UNIT 1

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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CASE STUDY

Early Childhood: Crybaby

Prepare

As you read the case, make notes:

1. **WHO** are the central characters in the case? Describe them.
2. **WHAT** is taking place?
3. **WHERE** is the case taking place? Is the environment a factor?
4. **WHEN** is the case taking place? Is the timing a factor?

Edward Abbott and Linda Harsted are teachers at a local childcare facility in the 4-year-old preschool room. The 20 students are from diverse backgrounds with a range of levels of socioeconomic status. At this preschool, the children are taught letter recognition, colors, fine- and large-motor skills, and many other readiness skills. The teachers also spend a large portion of the day encouraging social behaviors such as sharing, helping, expressing assertiveness without aggression, and behaving respectfully toward others. Each year, the teachers prepare kindergarten readiness reports to share with parents during a brief individual conference. To prepare for parent–teacher conferences, Ms. Harsted spent last week observing the children during centers to assess their educational skills while Mr. Abbott supervised the children. This week, Mr. Abbott will observe the children to assess their social behaviors while Ms. Harsted supervises. Centers include a number of activities, including playing house, having a snack, coloring, and playing with blocks and puzzles. Children in groups of four spend 15 minutes on each activity.

Mr. Abbott begins during snack time, when the children are having cheese crackers and juice. He quickly notices that Joe is helping Allison clean up her spilled juice that has soaked her crackers. Joe offers to share his crackers with Allison. Mr. Abbott thinks about how typical this behavior is of Joe. He is a very considerate child, always willing to help others. Mr. Abbott then turns his attention to Annie and Zada, who are arguing.

Annie says, "Zada, you aren't my best friend anymore!"

Zada replies, "Well, you didn't share your crayons with me before, so I don't have to share my crackers with you. You got your crackers! I don't have to give you some of mine."

Mr. Abbott has already commented in his notes for Annie and Zada that both girls tend to be natural leaders, which can result in problems, as both want to be "boss."

Ms. Harsted intervenes and asks Zada, "How did you feel earlier when Annie wouldn't share her crayons?"

Zada replies, "She was mean, so I was sad."

"Well, I bet that Annie is sad now because you won't share with her," states Ms. Harsted.

"OK, she can have this one cracker, but only if I get to be the mommy when we play house," replies Zada.

Annie quickly responds, "OK."

Mr. Abbott and Ms. Harsted exchange looks because both know that Annie's home life is much different from Zada's. Zada's parents are married and middle class and spend much of their extra time with Zada and her brother. Both children were adopted when their parents were in their 40s. Yesterday, Zada told everyone about a recent family trip to a museum. Annie's parents are divorced. Her father lives halfway across the country with his new wife and Annie's new baby sister. Annie's mother works first shift at the local hospital as a nurse's aide and spends several evenings a week socializing with friends.

Mr. Abbott moves over to the block area. He notices that Tyler and Tanner are building a tall tower. Erica begins to place more blocks on the tower, but Tyler shouts, "That one doesn't go there!" The loud shout startles Erica, who bumps the tower, and all the blocks come tumbling down.

Tanner yells, "You did that on purpose. We told you that girls aren't supposed to play with blocks."

"Yeah," adds Tyler. "You ruined everything!"

Erica begins to cry. Tyler adds, "See, you are just a little crybaby. Crybaby. Crybaby . . ."

"Boys, I want you to stop talking to Erica that way," interjects Mr. Abbott. "I saw the whole thing, and Erica didn't mean to knock down the tower. How do you think she feels when you make fun of her like that?"

Tyler jumps in. "Well, she's probably sad, but that's not our fault. We didn't knock down the tower."

"Maybe she's sad because you blamed her for an accident and then called her a crybaby," says Mr. Abbott. "Wouldn't you be sad too if someone blamed you and called you a crybaby?" he asks.

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"I wouldn't care," answers Tanner.

Mr. Abbott comments in his observation notes that Tyler is always quick to blame others yet rarely takes responsibility for his own actions. Mr. Abbott thinks about how all the children have difficulty understanding how another child might feel, but some have more trouble than others.

Assess: Early Childhood

1. How typical are the behaviors in this classroom?
2. Why do you think some children are so eager to be helpful and to share while other children are so quick to assign blame and respond in a negative manner?
3. How do you think the gender of each child plays a role in his or her behaviors?

CASE STUDY

Elementary School: Team

Prepare

As you read the case, make notes:

1. **WHO** are the central characters in the case? Describe them.
2. **WHAT** is taking place?
3. **WHERE** is the case taking place? Is the environment a factor?
4. **WHEN** is the case taking place? Is the timing a factor?

Rocío Barone is one of two first-grade teachers at a small rural elementary school. She was raised in a large metropolitan area and is continually amazed at the connections her students share. For example, three students in the first grade this year—Patricia, Kelly, and Samantha—are all cousins. In addition to familial connections, many of the parents attended high school together and have been friends for years, with their children growing up highly connected to one another outside school. Ms. Barone has always had a soft spot for the children who lack those connections within the community. Kashi is a good example. She moved to the small, rural community last year. Kashi is the only student in first grade who is African American. All the other students and almost everyone in the community are white. She had a rough transition to the school because her parents were getting a divorce, which led to the move. Kashi seemed to have made friends and to have adjusted to the new curriculum last year. But this year, she is struggling academically, and the children appear uninterested in playing with her on the playground or being her partner during classroom activities.

As Kashi enters the classroom, she squabbles with Patricia, one of the oldest but smallest children in the class, who also has experienced challenges adjusting to first grade. After kindergarten, Patricia was placed in a special pre–first-grade program for children who need extra time to develop academically or socially. Having her cousins in the same class has helped with the transition, but she continues to struggle with reading and math.

"Well, if you don't want to sit with me at lunch," says Kashi, "then you can't be on my team."

"I don't want to be on your team," Patricia replies. "My mom says I can do whatever I want on the playground. You know, Kashi, you aren't the boss!"

Ms. Barone intervenes and attempts to calm the situation. "Girls, please try to get along and speak nicely to each other. Now, take your seats so we can start our day."

As the day continues, Ms. Barone notes that Patricia and Kashi appear to have resolved their differences for the moment and are working on their science project together without bickering. This is typical for these two girls. One minute, they are playing or working nicely together, referring to each other as "best friends," and the next minute, one is telling on the other for saying or doing something "mean." Ms. Barone has always had trouble getting either of them to give specifics of the mean behavior.

As Ms. Barone asks the children to form their line and leave for lunch, two boys—Bill and Zach—begin pushing and shoving each other in the back of the line.

Bill shouts, "I am tired of you always bumping into me!"

Ms. Barone moves quickly to the back of the line and says, "Boys, please keep your hands to . . ."

Zach interrupts, saying to Bill, "Well, I didn't mean to bump you, and besides, I am tired of you always cutting in line at lunch. You are such a bully to everyone—my dad says you are just like your dad was in school!"

"At least my dad isn't a sissy," says Bill, who is very tall and athletic. "I didn't hurt you or anyone else. You're just like a little girl."

Ms. Barone states firmly, "Both of you stop right now. You should be ashamed of yourselves for talking to each other that way."

Both boys keep looking at each other with angry faces, but they discontinue their verbal and physical assaults. Ms. Barone sends the other children to lunch and has a short talk with the boys.

"Now, Bill, accidents do happen, and Zach may not have meant to bump into you. And Zach, it is not nice to call others names. You both need to keep your hands to yourself."

The boys give a quick "OK" and walk to lunch.

During the lunch break, Ms. Barone checks her email. Patricia's mom, Mary, has sent an email to tell Ms. Barone that Patricia has been very upset about how Kashi treats her at school. The email reads as follows:

Ms. Barone,

We have been having several conversations in the evening about Patricia and Kashi. Patricia tells me that Kashi has a "team" of girls, and if Patricia doesn't do what Kashi asks, then she cannot be on the "team." Her dad and I have tried to explain that Patricia should not allow others to boss her around and talk her into doing things she doesn't want to do. I am already somewhat concerned about Patricia's self-esteem and want her to have enough self-confidence to stand up for herself. I typically would have continued to try to work with Patricia at home on this issue, but now something else has happened, and I thought you should be aware. Last week, I was told by my friend who works in the cafeteria that Patricia doesn't always take all the food options because Kashi is whispering to her to only take the food that Kashi likes. I understand that a teacher cannot know everything that happens during the day, especially on the playground or at lunch, but I wanted you to know about this issue. Any advice you can give us to help Patricia deal with these issues would be helpful.

Mary

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Assess: Elementary School

1. How well do you think Ms. Barone handled the girls entering the classroom? How well do you think she handled the boys in the lunch line? Do you think gender played a role in her treatment of the incidents?
2. What examples of aggression did you notice?
3. What factors in the children's lives might have contributed to their behavior?
4. How would you respond to Mary's email?

CASE STUDY

Middle School: Basketball Star

Prepare

As you read the case, make notes:

1. **WHO** are the central characters in the case? Describe them.
2. **WHAT** is taking place?
3. **WHERE** is the case taking place? Is the environment a factor?
4. **WHEN** is the case taking place? Is the timing a factor?

Tyrone Martin is the middle school girls' basketball coach. The middle school is located in a suburb of a large metropolitan city, with students from mostly middle-class to upper middle-class homes. Mr. Martin has been teaching English at the school for 3 years. He was the coach for boys' basketball at his last job and enjoyed the out-of-class experience with his students. When he was asked by the principal to coach girls' basketball this year while the usual coach takes a leave of absence, he was excited about the opportunity. However, he has experienced some difficulties getting the girls to work as a team.

As Jill and Sierra enter the gym for practice, he overhears them whispering about Darla. Darla is very athletic but doesn't seem to fit in with the "popular" group of girls. Darla is already practicing and too far away to hear their conversation.

Mr. Martin overhears Jill saying, "If she thinks we are going to let her steal the show on the basketball court, she can forget it."

"The only reason she is any good is because her dad makes her play basketball every night for like 3 hours!" adds Sierra. "He thinks Darla is going to be some big star! Too bad she doesn't have a mother around to show her how to act."

Claudia, who appears to socialize with Darla, walks up behind the girls and overhears their conversation. She states loudly, "Well, Sierra, you have had three mothers now with all your dad's divorces and remarriages, and you still don't know how to act. Maybe you should spend a little more time with your father. Oh, that's right, he's too busy to pay attention to anything you're doing."

Mr. Martin defuses the situation by announcing that the girls need to take their positions for a scrimmage. As he thinks about Darla, Mr. Martin realizes that Darla does not seem to have many friends. Claudia has repeatedly attempted to include Darla in social events, but Darla doesn't seem to respond with excitement, appreciation, or even a simple "Thanks, but no thanks." Rather, she seems to be uninterested in having friends or a social life.

Mr. Martin decides to have a talk with Darla after practice to see if he can help determine what might be the problem. He begins by asking Darla, "How do you like basketball this year?"

Darla replies, "I like it. I just wish the other girls were more focused on the game instead of their looks or each other. They seem to think they are going to be movie stars or models."

"Well, what would you like to be when you grow up?" asks Mr. Martin.

"My dad says I should be a basketball player because I have a lot of natural talent. That's why I don't worry too much about those other girls and what they say about me. I know I am a good athlete. And I am going to take business classes in high school so that I can manage my own career and money when I make it big," says Darla with a slight smile.

Mr. Martin pushes her on the issue a bit. "Have you ever considered doing anything else?"

Darla replies quickly, "No way! My dad really wants me to be a basketball player. That's who I am. It's in my blood. Basketball is what makes me Darla. I am not good at many other things, especially school and making friends off the basketball court. So I'm sure I'll be a basketball player."

Mr. Martin ends the conversation, saying, "Well, Darla, I am glad you have such a clear plan for your future, but don't be afraid to change that plan. As people make their way through high school and college, most change their minds about what and who they want to be in the future. Just keep your options open, OK?"

"OK, but I already know who I am and where I'm going," says Darla.

As Mr. Martin puts away the equipment, he thinks about a boy at his last school. Mark also didn't have many friends or the skills to make friends. Rather, he had a short temper and typically was in other students' faces about something they had done to him or, at least, what Mark thought they had done to him. He never thought his remarks or retaliatory behaviors were as bad as those of the other kids. Mark and Darla had similar backgrounds in that their parents were divorced and each lived with their father. Mr. Martin wonders how two children from such similar backgrounds could act so different yet have so few friends.

Assess: Middle School

1. Darla seems to be a loner. Is this a bad thing? Why or why not?
2. What are some examples of appropriate social behavior? What are some examples of aggressive behavior?
3. How likely do you think it is that Darla will become a basketball player? Give the reasons for your answer.

CASE STUDY

High School: Steal, Cheat, and Fight

Prepare

As you read the case, make notes:

1. **WHO** are the central characters in the case? Describe them.
2. **WHAT** is taking place?
3. **WHERE** is the case taking place? Is the environment a factor?
4. **WHEN** is the case taking place? Is the timing a factor?

Rebecca Durbin is the principal at one of the three high schools located in a small city with a population of approximately 100,000. The school enrollment is approximately 2,500 students. Recently, there have been a number of incidents related to cheating, stealing, and drinking, as well as a number of verbal and physical fights. Ms. Durbin decides to use next Friday's school improvement day to address these behavioral issues. To prepare for the workshop, she sends an email to all the teachers and staff asking for examples of these behaviors and suggestions for how the school system should handle the issue. She receives a number of responses, including the following:

> *Mr. Smith (freshman English) wrote:* Last week, I wasted 5 minutes of class time breaking up an exchange between Lisa and Kiana. Basically, the girls were engaged in a verbal assault on each other, saying things such as, "You're fat and ugly" and "Your mom is a slut." I was very disturbed by their comments, but I don't have many suggestions. I am just thankful they didn't start a cat fight during my lecture!
>
> *Ms. Baxter (advanced mathematics) wrote:* I know we have several groups of students who don't apply themselves. For instance, there is that whole group of kids who stand across the street after school, smoking (one of whom spent the night in jail last weekend for driving under the influence) and the group of girls who walk around the school dressed like they're going clubbing. However, I don't think it is the school's place to dictate how they dress or to meddle in their behavior outside the school. I am much more concerned about the students who are here to learn and their inability to determine their career paths. Many of them are very academically talented yet have no direction or ideas about where to go to college or what their major will be. I think our time is better spent guiding them into good colleges and career paths.
>
> *Ms. Presley (office staff manager) wrote:* I have been working in high schools for over 25 years now and honestly believe that the school has little control over these teenagers. The problem is the breakdown of the family. So many of our students come from broken homes without a mother or a father, or they have the opposite problem—too many parents and stepparents. Plus, almost all of our mothers are not only working full-time jobs but have major careers that require them to work late and travel for days at a time, leaving no one at home to take care of these kids or the home. I suggest we offer parenting classes and family counseling to keep families together.
>
> *Mr. Ruestman (biology) wrote:* The problem is that we simply don't have the time to deal with all these issues. I have too much course content to cover to continually be dealing with the problems students have with their friends. Very few seem to know how to control their anger or how to think about how others might be feeling, and they don't understand that the world does not revolve around them. They all seem to be overly concerned about their friendships, who is friends with whom, or who was and wasn't invited to the party, yet they lack the skills to make and keep friends. Maybe some form of social skills training would help, but not during my class time.

Mr. Cargill (physical education) wrote: Just yesterday, Jimmy was sent to the office for hitting Bob. Apparently, Bob was talking about another Jim, commenting on his sister. The whole thing was taken out of context, and Jimmy hauled off and hit him. If Jimmy would have taken 2 seconds to look at Bob and pay attention to his tone of voice and nonverbal behaviors, Jimmy would have realized that the comments were not inappropriate or derogatory, and they were not even about his sister but another Jim's sister. Bob was actually commenting on how nice this girl had been, helping him with his math homework during study hall. These kids need a lesson in how to read others' intentions and behaviors, as well as how to handle their own emotions.

Ms. Kennel (chemistry) wrote: I am mostly concerned about the girls and minority students in our school. The girls seem to be lacking in confidence, particularly in academics and even more so in math and science. I think we need to find a way to boost their egos and give them the confidence they will need out there in the real world. Maybe with a little more confidence, they would stop worrying so much about their friends, boyfriends, and other relationships. The minority students may also need a boost, but even more, they need to stop grouping together according to their ethnicity. Do you know we now have a whole group of students who are referred to as the "Spans" because they all speak Spanish? We need to incorporate all ethnic groups into our school and educate every student on the issues of diversity in our country.

Ms. May (special education) wrote: The behaviors of stealing, cheating, and aggression in this school are due to a basic lack of respect for authority. We need to have firm policies on these issues and stick to them. Most students simply don't think it is a big deal to cheat, lie, or steal, and in many classes, it is because teachers let them get away with these behaviors. We need every teacher on board to enforce the rules of the school.

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Assess: High School

1. What are some of the recurring themes within these responses from the teachers and staff?
2. For each person's email, give a score based on how much you agree with the view (1 = *completely disagree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, 3 = *somewhat agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). Briefly explain why you agree or disagree with each email response and whether your rating is based on experience, observation, or opinion.
3. Do you think it is appropriate for the principal and teachers to use school time to address issues related to social and emotional behaviors?

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2 CONTEXTS OF DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **2.1** Describe Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory.
- **2.2** Describe how parenting styles and family transitions interact with the school system.
- **2.3** Describe how aspects of the peer context interact with the school system.
- **2.4** Explain how broader contexts of development influence microsystems and individual outcomes.

BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL THEORY

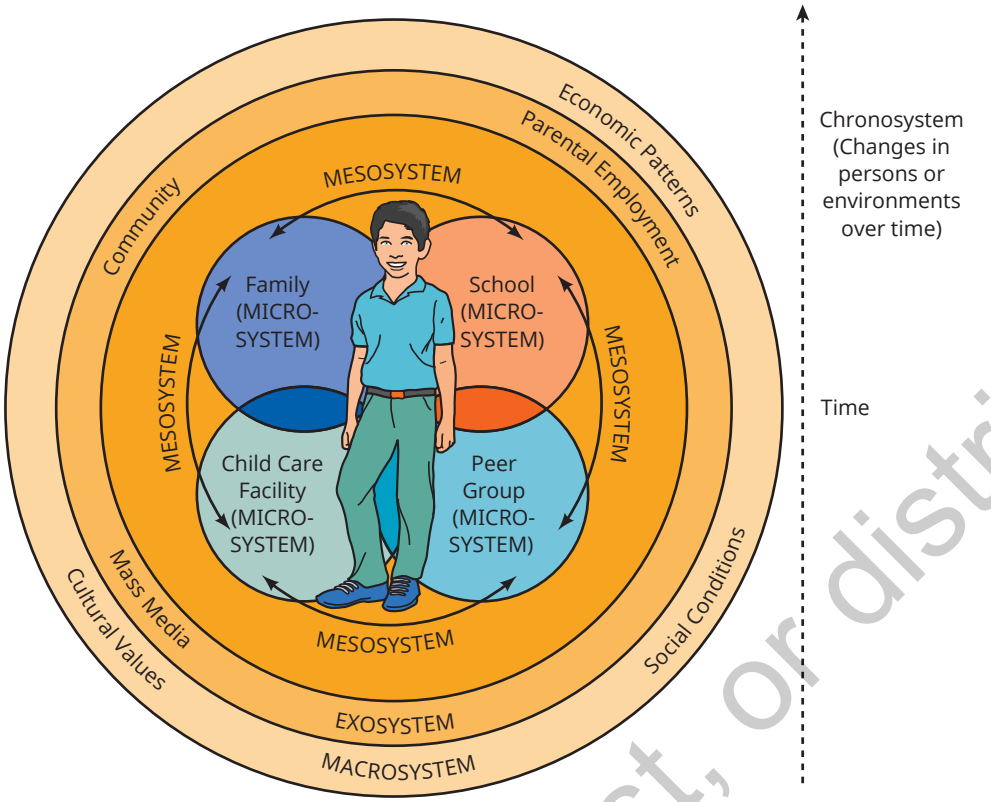
Who is the most influential person in your life now? Who was it 5 years ago? You can probably think of several people who have made a difference in your life. As children and adolescents, we grow and develop with the support and influence of people and places: our family members, friends, and teachers, as well as our neighborhoods and schools. Because of their influence on development, these people and places are considered *contexts of development.* Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1994, 2005) bioecological theory of human development, the best-known theory on the contexts of development, emphasizes the combined function of the person (or genetics) and the many systems that exist in the environment and interact to influence development, as shown in Figure 2.1. Let's examine this model more closely. It will be the framework for our discussion on the contexts of development throughout this module:

- The **microsystem**, the immediate environment surrounding an individual, includes the people, relationships, and systems that directly interact with the developing individual, such as family, peers, and school.
- The **mesosystem** links two or more microsystems. For example, the communication between parents and teachers links home and school environments or home and child care settings.
- The **exosystem** is the interaction among two or more environments, one of which does not directly include the individual. For developing children and adolescents, the exosystem includes links between home and their parents' places of work. The developing child typically has no direct interaction with a parent's workplace but is influenced by that environment indirectly. For example, parental work stress influences children's adjustment.
- The **macrosystem** includes many of the broader cultural patterns, such as beliefs, customs, knowledge, and morals. Bronfenbrenner suggests that this is not simply the ethnicity or social class of individuals but rather the social features that affect individuals. For example, low-income children may experience more stressors in their macrosystem—substandard housing, food deserts, crowding, or community violence—than do middle-class children (Pine, 2023; Santiago et al., 2011).
- The **chronosystem** refers to the chronological nature of development within the individual, as well as the history of the surrounding environment. The social environment changes over time and affects developing individuals differently at various points in history. For example, the impact of divorce on child development was viewed more negatively during the 1970s than it is today.

Much of the research on development in the past 30 years has been conducted from a bioecological perspective. In this module, we will examine the following:

- The microsystems of families and peers, with special emphasis on the interaction of these within the educational system (in other words, mesosystem)
- The influence of parental employment on development (exosystem)
- Connections to ethnicity and socioeconomic status (macrosystem) as they relate to the microsystems

FIGURE 2.1 ■ Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model.



FAMILY CONTEXT

Arguably, the most influential microsystem in the lives of individuals is the family. Several basic aspects of families—parenting practices, divorce and remarriage—directly influence the child and how the family interacts with the school system as a component of the mesosystem.

Parenting Practices

Parenting practices, also called parenting styles, are the patterns of discipline and affection parents display with their children. These practices have an important influence on child and adolescent development. Diana Baumrind (1966) described parenting practices as typically including two broad dimensions: control and responsiveness. **Control** is the manner and strictness with which parents provide their children with limits and discipline. **Responsiveness** includes the affection, acceptance, and caring involved in parenting. In short, control describes the *behavioral* aspects of parenting, while responsiveness describes the *emotional* aspects. Based on the levels of these two dimensions, Baumrind describes four parenting styles, as shown in Table 2.1.

- **Authoritative parenting** includes setting limits or having rules for children and adolescents and enforcing those rules. Parents and children also exhibit a high level of emotional connectedness that allows the parents to be flexible when necessary. For example, parents may be less strict than usual because they understand that their child is having difficulty with peers at school or is upset about not making the cheerleading squad.
- **Authoritarian parenting** includes a high level of control in which limits are set and rules are enforced yet emotional connectedness is lacking. Parents may be viewed as "dictators" who are inflexible, unable to bend the rules to accommodate special or unusual circumstances. For example, a parent might make a negative comment regarding the *B* in one academic subject when grades in all other subjects are *A*s.

TABLE 2.1 ■ Baumrind's Parenting Practices

	Responsiveness: Higher	Responsiveness: Lower
Control: Higher	Authoritative	Authoritarian
	Limits are set and rules are enforced, but parents are flexible when necessary. Parents and children exhibit a high level of emotional connectedness.	Limits are set and rules are enforced, yet emotional connectedness is lacking. Parents are inflexible, unable to bend the rules in special or unusual circumstances.
Control: Lower	Permissive	Uninvolved
	Parents either do not set rules for behavior or do not enforce established rules. However, parents do have a close connection to their children.	Parenting lacks both control and responsiveness. Parents typically are unaware of their child's behavior, friends, difficulties, or achievements.

- **Permissive parenting** involves less control, with parents either not setting rules for behavior or not enforcing rules. However, parents do have a close connection to their children such that observers might refer to them as "friends" rather than parents. For example, parents may show their affection by giving in to their child's tantrums in the grocery line and buying candy, or they may ground their adolescent but not monitor whether the teenager is home.
- **Uninvolved parenting** lacks both control and responsiveness. Parents typically are unaware of their child's behavior, friends, difficulties, or achievements. For example, a parent may not know what activities or events are happening at school or may be unable to name his or her child's friends. These parents are at risk of being neglectful or abusive.

Research studies consistently link authoritative parenting with positive outcomes. Children and adolescents with authoritative parents tend to have higher levels of healthy adjustment and fewer mental health issues or problem behaviors (Masud et al., 2019; McWhirter et al., 2023; Pinquart, 2017). However, the optimal parenting style may depend on the broader cultural context within which the parents and children are living. Specifically, authoritarian parenting may be important for deterring antisocial behavior among young adolescents residing in low-income neighborhoods with high rates of unemployment and an insufficient police presence (Eamon, 2001; Mowen & Schroeder, 2018).

How do parenting practices interact with the school system? Remember that an interaction between two microsystems—in this case, family and school—is called the mesosystem. The interaction between the family and school microsystems is evident because authoritative parenting is related to academic benefits among a variety of ethnic groups for both elementary-age students and high school students (Lansford, 2022; Pinquart & Kauser, 2018; Yu, 2023). For example, students with authoritative parents tend to have higher achievement and better attitudes toward school, spend more time on homework, are more engaged with teachers and learning, and have lower levels of maladaptive behavior in the classroom (Duchesne & Ratelle, 2010; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Zhao et al., 2023). Teachers are unlikely to be able to change the parenting practices a student experiences at home, but they can gain much insight into the reasons for children's and adolescents' behaviors in the classroom based on knowledge about those parenting practices.

Can you determine which parenting practice was used in your home? If you had two parents, were their parenting practices the same or different? How do you think parenting practices influenced your educational experiences or academic achievement?

Family Structures and Functions

Approximately 40% to 50% of all first marriages and 60% or more of second marriages end in divorce. As a result, nearly half of all children in the United States will live in a single-parent family for some length of time (Hetherington et al., 1999). Although not all children and adolescents experience problems following divorce, some do. Children and adolescents may also experience difficulties prior to the divorce. In fact, they tend to have the greatest difficulties a few years before and after the divorce, as indicated by poorer academic performance (Cao et al., 2022; Sun & Li, 2011). The difficulties surrounding divorce are thought to be the result of changes in the *functioning* of the family rather than *structural* changes (Cao et al., 2022; Demo & Acock, 1996). Changes in the functioning of families include a number of possible issues:

1. *Family conflict* surrounding divorce is an important aspect of family functioning related to children's and adolescents' adjustment (Cao et al., 2022). Although marital conflict occurs prior to the divorce, the level of conflict often increases around the time of divorce. Children living in high-conflict, intact families experience difficulties similar to those experienced by children in divorced families (O'Hara et al., 2023). In particular, school problems may arise as a result of attention difficulties. Children who are worried or concerned about the stability of their parents' relationship may be less able to focus, leading to poor peer relations and behavioral problems at school (Pearson et al., 2022).
2. *Disorganized parenting practices*, which may occur during divorce as parents are coping with their own distress, play a role in children's social and cognitive functioning (Forehand et al., 1990; Hadfield et al., 2018). Parents who once were authoritative may become overwhelmed by their own problems, have few cognitive resources available for their children, and become lax in their monitoring and supervision of children (Hetherington, 1991; Nair & Murray, 2005). Children tend to have fewer difficulties following divorce when parental discipline is consistent across homes (Amato et al., 2011; Rejaän et al., 2022).
3. *Decreases in family economics* also can have a negative impact on the functioning of families (Amato & Keith, 1991; Raley & Sweeney, 2020). Parents who were not employed outside the home may need to obtain employment, or parents who were employed may need to work longer hours or earn a second income in order to sustain the level of economics within the home (exosystem). Postdivorce economics may lead to the family moving to a smaller home or a lower socioeconomic status (SES) neighborhood (macrosystem), which may lead to poorer school achievement.

Some children—because of their developmental level, gender, personality, or relationships—may have a tougher time dealing with divorce than others do (Davies & Windle, 2001; Hetherington et al., 1998), especially

- younger children,
- boys more than girls,
- children placed in custody with the opposite-sex parent (typically boys),
- children who have a difficult temperament or who have always been less able to adjust to change within their environment, and
- children who do not have a supportive relationship with an adult outside the immediate family (e.g., teacher, aunt, uncle, coach).

Family Transitions. Children and adolescents experience fewer difficulties during family transitions when they have a supportive relationship with an adult outside the family, such as a teacher or coach.

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Although most difficulties occur around the time of divorce, children whose parents have been divorced for years may encounter problems again during adolescence; this is called the **sleeper effect** (Hetherington, 1993). Adolescents experiencing the sleeper effect exhibit difficulties such as drug and alcohol use, behavioral problems, poor school performance, and poor interpersonal relationships—including higher rates of divorce themselves later in life. The awakening of these difficulties is thought to occur because the period of adolescence introduces more opportunity to engage in drugs and alcohol use and to develop intimate relationships with peers and romantic partners, typically not a factor during childhood (Sarigiani & Spierling, 2011).

Some of the same family functioning issues surrounding divorce, such as family conflict and disruptions in parenting styles, continue to exist in remarried homes (Hadfield et al., 2018; Hetherington et al., 1998; Raley & Sweeney, 2020). Children's and adolescents' well-being suffers each time a transition or change occurs within the family. Remarriage adds a second transition to the family dynamics. As a result, adolescents from stepfamilies may have lower academic achievement and more involvement in delinquent acts than adolescents from single-parent homes (Amato & Keith, 1991; Hetherington, 1993; Raley & Sweeney, 2020; Sun & Li, 2011). Some children are particularly at risk for experiencing difficulties following remarriage (Hadfield et al., 2018; Hetherington et al., 1998), including

- older children,
- girls more than boys, and
- children with more difficult temperaments.

How do divorce and remarriage within the family interact with the school in the mesosystem? Children from both divorced and remarried families are more likely to have lower academic achievement and more problematic school behavior than children from intact families (Hadfield et al., 2018; Sun & Li, 2011). Understanding that family functioning may be the reason for such difficulties and that particular children may be more likely to experience these difficulties allows educators the opportunity to provide the support necessary to assist these children during family transitions. Children and adolescents who have a supportive adult relationship outside the family—such as a strong relationship with a particular teacher—are less likely to experience difficulties (Hetherington, 1993; Laletas & Khasin, 2021). On the other hand, teachers also may unwittingly form negative expectations about students based on their individual characteristics and family circumstances. This could lead to a **self-fulfilling prophecy**—an unfounded expectation that becomes true simply because it was expected. For example, a teacher who is aware of the relationship between divorce and achievement may expect less of children of divorce, which can lead to behaviors that cause the student to achieve less in school.

Teachers in today's classrooms encounter children from various family structures. Knowledge about family functioning and structure provides teachers with a context for understanding why some children may experience difficulties in the school setting. However, family background should not be used as a rationale to lower expectations for some students. Instead, it can provide information about who is most likely to need additional support and assistance within the microsystem of the school.

PEER CONTEXT

After families, peers are considered the second-most important microsystem influencing development. Let's examine the development of friendships and peer groups among children and adolescents, as well as how peer status can interact with the educational experience (mesosystem).

Friendships and Peer Groups

Friendships are important because having friends during childhood and adolescence is related to several positive outcomes. For example, children with close friendships tend to have more social competence, greater self-confidence, and higher self-esteem, as well as fewer difficulties with school transitions and better academic performance (Bagwell & Bukowski, 2018; Dryburgh et al., 2022; Hartup, 1996). Parents and teachers therefore should attempt to promote friendships among children and adolescents while understanding that friendships undergo changes throughout development.

Social competence and self-esteem: See Module 3

Friendships among preschool-age children are qualitatively different from friendships among adolescents. In early and middle childhood, children base their friendships on moment-to-moment interactions. For example, two preschool-age children might be playing well together and consider themselves best friends, but a moment of not sharing or an unwillingness to submit to the other's request can lead to anger, resulting in the children announcing that they are no longer friends. Within a few minutes, the children may resume interactions and once again announce that they are friends. Friendships among children in later childhood and early adolescence are based on more stable and similar qualities, such as typical play interests (we both like Barbies or video games) or typical qualities of sharing and kindness. In adolescence, friendships become based on common values and more complex interests, such as attitudes toward school, career aspirations, and achievement (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Hartup, 1996). As a result, distinct peer groups begin to emerge during adolescence.

Over the past 25 years, much of the research on peer group formation during adolescence has been conducted and written by B. Bradford Brown and his colleagues (Brown, 1990, 2004; Brown & Braun, 2013; Brown & Klute, 2006). During middle school, groups of peers begin to form cliques and crowds. **Cliques** are small groups of two to eight people who know each other very well. Cliques provide opportunities to learn social skills, discover how to communicate in interpersonal relationships, and, for some, practice leadership roles within small groups. Many times, these small groups have a social structure or place in which time is spent together. For example, one clique may hang out at the local restaurant, another may congregate at the school, and another may gather at one adolescent's home.

Social skills: See Module 3

Clique members typically are very similar on a number of demographic characteristics, such as age, SES, and race, as well as on shared activities (e.g., dress and music) and values (Ellis & Zarbatany, 2017; Hamm, 2000; Hartup, 1996). For example, members of a clique typically have similar beliefs about the importance of school and academic achievement, as well as similar levels of involvement in delinquent behavior and substance use (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011; Ivaniushina & Titkova, 2021; Wentzel, 2022). In addition, cliques typically include same-sex friends during middle school but develop into mixed-sex groups during high school (Xie & Shi, 2009). The similarities among clique members may be due to the following processes:

- *Peer selection process*—adolescents seeking out others similar to themselves
- *Peer socialization process*—dissimilar adolescents becoming more similar over time

In contrast to the small, interaction-based peer cliques, **crowds** are larger, reputation-based peer groups that typically have common labels across school districts and vary across gender (Kindermann & Gest, 2018; Sussman et al., 2007; Youniss et al., 1994). They include the following:

- Populars/Preps (elites)—having many friends, being well-known, being cool, being highly social (more likely to be girls than boys)
- Jocks (athletes)—participating in sports and physical activities (more likely to be boys than girls)
- Brains/Nerds (academics)—being smart and showing high academic performance (equally likely to be girls or boys)

- Normals (others)—being average or normal, being cool, being highly social (more likely to be girls than boys)
- Druggies/Partiers/Burnouts (deviants)—using drugs, alcohol, and physical aggression (more likely to be boys than girls)
- Loners—belonging to a small group, having few friendships, being nonconforming (more likely to be girls than boys)

By ninth grade, most adolescents agree on who belongs to which crowd within the school system, and these labels provide adolescents with a basis for identity development—that is, understanding who they are and how they fit into society (Brown & Larson, 2009; Newman & Newman, 2001). Crowds tend to be hierarchical during middle school and hence are related to self-esteem or how positively individuals feel about themselves. Adolescents in higher status crowds, such as preps and jocks, typically have higher self-esteem than individuals in lower status crowds, such as druggies (Helms et al., 2014; Prinstein & La Greca, 2002). The hierarchy of crowds changes over time, and membership within these crowds is more easily changed during the later years of high school, such that individuals may be members of more than one crowd (Youniss et al., 1994).

Identity development: See Module 3
Self-esteem: See Module 3

The interaction between the peer and school microsystems is another example of the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. As discussed earlier, children with friends tend to have better school performance and to handle school transitions (e.g., the move from elementary to middle school) better than children who lack friendships. Similarly, affiliation with cliques and crowds during adolescence promotes social skills and identity formation, both of which are related to higher levels of academic achievement (Denham et al., 2003; Flashman, 2012; Wentzel, 2022). As a result, teachers should attempt to foster friendships among peers early in students' development and should continue to support peer group formation throughout adolescence.

Can you list the friends who were in your clique during high school? Which crowd label best represents you during high school? How did those peer groups help or hinder your academic progress?

Peer Statuses

In addition to friendships and peer groups, the social status of individuals among their peers is an important factor in the microsystem of peers. Peer social status typically is determined by both socially appropriate behaviors (e.g., caring, leadership skills) and aggressive behaviors. Positive social behaviors and aggression are important determinants of peer status across developmental levels—with preschool-age children as well as elementary, middle, and high school students—and among rural African American adolescents (Burr et al., 2005; Farmer et al., 2003; Rose et al., 2004).

In discussing the peer context, aggression typically sparks ideas of physical or **overt aggression**, such as fighting, with the intent to harm another physically. Research has defined a second type of aggression: relational aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). **Relational aggression** refers to behaviors specifically intended to damage another child's friendships, social status, or feelings of inclusion in a peer group. Such behaviors include gossiping, rumor spreading, and excluding people as a way to control them. In the United States, boys are more likely to use overt aggression, whereas girls are more likely to display relational aggression, especially during middle school (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Gangel et al., 2017; Mathieson & Crick, 2010; Voulgaridou & Kokkinos, 2023). However, this pattern is different across cultures. More specifically, adolescent boys are more likely than girls to use relational aggression in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe (Voulgaridou & Kokkinos, 2023).

Children and adolescents have been categorized into several peer statuses based on socially appropriate and aggressive behaviors with peers: popular, rejected, or neglected.

Popular

Using different approaches, researchers have determined that there are actually two separate forms of popularity (Brown & Larson, 2009; Cillessen & Rose, 2005). In the first type, **sociometric popularity**, students nominate peers whom they most like and most dislike within their classroom or grade. In **perceived popularity**, students nominate peers who are the most popular or "cool" and those who are the least popular or "cool." Both sociometric and perceived popularity include characteristics of positive behavior, such as being cooperative and/or displaying socially appropriate behaviors. Unlike individuals with sociometric popularity, those with perceived popularity sometimes receive high numbers of nominations both for being liked and for being disliked—meaning that their popularity is controversial. The main difference between the two types of popularity, however, appears to be whether these peer status positions include displays of aggression. Sociometric popularity is not related to aggressive behaviors, whereas individuals with high levels of perceived popularity are likely to show higher levels of overt or relational aggression (Hensums et al., 2023; LaFontana & Cillessen, 2002; Puckett et al., 2008). However, relational aggression appears to play a more important role in peer status than does overt aggression and more so with girls' perceived popularity than with that of boys (Seo et al., 2023). Relational aggression can be used to obtain or maintain high peer status, which is more likely to occur following the transition from elementary school to middle school (Kim & Cillessen, 2023; LaFontana & Cillessen, 2002). Middle school students with advanced social skills may be more effective in delivering threats of friendship withdrawal, excluding others from the peer group, or orchestrating rumor spreading (Adler & Adler, 1998; Gangel et al., 2017; Xie et al., 2005). A specific type of relational aggression is referred to as **cyberbullying**, or intentional acts of relational aggression using electronic formats such as texting and social media. Similar to the broader category of relational aggression, recent research has found that the specific form of cyberbullying is also related to perceived popularity but not sociometric popularity (Nesi et al., 2018; Wegge et al., 2016).

Gender and Aggression. During middle school, boys are more likely to use overt aggression, and girls are more likely to use relational aggression.

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Rejected

Not all individuals who display relational or overt aggression are perceived as popular (Rose et al., 2004; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). Individuals who display aggressive behaviors but do not display the positive behaviors of cooperation and social skills typically are considered **rejected youth** (Closson & Hymel, 2016; Zimmer-Genbeck et al., 2013). Rejected youth tend to be less well liked by peers, including those within their own peer clique, and are members of smaller peer cliques (Bagwell et al., 2000). In addition, violence may beget violence in rejected students. For example, rejection status and the use of relational aggression are related to increases in relational aggression for girls. Similarly, rejection and overt aggression are related to increases in overt aggression for both boys and girls (Werner & Crick, 2004). Many consider a pattern of aggressive and coercive behavior over time to be *bullying*. Yet being the victim of aggression also may lead to higher levels of aggression, meaning victims of aggression may themselves become aggressive (Casper & Card, 2017; Guo et al., 2022). For example, one

study of African American eighth graders found that students who were the victims of overt or relational aggression by their peers also were more likely to be aggressive themselves (Sullivan et al., 2006). Unfortunately, students with mild disabilities may be more likely to be perceived as bullies and victims as compared with general education students who are more likely than gifted students to be perceived as bullies or victims (Bear et al., 2015; Estell et al., 2009).

Bullying: See Module 17

Neglected

The final category of peer status includes those individuals who are neither popular nor aggressive but rather are considered **neglected youth**. Individuals who are considered neglected typically are not nominated as liked or disliked and do not show high rates of overt or relational aggression (Brown, 2004). Because little research evidence is available concerning this category of peer status, less is known about related characteristics among these individuals.

> Think about people at your high school who would have been considered popular because they were well liked and those who were popular but not well liked. Did aggressive behaviors contribute to these popular students being disliked by their peers?

How does peer status interact with the school in the mesosystem? Students perceived as popular but not necessarily well liked tend to be less academically engaged, whereas students who are well liked by peers are considered to be more academically engaged (de Bruyn & Cillessen, 2006; Ladd, 2013). Similarly, adolescents who experience victimization or peer rejection are likely to have lower school performance and more psychological distress (Menken et al., 2022; Platt et al., 2013). In particular, relational aggression has been linked to academic engagement (Polanco et al., 2023), and cyberbullying has been found to have a unique connection to adolescent depression (Landoll et al., 2015). Because popularity and aggression are related to academic outcomes and psychological difficulties, teachers need to identify and eliminate aggressive behaviors. However, research has found that teachers are more likely to identify overt, physical aggression than relational aggression, not only in the United States but in other countries as well (Chen et al., 2018; Migliaccio, 2015). In addition, teachers' reactions are more likely to include discipline for overt aggression than relational aggression (Yoon et al., 2016).

We might assume that teachers have more difficulty identifying acts of relational aggression and determining who is to blame because the behaviors are less obvious and more indirect. For example, teachers might clearly see overt aggression when one child hits, kicks, or slaps another child, but they might not "see" the rumor spreading or gossiping behaviors characteristic of relational aggression. Given the link between relational aggression and negative outcomes, teachers should be on the lookout for instances of relational aggression and react as swiftly to these aggressive behaviors as they do to instances of overt aggression. An intervention program for rural schools has been successful in improving teachers' abilities to identify students involved in bullying (Farmer et al., 2010). Education and training of school personnel on the significance of relational aggression may also see benefits.

BROADER CONTEXTS

Although the microsystems of families, peers, and schools most directly influence children, Bronfenbrenner's model also includes systems that have less direct influence on the developing individual—the exosystem and the macrosystem.

Parental Employment

In today's economy, both parents typically are employed outside the household, making parental workplaces a common element of a student's exosystem—that is, an indirect influence on development.

Thirty to forty years ago, as more mothers began rejoining the workforce, researchers examined the effects on child and adolescent outcomes and did not find negative results. Instead, a number of positive outcomes were found, particularly for girls (Hoffman, 1974):

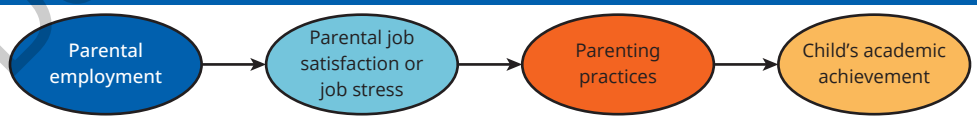
- Girls with working mothers tended to have higher achievement aspirations or greater desire to excel academically, as well as higher achievement in school, compared to girls with nonworking mothers.
- Girls with working mothers tended to have higher intelligence scores (IQ scores) compared to girls with nonworking mothers.
- Children of working mothers were not more likely to be involved in delinquent acts than were children of nonworking mothers.
- Children of working mothers had more household responsibilities than did children of nonworking mothers, a situation related to positive rather than negative outcomes, such as advanced social development.

More recent research on parental employment as an exosystem suggests that having both parents employed outside the home does not generally affect children in either a negative or a positive manner (Lombardi & Coley, 2017; Lucas-Thompson et al., 2010). For example, working mothers spend slightly less time with their children than do nonworking mothers; however, fathers whose wives are employed become more involved in child rearing than do fathers whose wives are not employed outside the home. In short, parental employment appears to have little impact on children and may even be related to positive academic achievement, aspirations, and intelligence among girls.

Parental satisfaction or job stress may have an indirect influence in the lives of children and adolescents. Data from the 1970s suggested that children of working mothers who were satisfied with their jobs had more positive outcomes than did children of unemployed mothers who preferred to work or working mothers who did not want to work (Hoffman, 1974). Similarly, more recent research suggests that job stress may be related to parenting practices. Higher levels of job stress may lead to a mother's withdrawal from her child and increased family conflict (Crouter & McHale, 2005; Vahedi et al., 2019). In contrast, mothers who view their jobs as enriching their family life may actually display more optimal, warm parenting practices (Cooklin et al., 2015). Not surprising, the connection between job stress/job enrichment and child outcomes is not only important for mothers' work but is also found when examining fathers' work stress and child outcomes (Bilodeau et al., 2023).

Because parental satisfaction and job stress are components of the exosystem, the interaction with the school system is less direct, but it is not completely absent. Parents who are employed and experience high levels of job stress and dissatisfaction may exhibit less effective parenting practices, which can influence the academic achievement of their children (see Figure 2.2). Teachers might not be able to change the employment, job satisfaction, or parenting styles of parents, but they need to understand that this aspect of the exosystem indirectly affects the students in their classrooms.

FIGURE 2.2 ■ Exosystem's Relevance. This graphic shows the indirect influence of parental employment on academic achievement.



A more direct influence of parental employment on the school system is the need of many families to use child care facilities. Child care facilities are considered a microsystem within a child's life, but they exist within the broader context of parental employment. Approximately 55% of all families with children under the age of 5 pay for child care, and 79% use some form of child care (Malik, 2019). A variety of options for child care are available, including care by a relative, home or center care, licensed

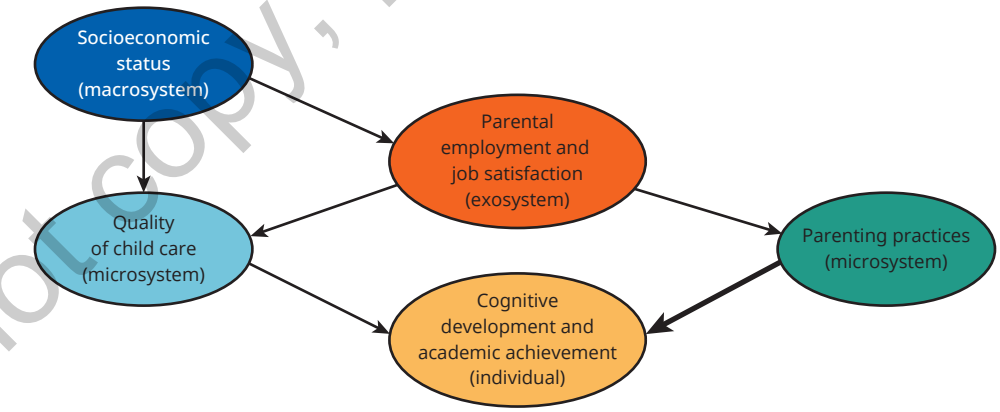
or unlicensed care, and for-profit or not-for-profit organizations. The amount of time spent in child care is not as important as the quality of care (McCartney et al., 2010). Quality of care from birth through age 4 can have positive effects on academic achievement through adolescence (Vandell et al., 2016; Vandell & Gülseven, 2023).

Quality care typically means a safe environment with warm, supportive interactions that enhance children's development. Specific characteristics of quality care include the following:

- Small group sizes within homes or classrooms
- Low teacher-to-child ratios within classrooms
- Qualified teachers or child care providers with early childhood education or child development training
- High stability or low turnover rates among teachers

Although quality of care is an important microsystem to consider, other factors appear to have an even greater influence on later development. A government-funded study has examined child care since 1991, following children from birth through sixth grade. The most recent findings indicate that parenting practices as well as a child's temperament are better predictors of later cognitive and social development outcomes than are experiences in child care facilities (Belsky et al., 2007; Burchina et al., 2014; Vandell & Gülseven, 2023). Broader contextual factors may also have a stronger impact on the cognitive and academic performance of children than quality of child care. For example, although quality of child care is related to language and cognitive development in children, this connection can be explained by family income and SES because families living in higher SES neighborhoods have better access to quality child care (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2002; Hatfield et al., 2015; Malik, 2019). Figure 2.3 depicts the complex nature of how microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems together influence an individual.

FIGURE 2.3 ■ Interrelationships. Systems are interdependent and exert direct and indirect influences on the individual.



Cultural Factors

Like parenting practices (microsystem) and parental employment (exosystem), even broader contextual factors—SES (macrosystem)—can shape child and adolescent development. More specifically, high-poverty school systems and highly segregated African American school systems can have a negative impact on educational outcomes beyond individual differences (Borman & Dowling, 2010; Tan et al., 2023). Similarly, cultural values regarding education can play a major role in children's and adolescents' academic performance. Almost all parents want their children to excel academically and become successful, yet parental expectations may vary based on ethnicity and SES.

These different expectations among parents may reflect their beliefs about the benefits of education. For example, African Americans are more skeptical of how helpful education will be because many

believe that even with an education their children will be discriminated against and their opportunities for success will be limited (Hill et al., 2018; Ogbu, 1994, 2003). Hence, African American students have fewer negative views of the future when they think about not being educated, whereas Asian American students have a greater fear of negative outcomes or failure when they think about not being well educated (Steinberg, 1996).

Parental Employment. Fathers with working wives become more involved in child rearing than do fathers whose wives do not work outside the home.

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Broader cultural beliefs about the benefits of education may lead to parents being either more or less involved in their child's education. The connection between parental involvement and broader cultural beliefs is important because higher parental involvement is consistently linked to higher academic achievement (Boonk et al., 2018; Choi et al., 2015). African American parents have been found to participate less in school functions—such as parent–teacher organizations, workshops, and open houses—than white American parents and to be less likely to help their children with homework or check that homework has been completed (Ogbu, 2003). Lower parental involvement among African American parents most likely results from a misconception that the school does not need their help to educate their children, with the result that these parents may not understand the importance of their role at school or as homework facilitators (Ogbu, 2003; Steinberg, 1996). In contrast, Asian Americans are highly invested in the school system, and Asian American students spend substantially more time on homework than do white Americans (Steinberg, 1996). In short, families (microsystem) are influenced by cultural beliefs (macrosystem), particularly with regard to parental involvement in education and interactions with the school setting (mesosystem). Teachers and educators need to be reminded that differences among beliefs in and support for education exist not only between ethnic groups but also within ethnic groups. The value each student's family places on education should be considered outside of his or her ethnicity.

As with many of the contexts of development we have discussed, teachers may have little ability to change the cultural values or beliefs held by their students' parents. However, teachers can use culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms, such as differentiated instruction, to ensure equitable learning for all students.

Culturally responsive pedagogy: See Module 18

SUMMARY

1. **Describe Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory.** Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory emphasizes the interaction between the biological person and the environmental systems, including microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and the chronosystem. Research examining families and peers has relied on this theory to help explain developmental outcomes.

2. **Describe how parenting practices and family transitions interact with the school system.** The four parenting practices vary by level of control and responsiveness. Authoritative parenting appears to be most beneficial to children's and adolescents' academic achievement and school performance. Although children from both divorced and remarried families are more likely to have lower academic achievement and to exhibit more problem behaviors in school than children from intact families, not all such children experience difficulties. Difficulties do tend to increase with each family transition, meaning that academic achievement may be lower in remarried families than in single-parent families. Teachers should use information about the family context to help them understand children's difficulties and provide additional support to children and families.

3. **Describe how aspects of the peer context interact with the school system.** Children with friends or peer group affiliation tend to have better school performance than do children without

friends or peer ties. In addition, children or adolescents who are well liked by their peers are more likely to be engaged in school than are those who are disliked or neglected by peers. Because of the link between overt aggression and negative outcomes, as well as between relational aggression and negative outcomes, teachers need to identify both overt and relational aggression.

4. **Explain how broader contexts of development influence microsystems and individual outcomes.** The presence of an exosystem such as parental employment is not as important to a child's development as the indirect influence on the child via job satisfaction and stress. In addition, the presence of parental work outside the home may lead to an additional microsystem in the child's life—child care—but the child's development may be influenced more by the macrosystem of SES and neighborhood. The macrosystem also varies by ethnicity and cultural values such that parental expectations and support for educational achievement may vary across and within ethnic groups to help explain differences in academic performance among students.

KEY TERMS

Authoritarian Parenting
Authoritative Parenting
Chronosystem
Cliques
Control
Crowds
Cyberbullying
Exosystem
Macrosystem
Mesosystem
Microsystem
Neglected Youth
Overt Aggression
Parenting Practices
Perceived Popularity
Permissive Parenting
Rejected Youth
Relational Aggression
Responsiveness
Self-Fulfilling Prophecy
Sleeper Effect
Sociometric Popularity
Uninvolved Parenting

CASE STUDIES: REFLECT AND EVALUATE

Early Childhood: Crybaby

These questions refer to the Unit 1 Case Study: Early Childhood: Crybaby.

1. Based on the information provided in the case study, speculate on the parenting strategies most likely used by Annie's mom and Zada's parents.
2. How might the family structures of Annie and Zada influence their behavior?
3. How developmentally appropriate is Annie's comment about not being best friends with Zada?
4. How might Tyler's aggressive behavior become a problem with peers as he continues into elementary school?
5. How does the employment of Annie's and Zada's parents play a role in their development?
6. How does the value placed on education differ in Annie's and Zada's homes? What factors might account for these differences?

Elementary School: Team

These questions refer to Unit 1 Case Study: Elementary School: Team.

1. How might Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory be important in understanding Kashi's experiences?
2. Based on the information provided in the case study, speculate on the type of parenting strategy most likely used by Patricia's mom, Mary.

3. In what specific ways might the divorce of Kashi's parents have influenced her behavior?
4. What does Kashi's "team" most likely refer to regarding peer groups?
5. Based on the information provided in the case study, is Zach correct in labeling Bill a *bully*? Why or why not?
6. Does Ms. Barone handle the girls and boys differently? Based on the research presented in the module, how are teachers' reactions typically different based on types of aggression and children's gender?

Middle School: Basketball Star

These questions refer to Unit 1 Case Study: Middle School: Basketball Star.

1. What parenting strategy is most likely used by Sierra's dad? Darla's dad?
2. How might the family structures of Sierra, Darla, and Mark influence their behavior?
3. Identify an example of a clique and a crowd in the case study. Would these be expected to be formed during middle school? How might they change over the next several years?
4. What are the peer statuses of Jill, Sierra, Darla, and Mark? Give specific examples of their behavior that indicate these statuses. How might their peer status affect their school performance?
5. What type of aggression is used by Jill and Sierra? By Claudia? By Mark? Why might teachers react differently to aggressive behaviors displayed by these students?

High School: Steal, Cheat, and Fight

These questions refer to Unit 1 Case Study: High School: Steal, Cheat, and Fight.

1. How could the content of these emails be combined to better reflect the bioecological model?
2. Ms. Presley believes that the family is responsible for these behaviors. To which aspects of family life might she attribute these behaviors?
3. How might Ms. Presley be accurate and inaccurate in her descriptions of divorce, remarriage, and parental employment?
4. What examples of cliques and crowds are given by the teachers and staff? Are these typical groupings in a high school? Why or why not?
5. What examples of relational and physical aggression are given by the teachers and staff? Based on the research presented in the module, is the gender of the adolescent who is displaying a particular type of aggression in the case study typical or atypical?