

Childrens cognitive development

[Education](#)



I interviewed a 2nd and a 4th grade teacher for this assignment. Both have been teaching for over 15 years and worked in the same elementary school. They report that the most important factor they saw influencing a child's achievement is the home situation of the child. Stable, nurturing home situations seemed to encourage higher levels of achievement. One speculated that something as basic as the nutritional choices offered at home might be a big influence on the ability of the child to achieve at school. The other said he felt that a sense of safety provided by a stable home allowed a child to concentrate on learning and achievement at school. Both teachers report that motivation is easy to achieve in 2nd and 4th grade because children still seek to please authority figures at this stage in their development. Rewards for good behavior, such as extra recess time are no longer possible because so much time is devoted to standardized testing. These teachers have adapted by offering students more choices about how and what they learn within the classroom. Differentiated instruction is a key to motivation and classroom management in elementary school. Both teachers agree that there is a difference between what they feel parents should do for their child's education and what they actually see happening. Both teachers feel a stable home with good nutrition, boundaries concerning bed times and video games, and exposure to books and literature are all helpful. A home with scheduled study times was also identified as being a plus. Both teachers agree in stating that less than half of their children now have this sort of a home. Even the affluent, educated kids seem overscheduled and parents appear overindulgent when it comes to permitting TV watching and playing into the late hours of the evening. Kids seem tired and restless according to the 4th grade teacher.

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I interviewed the principal of a middle school for the next set of questions. She related that Gifted children have their needs addressed in two ways. One of the methods employed is to write specific skills or activities the classroom teacher must develop and do as a part of fulfilling the GIEP. This ensures that students are challenged within the regular classroom setting. She pointed out that inclusion is an important concept for Gifted students as well as students with learning disabilities. The second method employed is through the district Gifted Coordinator. This individual meets one day out of six with the gifted students in the middle school. Enrichment in the arts, literature and logic is offered at this time. The challenge in implementing a great Gifted program is cost. In an age of budget cuts, she worries each year that the Gifted Coordinator position could be eliminated.

The day care I visited was in a rural area that had lots of poverty. The physical facilities were very basic, yet clean and appropriate. The one thing that I noticed the children and workers did throughout the day was sing. Singing seemed to be a major means of teaching, because all sorts of kinesthetic motion accompanied each song, as well as management of the children. Rhyming games were a focus of many workers as was small group reading and listening time. There was no technology available in any part of the day care. No television sets or even computers were to be seen. One of the teachers said that they felt setting a child in front of a screen was not a good way for them to develop cognitively. She said that their philosophy was to interact through song, games and the spoken word throughout the day. The quietest time of the whole day was when the blocks and puzzles were brought out. The teacher explained that they knew they were heavy in their curriculum when it came to audible instruction and stimulation. The blocks

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and puzzles were introduced to give the kids (and teachers) a rest from the constant noise of interaction and to introduce some spatial reasoning skills.