, and movies, with children seeking out the printed material after experiencing the characters in another format. E-books and websites, such as Starfall, that make reading a more interactive experience for children provide other formats that complement, but haven't yet replaced, physical books.

Print media also affect children's development indirectly through the publications their parents read. Books, magazines, and websites inform adults how to lead healthy, productive lives and proclaim the dangers of unhealthy practices. Advertising affects the types of clothing, food, and (especially) toys bought for children. Some toys engage children's imagination and are designed for groups of children playing together. Other toys are more suitable for children playing alone. Children's potential for social and intellectual development is affected by which type of toy adults are motivated to buy.

Studies on early literacy indicate that the amount and types of printed materials that adults have in the home, as well as how adults interact with these materials in the presence of children, affect the children's interest and literacy achievement (Trelease, 2013). From the books that adults read to children, children internalize attitudes, feelings, and biases about their own and other cultures. In the chapter's opening vignette, Zach had a chance to express aggression in acceptable ways through *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and was influenced in the kinds of clothes he wanted by the story *Max's Dragon Shirt*. Books, like peers, provide children with a vision of their world that sometimes reaffirms their own lives and sometimes challenges their perspectives.

In classic research on children's reactions to stories presented through television, books, and radio, children seemed to view television events as something not directly associated with themselves, but they appeared to personalize the events in books (Meringoff, 1980). Berns (2012) and Desmond (2012) stress that because the reader is more intimately involved in the book, it is a stronger socializing agent. However, the stronger personal influence of printed materials compared to television or the internet could also reflect the manner in which the two are presented to children. Young children first know about books because someone reads to them and interacts with them about the story, whereas more often than not, children are left by themselves to watch television and movies, and to use tablets and computers.

EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Think of films or other media you have found that focus on other cultures, then compare these to aspects of your own life. How much do the living habits, music, dress, and work styles of these other cultures resemble your own?

One desirable outcome of our highly connected world is that all people see and sense the diversity of individuals living in modern American communities. As we view screen images of children playing in the streets of Guatemala, Canada, or Kazakhstan, we see them delighting in the same things that children in Seattle or Pittsburgh find desirable. Cultures across the world are borrowing steadily from each other, and far more rapidly, than in previous generations.

AGE LEVELS AND INFLUENCE

The community, home, school, peers, and media exert a greater or lesser influence on children's learning, depending on the age of the children concerned (note again Figure 1-2). Later in this chapter, we will explore how theorists have described the stages

in children's development from dependency to independence and the various external factors that contribute to that development. Family, school, and community contexts impact the growing child, and are in turn affected by larger societal factors such as the beliefs, values, and governmental policies in place. As you develop strategies to promote **partnerships** for children's education, it will be helpful to keep in mind the complexity of influences that impact child development, and the various perspectives others have on development that may differ from your own.

The Early Years—Strong Home Influence

Early researchers such as Maslow (1970), Erikson (1963), and Piaget (1967) all emphasized the strong need for attachment and environmental support of infants and toddlers. Developing children require a physically and emotionally supportive home in which their basic needs can be met. Infants must first develop trust in others so that they can explore their surroundings. According to Piaget, it is this exploration that enables them to construct knowledge about themselves and their world (Piaget, 1967).

Neuroscientists have discovered links between brain structure and brain activity, and brain research substantiates the notion that a child's knowledge develops because of an interactive process that begins even as the brain develops before birth. Heredity may determine the framework of a developing child's brain, but researchers point out the many ways in which genes, environment, and infant responses interact to develop the connections between the brain cells that account for learning (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Olson, 2012).

Because of this brain–environment interactive development, we can see that myriad events will affect growth, some positively and some negatively. Type of housing, presence of caregivers, and lifestyles associated with different homes will influence children's lives in profound and dramatic ways. We find that some environments are extremely supportive and nurturing, whereas others are dominating, negligent, and even dysfunctional. For example, in a landmark report released by the Carnegie Corporation (1994), affectionate interactions, consistent practices, organized schedules, and high-quality nourishment bring support and security to young children. Such nurturing environments have secure caregivers who respond to their children by touching, cuddling, talking to, telling stories, and reading with them. Most authorities agree that emotional support and interactions with the child provide building blocks for intellectual competence and language comprehension.

Suzanne Clouzeau/Pearson Education, Inc.

Young children respond to books when significant adults engage them in literary experiences.

On the other hand, the trials of homelessness, highly mobile families, absentee parents, and poverty often mean that parents are unable to provide positive and secure environments. The lack of a responsive environment, which stems from the parents' own life experience, will affect a child's intellectual, social, and emotional competence. But the young brain is quite resilient, and later stimulation or strong emotional bonds can help many children overcome some of the negative results of early

deprivation. Without such intervention, however, the effects of early childhood adversity can be lifelong (Shonkoff & Garner, 2012).

Regardless of family configuration, American society expects all families to provide economic and emotional support for infants and toddlers. With more single-parent and dual-income families and fewer extended family members available to support them, families face many challenges in providing optimal care for their children. Therefore, the roles of caregivers and teachers have become even more important in children's lives at younger and younger ages.

Preschool and Kindergarten Years—Increasing School Influence

As children develop a sense of autonomy, they need to learn the boundaries within which they can operate, and they must learn to identify new ones they will encounter as they separate from home. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1993) bioecological model introduced earlier in this chapter accurately explains the transitions from the intimate **microsystem** of home to the **mesosystem** of outer linkages that come to bear on the developing child's perceptions and behaviour (see Figure 1-1). As parents give their children necessary support, they must also give them freedom to try things on their own.

As we noted, one's sense of self first develops in the home and then extends into the neighborhood, child-care center, and larger community. At school, the teacher and the children's peers begin to alter or reinforce this sense. Children modify their behavior in school in response to various rules and regulations, and to perceived teacher and peer expectations. At the same time, significant others in the home setting continue to influence development as the early schoolers move from basic trust to **autonomy** and independence.

Many children have school-like experiences in their preschool years. For other children, school as a culture first occurs when they enter formal public or private elementary school. In the preschool years, children may encounter several types of school-like experiences. Head Start programs, child-care centers, and nursery schools all demonstrate somewhat different philosophical orientations. Some programs seek to introduce children to school through a more structured curriculum, others try to extend the nurturance of the home, and still others combine facets of both. The current movement toward universal preschool for children is an indication of the growing awareness of the importance of this developmental stage. Although it is difficult to conduct rigorous studies to determine the influence of different programs on developing children, we have evidence that quality preschool programs have a lasting, positive effect on children's academic growth and subsequent life-skill development (Weikart, 2004; Reynolds,, Temple, Ou, Arteaga, & White, 2011).

Primary Years—Growing Community Influence

Community influence appears early in children's lives and progresses steadily as children mature; refer again to Figure 1-2 to see that by the time a child turns 8, community impact is high. The effect of the community depends, however, on how families use neighborhood resources. The nature of that effect is not simple; it derives from the many subsystems within the community. For example, the family may live in a neighborhood that provides positive social and physical support or in an area where parents are afraid to take their children outdoors.

As children expand their horizons, the living conditions of the neighborhood and community provide experiences on which to build their language, physical, artistic, spatial, and interpersonal skills. Children who can visit zoos, museums, libraries, business establishments, parks, and other natural settings are better equipped to deal with the many mathematical, scientific, social, and language concepts discussed in schools than are children who can't. Recent decades have produced a rich mix of cultural and ethnic

diversity in many American communities—which contrasts starkly with the situation that existed in the mid-20th century. Inclusive schools, ethnically diverse neighborhoods, and **transcultural** events all produce a positive effect on young children.

EXAMINE YOUR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Think of the neighbors and workers in your childhood community and reflect on how they influenced your growth. Did they influence how you saw school when you were in the primary grades? Did they make you feel safe in your area? How? Now compare this situation to that of the school community that you last visited. Are there any differences?

Traditions, cultural values, community **mores**, opportunities for recreation, and other social and cultural activities all play a part in children's development. Experiences in interacting with adults in clubs, sports, and art and music activities open up children to differences in communication styles and offer them a range of experiences. This type of involvement with adults becomes part of a child's **social capital**, and this capital is as important as financial capital in determining the child's school performance. Lareau (2011) pointed out that children living in poverty may have fewer opportunities to participate in interactive incidents with different adults than children who do not. Although socialization practices are learned at home, children who participate in community activities have greater opportunities to practice their negotiating, problem-solving, and intellectual skills. In the following vignette, Malik begins to learn some of these important lessons.

Malik signed up for tae kwon do sessions in third grade, but was unhappy because the instructor was "always criticizing" what he did. "I don't even know what I do wrong," he told his mother.

"And what do you do when he tells you something?" she asked.

"Oh, I get so mad, I just grit my teeth."

"Are you sure he never compliments you?"

"Uh, uh, hardly ever," pouted Malik.

"Well, want to try an experiment?" his mother suggested. "The next time he even suggests something is good, smile at him and say, 'Oh, that really helps me know what I should be doing,' and just ignore the criticisms." Malik reluctantly agreed to give it a try.

Two weeks later, a jubilant Malik returned from a practice session saying, "Hey, Mom, he really does tell me lots about what I'm doing right!" Whether Malik or the instructor changed behavior patterns isn't clear, but certainly Malik was learning new ways of working with adults so that he could profit from their instruction.

Positive interactions between community and family give a sense of security and well-being to all. This situation helps families provide the kind of nurturing that children need. Regrettably, not all communities provide healthy conditions for children. Community tolerance for gangs, illicit activities, or establishments with erotic content will have unhealthy and negative influences on children's growth and the experiences they have. Violence in the streets limits everyone's sense of security. Yet, even in neighborhoods besieged by poverty, the extended family, the churches, the social and service organizations, and neighborhood groups will make a positive difference in children's lives and extend the work of families and schools (Richards & Armstrong, 2016).

INFLUENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINTS

Over the years, the philosophical ideas present in society, together with political, sociological, and global events, have influenced educators' ideas about children's development, the purpose of education, and the ways in which children are taught. As ideology and the social, political, and global circumstances change, the type of relationship and the dominant role that each of the three social settings (home, school, community) has in the lives of children also change. The following overview of philosophical theories presents the forces that influence how families, schools, and communities play their roles.

The 20th century brought rapid changes to our world society and altered not only our views about how children learn best, but also our views of who is responsible for their education. We also see changes today in ideas about what the content of their education should be. Rapid changes in technology have resulted in changes in how people, even in the most isolated and rural areas, view the world. Events that happen in Africa can affect what students in a small American community study as they acquire the knowledge and skills they need to cope with their own world in the 21st century.

Our views and philosophies today have roots in early philosophical teachings. For example, in early Chinese society, Confucius (552–479 B.C.) proclaimed that the basic aim of education was to teach individuals to become good and productive citizens, and even to make good use of leisure time. These are important goals even today. For instance, the mission statement of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2012) states: "With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."

Early Greek philosophers such as Plato (427–347 B.C.) believed that children were the hope of the future. He stated that education must train the spirit through music, the body through gymnastics, and the mind through philosophy, a notion similar to today's view that education must encompass the whole child (physical, social, emotional, and intellectual). Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) insisted that the teacher must take into consideration the successive stages and rates of child development when considering what to teach individual children. Advocates of an **age-appropriate curriculum** and **individualized teaching** find commonality with some of Aristotle's precepts.

In the early 20th century, theories on development tended to cluster around two contrasting views, known today as the **nature–nurture controversy**, a debate centered on the relative contributions of genetic inheritance and environmental contributions to development. But some theorists (e.g., Piaget) proposed that neither nature nor nurture, but rather an interactive–constructive perspective, fully explains child development. Other authorities (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) maintain that although both environmental and biological factors influence development, one cannot understand the development of particular children without considering the cultural, historical, and ecological evidence around them. More recently, family systems theorists (e.g., Bowen, 1987) have viewed the family as an emotional unit with complex interactions that have profound impact on human behavior. Brain research findings have added support to these earlier views by establishing the complex way in which genetics influence brain functioning and experiences modify the expression of our genes.

The development of the internet and the prospect of world cultures moving to a global society have triggered different positions on educational needs. Political perspectives now affect how we perceive education. Traditionally, America has been a society that supports individual accomplishments, but students in the 21st century need new

skills and outlooks so they can relate to people whose culture and language are very different from their own. If we can help them appreciate the values of social rituals, communal orientation, and different responsibilities found in many cultures worldwide, young people will have a better global understanding in the 21st century and, we hope, develop the skills to cope with an ever-changing world.

IDEAS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

Matching American students with English-speaking students around the world is a time-tested way to help children learn about other cultures. While organizations such as Student Letter Exchange have helped facilitate the exchange of postal letters between pen pals for decades, other groups use technology to create friendships between individuals and schools.

Evolution of Philosophical Perspectives

In the following section, we examine the evolution of views that influence how we educate our children. Understanding how we change our views of what children need as times change should help you recognize that the political, social, economic, and even global factors at any given time influence how schools and educational practices swing from one perspective to another. (See Figure 1-4 for details of the three major theories, Nativism, Behaviorism, and Constructivism, discussed here.)

John Locke (1632–1704) was an early advocate of the importance of environmental influences on children's behavior. He believed that a child's mind was a blank slate, and that stimuli from others and from the environment controlled the child's development and learning. Following this concept, John Watson (1878–1958) and B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) argued that children learned as a result of conditioning by adults, who provided stimuli and then rewarded correct responses. **Behaviorist** theory proposes that children learn because their needs are satisfied (or not satisfied) by another person or because of environmental factors.

In contrast, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) viewed children as unfolding and developing according to an innate plan—the result of systematic and natural internal forces. Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) formed schools and developed materials for children based on this naturalistic philosophy, which came to be known as **nativism**, or the maturational theory of development. They believed that children learned through play and sensory experiences during the unfolding stages of development. They also maintained that children learned best when homes, schools, and communities were involved. The first kindergartens of the 19th century in America followed these models, using specific materials designed to stimulate this sensory learning.

John Dewey (1859–1952) proposed that children constantly test and hypothesize as they play and entertain themselves. A playful attitude, he maintained, keeps children motivated, and this motivation is what allows them to grow and learn (Dewey, 1910, 1944). Thus, the development of a child-initiated or **play-oriented curriculum** in early childhood settings stems from the ideas of Rousseau and Dewey. In a related way, Arnold Gesell (1880–1961) documented children's growth, finding general developmental similarities and trends among children. He concluded that development is a result of laws and a sequence of maturation that is a continuous spiral. Gesell and his associates maintained that parents and teachers must permit the child's natural unfolding before learning can take place.

FIGURE 1-4 Major Theories of Child Development and Learning

NATIVISM OR MATURATIONAL	
Stages of Development	Meaning for Parents and Educators
Genetics or internal mechanisms are key to child development. It's an unfolding of an innate plan. The child develops to a point before training or teaching has an effect. Brain research supports some of this ideology. Rooted in the ideas of Rousseau and Darwinian theories of evolution, then extended in the 20th century by G. Stanley Hall and A. Gesell.	Adults support development and learning of the child. One observes child behaviors that signal readiness to experience things, relate to situations, or show readiness to learn and participate, then input is supplied. Caveat: Do not rush tasks or activities.
BEHAVIORISM	
Stages of Development	Meaning for Parents and Educators
Environmental pressures and stimuli become the primary forces in a child's development and learning. Classical conditioning and stimuli result in a reflexive response, which leads to a learned response on the part of the child. Operant conditioning means that the child learns as a result of positive reinforcers or rewards. Rooted in Locke's notions of the mind as a blank slate until stimulated by others or environments. Promoted in the 20th century by J. Watson, E. L. Thorndike, and B. F. Skinner.	Adults determine desired behaviors and set up strategies for reinforcing a child when correct behaviors occur. The ideas are promoted for all levels—infants through adulthood. This is the system of rewards and punishments that has held sway for generations. External forces are key here, and adults will be carefully planning instruction with behavioral objectives, direct instruction, and carefully sequenced sets of skills and hierarchies of learning.
CONSTRUCTIVISM	
Stages of Development	Meaning for Parents and Educators
Both biological and environmental forces are at work in a child's development and learning, but the child constructs his own knowledge and understanding. Children develop by assimilating external stimuli and then accommodating new stimuli to already existing mental structures. Levels or stages of development are key here and follow from preoperational, to concrete operational, to logical thinking stage in a predictable way. Piaget is the early and major contributor to this theory, but Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner's work in the mid-20th century has added the components of cultural, sociological, and historical features—and the interactions of these elements—as factors in development and learning. Bronfenbrenner's ecological system paradigm shows the child's ever-widening world of relationships and interactions that steer thinking and development.	Adults provide a rich and stimulating environment to assist a child in interacting with that environment as the child constructs his own knowledge. Adults provide support so a child's instincts are satisfied, but they increase stimulation so the child moves to the next stages. Adults are only one part of the influences that affect learning. But the close adults, if they are aware of a child's readiness and ecology, can control these features to a degree and bring about new attainments for the child's progress.

Source: Based on Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

ThislifeThen/Thislife Pictures/Alamy Stock Photo

Instructional practices have changed as perspectives have evolved.

In the mid-1800s, Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) work on evolution and natural selection provided enormous momentum for the scientific study of children, and his theory supports principles in both the nature and nurture positions. Development, he insisted, unfolds in a natural, dynamic way, and all species adapt to their particular environments to enhance their chances of survival.

The constructivist theory has emerged in recent decades. Theorists with this orientation insist that both biological and environmental factors affect development in a reciprocal manner. As different theorists expanded this perspective throughout the 20th century, they focused on specific aspects of development. Jean Piaget (1896–1980), a cognitive theorist, proposed that children develop by assimilating and acting on stimuli, or information, from the environment and by accommodating new stimuli to already existing structures. He held that children construct their own understanding and knowledge, which change only as they find inconsistencies in their environments and incorporate the new information to produce new insights or knowledge.

Another view, recognizing both internal and environmental influences, was advanced by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and his followers. Freud was the first psychologist to view human nature as all-encompassing. His daughter, Anna Freud (1895–1982), advanced the idea that children's developmental stages had an important relationship with their healthy growth. She also influenced Erik Erikson (1902–1994), who identified eight **stages of development**, each with positive and negative attributes, and he insisted that cultural and social values affected how one progresses from one stage to another. For Erikson, there are **critical periods of development**, and for a person to develop normal patterns of behaviour, the positive attributes at each stage need to be satisfied before the next stage can truly develop.

Theorists of social–cultural context such as Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917–2005) also regarded development as being influenced in a reciprocal manner by both biological and environmental factors. However, they believed that to understand development, it is necessary to take into account the cultural and historical contexts in which development occurs. These theorists contended that there are many social systems with which a child interacts (e.g., family, school, neighborhood, community, and dominant beliefs in society), and it is a combination of these interactions that affects development. The theorists of social–cultural context have steered educators to a greater understanding and acceptance of the complexities of development.

Vygotsky believed that biological and maturational factors influence a child's physical and intellectual development to a large degree in earliest learning, but that later learning is a result of children independently acting on and interpreting their environments. As children's development approaches the problem-solving stage, Vygotsky suggested that two spheres of operation are present. One is the ability to problem-solve independently when concepts are already mastered; the other is the potential learning and problem-solving ability. The space or variation between these two levels was labelled the **zone of proximal development** (Vygotsky, 1978), and is the area where teachers can be most effective by controlling the amount of guidance they provide, a concept known as **scaffolding** (see Figure 1-5).

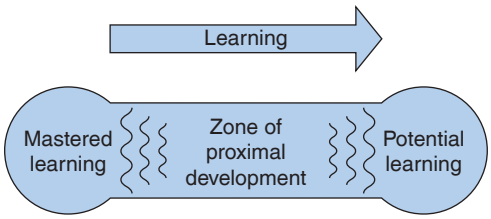


FIGURE 1-5 Vygotsky's Proposition on the Process of Children's Intellectual Development
Source: Based on Vygotsky (1978).

Both Bronfenbrenner and Comer (2009) believed in the importance of social networks with regard to child development. The Comer School Development Program (discussed in a later chapter) is based on the collaboration of parents, educators, and communities as a way to improve children's social, emotional, and academic success. As a co-founder of the Head Start Program, Bronfenbrenner's view of parent participation in school as an integral aspect of their development helped establish parental involvement as a cornerstone of Head Start.

Murray Bowen (1913–1990) describes the complex interaction of the family unit in his family systems theory (Gilbert, 2006). Interdependence among family members provides solidarity and mutual cooperation. Hence, whatever affects one family member affects the others. As family goals and ambitions change, stress on one member will cause anxiety among the other members. Bowen's theory requires teachers to view children's social, emotional, and intellectual development in the context of the family unit, because the family's functioning affects the child's functioning.

Our understandings of cognitive ability, or intelligence, have evolved over the years. The traditional early 20th-century view was that intelligence was innate and unchanging, and could be measured effectively and communicated with an IQ (intelligence quotient) score. Current theory and research support more complex understandings of the nature of intelligence. Nisbett's (2009) analysis of studies concludes that environment accounts for most of children's intellectual development. Cianciolo and Sternberg (2004) contend that intelligence is adaptive and arises from analytical, creative, and practical abilities within the individual and within the socio-cultural context. Gardner's theory (1999) identifies nine different intelligences that individuals possess. The strength of these intelligences varies widely within individuals, and helps determine how one learns best. These authorities and their associates provide convincing evidence that IQ does move beyond a single, static reasoning ability, and does change with time and experience.

In 2000, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Shonkoff & Phillips) was published. This influential report, based on research on brain development and the behavioral and social sciences, concludes that the long-standing debate of nature versus nurture is a dead issue. Development is influenced by an interaction between nature and nurture so that while children have unique genetic

Alice McBroom/Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd.

Concepts develop for children as they investigate and experiment with their environment.

predispositions, personal experience and environmental factors have a huge impact on their learning. Another important finding was the connection between social and emotional well-being and intellectual growth.

It should be clear that throughout history, theorists and researchers have stressed specific but different elements and aspects of development. All these theories, together with political and social events, have influenced how families, schools, and communities envisioned their roles in educating children throughout the generations. We believe students should maintain a perspective on human development that recognizes the contributions of various theorists, thus providing a richer understanding of human growth and development as well as a platform for decision making.

CHALLENGES AFFECTING EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In the 21st century, further developments in brain research (Olson, 2012) have led to the growing understanding of the foundational importance of the early childhood years. Scholars (Smidt, 2013; Sousa, 2013) emphasize the complexities of influences that affect how children grow and develop, and have pointed out that environmental, ecological, and contextual factors do make a difference: They affect genetic development of the embryo, and these effects extend through the prenatal stage. Political and social forces, as well as genetic studies, continue to challenge curricula and how schools should operate.

As noted previously, practices regarding education in America have changed from one generation to the next. Our perceptions about child development and learning styles change as new studies and findings present evidence to confirm or modify one theory or another. Evolution is natural and ongoing as research and empirical studies continue. Social changes, political forces, and economic pressures, as well as beliefs and values, continue to develop in our country. As you would expect, these are bound to influence educational practices, and the following topics will likely have a significant impact on future school objectives and patterns.

Cathy Yeulet/123RF.com

Changing demographics are altering US educational practices.

Diversity

While the presidency of Barack Obama from 2008–2016 offered hope that America had entered a post-racial era, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 signaled a resurgence of the ethnocentrism that had characterized earlier eras of our history. While many Americans are confident and positive about the diversity of American communities in the 21st century, others seek to return our country to a more homogenous state. Potential restrictive laws directed at undocumented immigrants and Muslims have raised fear and concern. The children of these targeted groups are particularly vulnerable. Discrimination

against certain groups and increased social stratification in the United States seem to fly in the face of the values of equality and justice that have been foundations of our democracy. Tensions will remain as the United States continues to diversify.

Despite the uncertainty of the current political climate, the rapidly expanding mix of culture and ethnicity in the United States will continue, and the changing demographics will affect American education. Trends in immigration and birth rates indicate there will soon be no majority racial or ethnic group in the United States. This increasing diversity is most apparent among the youngest residents, with 47% of children younger than age 5 belonging to a racial or ethnic minority group (Center for Public Education, 2012). A challenge facing American schools today is educating this diverse child population with a teaching force that remains largely White, middle-class, and female (Landsman & Lewis, 2011). Beginning teachers and community workers, regardless of their race or ethnic background, have a responsibility to increase their awareness of the beliefs and values of the families they serve.

For some families, many newly arrived in the United States, school will be an important link to the larger society. As a teacher, you may have to overcome language barriers to communicate effectively with families. You may teach children whose families have entered the country without proper documentation and who live in fear of discovery and possible deportation of their parents. You may work with families headed by gay, lesbian, or transgender parents. Multicultural curricula and pointed attempts to foster anti-bias programs offer a positive approach to diversity in American schools and neighborhoods (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010, 2012). You as an individual can only do so much to help overcome the inequities that exist as a result of race, ethnic, and cultural differences, but you do have an obligation to provide the best education and support that you can to the children and families you serve. As a professional in a school setting, you will have the opportunity to get to know diverse families as individuals, and you will play an essential role in helping all children and families feel welcome in your classroom (Adams & Bell, 2016).

IDEAS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

Developing Your Awareness and Professionalism

Become aware of your own attitudes toward the families you find in schools and neighborhoods where you are involved. Your positive attitude toward children plus high expectations of your students from all cultural backgrounds can have a profound effect on their learning and school success. Partnerships formed by families, schools, and communities will continue to be the best possible ways to promote the advantages of diversity and demographic change.

Increase your objectivity and professionalism by doing the following:

- *Listen to their family stories about themselves.*
- *Help them interpret school policies and regulations.*
- *Put yourself in their shoes when considering complaints.*
- *Be willing to reassess children's work when you find new information.*

Poverty

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2017), of the more than 24 million children in middle childhood (ages 6 through 11) in the United States, 44%, or 10.7 million, children live in low-income families, and 21%, or 5.2 million, children live in poor families. Low income is defined as at or above 200% of the federal poverty threshold (FPT), poor is defined as below 100% of FPT, and near poor is between 100% and 199% of the FPT. The low-income category includes both the poor and the near poor. The poverty threshold is considered incomes below $24,036 a year for a family of four. From your own experiences, you know that this is well below what it takes to support a family's basic needs.

Children living in poverty can experience food insecurity, homelessness, and many other difficulties. All this can lead to the toxic stress that impedes their ability to learn, and is associated with poor academic achievement, high dropout rates, and physical and mental health issues such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, substance abuse, and social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Political movements in the 1960s resulted in sweeping changes for American education and in the corresponding roles of parents, schools, and communities. The civil rights movement resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which acknowledged that children in segregated schools received an inferior education. Whereas middle-class White parents have always felt themselves a part of their children's educational process, before the landmark legislation of the 1960s, many parents in minority and low socioeconomic groups felt disenfranchised. Parental involvement for all, regardless of heritage or economic status, became highlighted in this era, and continues to be an important issue.

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Children receive nutritional and health services under Head Start plans.

Clearly, poverty is a great threat to children's well-being, and has led to the large divergence in learning achievement between low-income and higher-income students in the United States. To