

Nature vs. nurture

Family



Nature vs. Nurture Nature vs. Nurture A child normally undergoes five different developmental stages; Social, Physical, Intellectual, creative and emotional. These developmental stages depend heavily on two factors; nature and nurture or heredity and environment. Nature and nurture can influence the physical, mental, emotional and social development of a child in different ways. Even if a child's nature or heredity is sound, it doesn't mean that the child may develop properly if brought up in a poor environment. Same way, even if a child brought up in a healthy environment, it doesn't mean that he may develop properly, if nature or heredity happens to be poor. This paper briefly analyses the importance of nature and nurture in the development of a child. Some people argue that the development of a child depends on his genetic predispositions (Powel, 2010). Their arguments are based on the fact that children tend to resemble their parents in many ways. For example, parents with high intelligence normally have children of high intelligence even though there are certain exceptions. Moreover, children of taller parents may become taller when they grow up whereas children of shorter parents may never become taller. Hereditarianism believes that parents transfer their physical and mental characteristics to their children at the time of conception through genes or chromosomes. In their opinion, every child enters the world with certain physical and mental features of their parents. In short these people believe that the physical and mental characteristics of the parents will be transferred to their children and hence the child development depends on the characteristics of the parents. On the other hand, some other people argue that the development of a child depends on the environment in which he is brought up. In their opinion, nurturing of the child plays an important role in <https://assignbuster.com/nature-vs-nurture-essay-samples-5/>

the development. In their opinion, children born to even criminal parents can be developed properly if he is nurtured properly. Environment means all those factors which are contributed to the development of a person like; home, family, neighbourhood, peer group, the school and the entire community in which the person is interacting. The supporters of nurture argue that a Christian child brought up in a Muslim family may develop Islamic beliefs only because of the importance of nurture over nature in the development. Same way, a Muslim child brought up in a Hindu family may develop Hindu belief only. Even though these children may have different nature or heredity, nurturing or environment shapes their development. In short, environmentalists or the supporters of nurture believe that nurturing dominates over nature in the development of children. “ Child development has; different dimensions, orderly pattern and the results of different stages of development lead to more efficient way of functioning. There are interactions between the child and the different contexts in which it grow up” (Aldgate et al, 2006, p. 20). A normal child may develop physically and mentally based on certain patters at different stages of his development. Before birth, the child was not interacting with any other parameters except the mother. But after birth, the child happens to be in the middle of lot of social, cultural and natural domains which can affect his physical and mental development. “ At the age of 18 to 36 months, a child’s cognitive and emotional faculties develop surprisingly quickly”(Child Development Media, n. d). Emotional development is one of the critical developmental stages which determine the future personality character development of a child. Self-awareness and self-confidence are the parts of emotional developments. The sense of self like; “ me”, “ myself” and “ I” develop as part of the

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emotional development during the early childhood. The sense of self development begins to develop at around 4 to 6 years. The sense of self development may not be rapid at the beginning stages, but acquires momentum gradually. Many factors like relationships, friendships, gender, emotions, self-concept, parenting, culture, attachment etc can affect the sense of self development. Francis Galton and William Dugdale were some of the famous psychologists who argued strongly for the involvement of nature in the development of a child. “ Francis Galton's ancestral law states that the two parents contribute between them on average one-half of the total heritage of the offspring, the four grandparents one-quarter, and so on” (Bulmer, 1998) American psychologist John Watson and Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner are some of the prominent psychologists who stressed the importance of nurturing in the child development. Watson once said that: Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select... regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations and race of his ancestors (Powel, 2010). B. F. Skinner's was able to produce or develop pigeons that could dance, do figure eights, and play tennis. In short, Watson and Skinner proved beyond doubt that human behaviours can be conditioned or nurture dominates over nature in the development of a child. In short, both nature and nurture play an important role in the development of a child. It is difficult to identify which factor contributes to a particular developmental area. However, the following table gives a general idea about the influence of nature and nurture on some specific developments. Nature Nurture Blood type Language Eye colour Religion Skin colour Intelligence/emotional

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development Height/Weight Beliefs/attitudes/character Personality traits

References 1. Aldgate, J. Jones, D. Rose, W. & Jeffery C. (2006) *The Developing World of the Child*, London: Jessica Kingsley. 2. Bulmer M. (1998), Galton's law of ancestral heredity. Retrieved from <http://www.nature.com/hdy/journal/v81/n5/full/6884180a.html> 3. Child Development Media, (n.d), Retrieved from <http://www.childdevelopmentmedia.com/parenting/61624a.html> 4. Powel. K. (2010). Nature vs. Nurture. Retrieved from http://genealogy.about.com/cs/geneticgenealogy/a/nature_nurture.htm 4) Create a Microsoft Word table or Excel chart to record findings. Bulleted format is acceptable within the cells of the table or chart .