

# Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory on child development essay sample

[Environment](#), [Ecology](#)



Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist, developed the Ecological Systems Theory in order to further discuss and explain child development. Bronfenbrenner's theory explains that there are certain cultural and social factors within a child's immediate environment that influences the child's development and experience. Within the immediate environment of the child, there are many levels, or systems, that can affect and influence child development.

There are five systems that Bronfenbrenner indicates in his theory on child development. The first system in the Ecological Theory is microsystem, which is the child's closest layer. The microsystem is the immediate environment in which the child lives in. Any immediate interaction with the child is part of the microsystem, such as at school, day care and with family and peers. Such relationship can certainly influence a child's development psychologically, biologically, or etc. As a child develops, the child is very susceptible to his or her immediate surroundings and interaction within the microsystem. The ways in which a child is treated within the microsystem and also the ways in which the child reacts are also important factors in the microsystem.

The second system is the mesosystem, which is a system that is comprised by the linkages between the microsystems. Such an example includes the possible connection between a child's immediate surroundings of school and home. More specifically, the connection with a child's school and home is a parent teacher meeting or conference, in which the child is involved in.

The third system of Bronfenbrenner's theory on child development is the exosystem, which includes other places or people that indirectly influences a child's development. One of the most common examples of an exoskeleton is the workplace of the child's parents. Although the child will most likely not interact within the parent's workplace, there are many factors that can affect child development. A bad day at work, such as being fired, can negatively affect the parent's attitude towards the child. With the stress of paying bills and being in debt, the parents will most likely take out their stress or anger towards their child, which will negatively influence development. Similarly, a parent who receives a raise at work will most likely treat the child much better, such as buying their child toys and such. This will positively influence child development although the child is not directly interacting with the exosystem, or the parent's workplace.

The next system in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory is the macrosystem, which includes the large cultural context of people or things that are entirely remote to a child's immediate environment. Yet, there is still a great influence on the child's development. Such examples like the economy, wars, and laws can remotely influence child development either positively or negatively.

The last system is the chronosystem, which involves biological change within child, or external changes in the child's environment. Examples include internal changes such as puberty or external changes such as the divorce of a child's parents. All of these five systems can negatively or positively influencing a child's development, either directly or indirectly.

#2 There are four basic issues in development. One issue discusses whether the course of development is continuous or discontinuous. This means whether development occurs as a gradual and smooth process, or if it occurs in a series of developmental steps. The second issue argues if any one course of development can characterize all children. Another issue discusses the nature vs. nurture controversy and which plays a more significant role in development. I think that the Ecological Approach would fall into the nature vs. nurture issue. The Ecological Approach discusses microsystems, mesosystems, and so on. These systems examine how children are influenced and develop within their immediate environment.

The Ecological Approach discusses how immediate environmental factors play a role in how a child is influenced by those factors, thus leading to development. Also, the chronosystem of the Ecological Theory talks about biological change, which falls into the nurture argument of the nature vs. nurture issue.

The Ecological Approach would not fall into the discontinuous or continuous issue because the Ecological Approach does not talk emphasize whether or not the systems lead to gradual or sudden development. Instead, the Ecological Approach discusses the different types of systems within a child, which can be affected by the child's environmental and biological factors.

## References

Berk, Laura. (2005). *Infants, Children, and Adolescents*. ( SMC Custom Edition). Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon

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