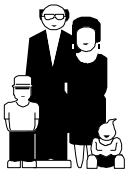
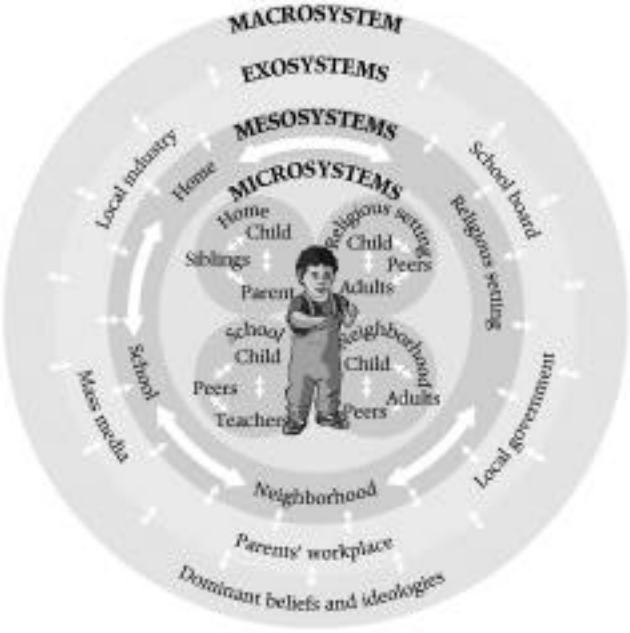
The Contexts of Early Childhood Development



Contexts

- Family
- Media
- Community
  - Daycare/Preschool



The Family as a Context for Development

- **Family Configurations and Socialization Practices in North America**
  - **Parenting styles in the middle-class North American nuclear family**
  - **Patterns of socialization in single-parent families**
  - **The impact of poverty on child rearing**
  - **The extended family and social networks**

Media: Linking Community & Home

- **The Lessons of History**
- **Books**
- **Television**
- **Interactive Media**

Books

- **The form of early literacy experiences**
  - **Zone of Proximal Development**
  - **Dialogic Reading**
    - **Whitehurst - grammar, idea expression, word sounds**
- **Appropriate content for young children**
  - **Fairy tales: Do they have a role?**
  - **Stereotypes**

Television

- **Viewing Factors**
  - **Interests Change over time**
    - **Preschoolers - educational shows**
    - **Kindergarten (5) - cartoons**
    - **Middle childhood - general audience**
  - **Individual Differences**
    - **Males more than females**
    - **African Americans more than Caucasians**
    - **Lower SES more than Higher SES**
  - **How Much?**
    - **1 hour at 6 mo. - - 4 hours at 10 years (per day**

Television: Neutral, Helpful or Harmful?

- **Appearance -Reality Distinction**
- **The problem of television form**
  - **Scene-changes, flashbacks, face-paced**
    - **Induces Mental Laziness?**
- **The problem of television content**
  - **Media Stereotypes**
    - **Men vs women, Ethnic minorities & Foreigners**
    - **Dangers: Identification with own group**
  - **Violence: Problems with evaluating its effect.**
    - **Observational, experimental**
    - **Natural Experimental: Introduction of TV to community**

Television: Helpful?

- **Cognitive Development**
  - **Sesame Street (school readiness skills)**
    - **Greatest gains for disadvantaged children**
    - **Increase in vocabulary, letters, name writing, numbers & forms**
    - **Better adapted to schools, more positive attitudes to school & other ethnic groups**
  - **Barney & Friends**
    - **Social-emotional benefits**
- **TV: Good or Bad: Depends on Quantity**

Television

- **Family Influences**
  - **Joint Television watching: Helpful?**
    - **Depends on what is watched**
    - **How parents interact with show and child**

Paper #3

- **Evaluation of the positive & negative influences on development of children's television.**
  - **Synopsis of the show**
  - **Analysis of the developmental goals**
  - **Evaluation of the goals**
    - **Background research, theory**
  - **Recommendations**

Blues Clues

Media Paper

- Writing a synopsis
  - Describe the general format of the show
    - Animation, real-life, mixed media
    - Setting & characters (where, who)
    - Plot line (goal, focus - what is it about)
    - Audience (who is the show designed for)
  - Describe the specific features of the episode
    - Topic
    - Activities/ concepts

Media Paper

- **Analysis of the developmental goals**
  - What are they trying to teach
    - In general - specific examples
  - What strategies do they use to teach
    - In general - specific examples
- **Evaluation of the goals (Theory & Research)**
  - Are the goals appropriate for the audience
    - Content & Strategy
  - Success in attaining their goals
    - How well did they implement the goal
  - Recommendations (Theory & Research)
    - How would you make the show better?

Interactive Media

- Modeled on Cartoons & Books but interactive
  - Graphics, Music, Game-like
  - Teach basic skills
    - Literacy skills (letter recognition, sounds - letters, spelling, etc)
    - Mathematical skills (numbers, quantity, classification, addition & subtraction)
    - Reasoning skills (problem solving, sequencing, etc)
  - Computer skills
    - Controlling mouse, click & drag, activating, opening & closing files, programs, etc

The Young Child in the Community

- **Varieties of Day Care**
  - **Home care**
  - **Family day care**
  - **Day-care centers**
- **Developmental Effects of Day Care**
  - **Intellectual effects**
  - **Impact on social development**
- **Preschool**
  - **Preschools and "The war on poverty"**
  - **What difference does Head Start make?**
  - **The future of compensatory preschool programs**