

one way to reduce disparities in health care.

Influences in the Surrounding Environment

Schools

When children enter school, their radius of relationships extends to include a wider variety of peers and a new source of authority. Although parents continue to exert the major influence on children, in the school environment, teachers have the most significant psychological impact on children's development and socialization. In addition to academic and cognitive progress, teachers are concerned with the emotional and social development of the children in their care. Both parents and teachers act to model, shape, and promote positive behavior, constrain negative behavior, and enforce standards of conduct. Ideally, parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the children in their care.

Schools serve as a major source of socialization for children. Next to the family, schools exert a major force in providing continuity and passing down culture from one generation to the next. This, in turn, prepares children to carry out the social roles they are expected to assume as they develop into adults. School is the center of cultural diffusion wherein the cultural standards of the larger group are disseminated into the community. It governs what is taught and, to a great extent, how it is taught. School rules and regulations regarding attendance, authority relationships, and the system of rewards and penalties based on achievement transmit to children the expectations of the adult world of employment and relationships. School is an important institution in which children systematically learn about the negative consequences of behavior that departs from social expectations. School also serves as an avenue for children to participate in the larger society in rewarding ways, to promote social mobility, and to connect the family with new knowledge and services. Like parents, teachers are responsible for transmitting knowledge and culture (i.e., values on which there is a broad consensus) to the children in their care. Teachers are also expected to stimulate and guide children's intellectual development