

# Developmental

[Life](#), [Adolescence](#)



1. Consider Anna's development with regard to the following issues or concepts: contributions of nature; contributions of nurture; proximal processes; distal processes. Anna could possibly be affected by genetic predispositions for mental illness issues that cluster around similar markers for hereditary alcoholism on her father's side. Additionally, being conceived in and spending her prenatal months in a poor, heavily industrial area could also make her vulnerable to various physical or mental illnesses often associated with her demographic. On the other hand, some Eastern European genes could lend Anna some extraordinary genetic resilience and a formidable constitution and temperament. Alcoholism (and perhaps its underlying pathologies) has been shown to skip generations. Anna was also born with white privilege, part of society's dominant group. Unfortunately, on the nurture side, Anna's development has been impacted by risk factors that far outweigh the impact of protective factors. Hauser (1999) demonstrated that young adults who suffered traumas as adolescents made better adjustments the higher their levels of protection were. Father absence, low parent education, low income and maternal depression are all risk factors associated with poor academic performance. (Gutman, Sameroff, and Eccles (2002). Proximal processes for Anna appear to be restricted, confounded and confusing. She is innocently caught in dynamics that certainly frustrate her selfobject needs and make effectively engaging her environment difficult. Distal processes include a culture and likely school system not designed to target Anna for a battery of protective measures and interventions that will allow her any measure of developmental equifinality. 2. Can you predict outcomes? Consider issues of continuity and change. Prevention science is

an approach to developmental psychology meant to increase the probability of predicting undesirable outcomes and finding ways to prevent them.

(Broderick & Blewitt, 2010 p. 26). I don't believe specific outcomes can be predicted outright, but you can predict the probability of an outcome. In Anna's case, she has already, at age 9, manifested developmental problems that were predictable, and because of that, preventable. The question is whether enough protection interventions can employ in time to mediate or moderate the risk factors. Continuity theory would assert that Anna is almost guaranteed to have a shortened life span due to the fact that she was born into poverty, a persistent proximal factor, and that there are few moderating variables that could change the effect of it on her longevity. (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010 p. 20). 3. What are the strength and weaknesses of each of the family members? Anna- Resilient, oldest sibling, in a good school, teachers who care. Step-father willing to level her and maybe support her. Weaknesses are academic problems, peer problems, attachment issues. John-Middle child probably close to Anna, creates safety and mutual nurturing. He is probably severely emotionally neglected Infant Sibling-Youngest and could benefit the most by family intervention and protection. Unwanted. Karen- Works hard to provide, put Anna in a good school. Appears to have strong family values, keeping her three kids together. Karen has attachment disorders, chronic physical illness and is likely extremely depressed. Walter- An alcoholic whereabouts unknown, but if he is sober he may be in a position to leverage his sobriety in a way that benefits Anna. Frank-Hard worker, seems to want to be a good father. Checkered past, low resilience. 4. What environmental modifications would be helpful to promote

healthy developmental outcomes? Be specific about each family member. For this family, it would be worth checking out Walter's status, specifically seeking child support. Frank could at the same time be encouraged to continue his involvement with Anna and consistently and regularly visit with the other two children. Karen's employer should be put on notice regarding her disability and be provided accommodation and a sense of job security. She should ideally be encouraged to seek treatment for depression, general counseling and perhaps attendance of Debtors Anonymous. Karen should be encouraged to seek public in-home services to help her care for her children and provide tutoring. Anna should be assessed for learning disabilities, provided counseling and increased opportunities to interact with peers. John might be placed in a preschool setting where he is properly stimulated and nurtured. Karen may consider attending a mommy and me class with the infant. Karen and either Walter or Frank could be urged to join the PTA or otherwise involve themselves in Anna's school.

References Broderick, P. & Blewitt, P. (2010). *The life span: Human development for helping professions*. Third Edition. Pearson: Gutman, Sameroff & Eccles (2002). The academic achievement of African American students during early adolescence: An examination of multiple risk, promotive, and protective factors. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30. 367-399. (In Blewitt & Broderick, 2010.) Hauser, S. T. (1999). Understanding resilient outcomes: Adolescent lives across time and generations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 9, 1-24. (In Broderick & Blewitt, 2010).