EDUE253F
# *Child and Adolescent Development*

Lecture 17: **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory**

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework

- Founded by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979

- Every person is influenced by the different environmental systems

- Explain the way we act differently under different circumstances or environment

- Inter-related

- Bi-directional

(Woolfolk, 2016)
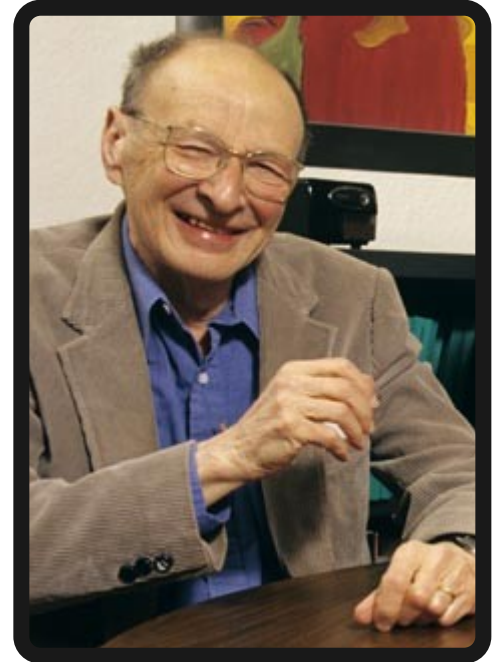
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework

- Development is the result of the relationship between people and their environments

    - Cannot evaluate a child's development only in the immediate environment

    - Must also examine the interaction among the larger environments

- **Key Question: How does this world around the child help the development**

(Woolfolk, 2016)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Framework

- Five Environmental systems
    - Microsystem
    - Mesosystem
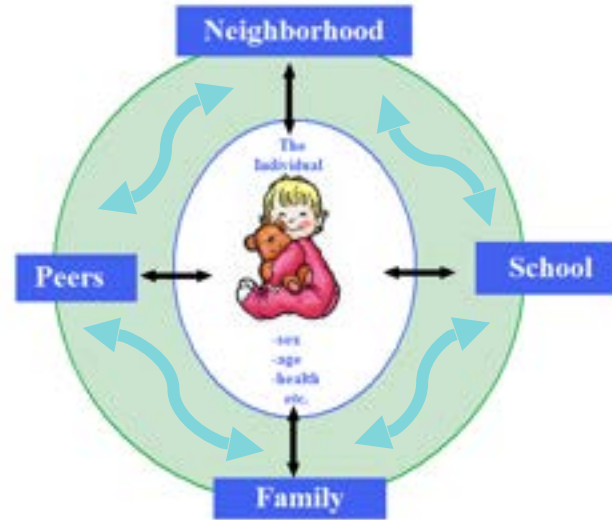   - Exosystem
    - Macrosystem
    - Chronosystem

(Woolfolk, 2016)
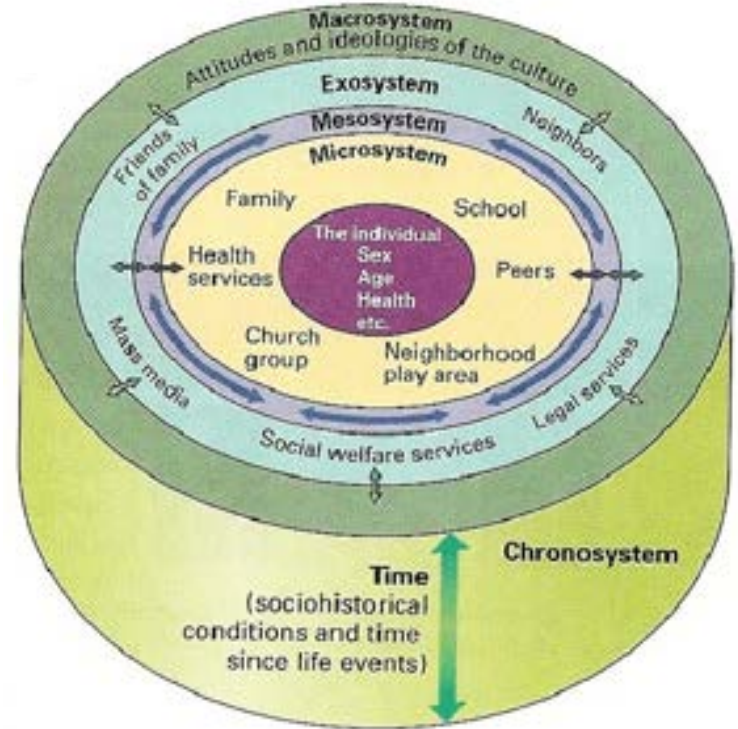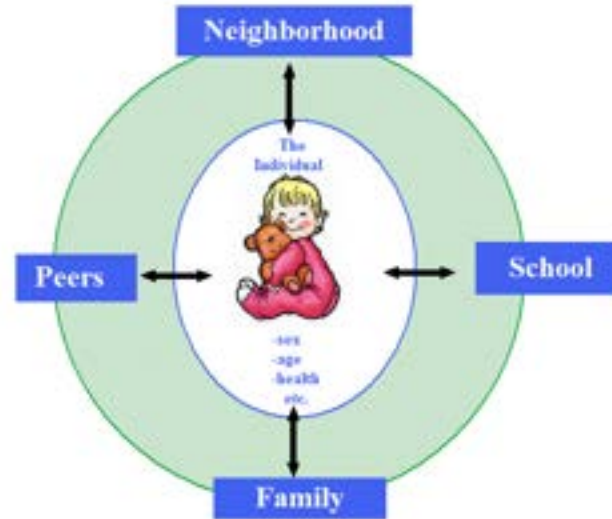
Microsystem

- Child is influenced by people that he/she has direct contact with like family, peers. teachers., etc..

(Woolfolk, 2016)

Mesosystem

- Child is influenced by the experiences he/she has with the people in the Microsystem.
  - i.e. A child maybe withdrawn from his/her peers at school because they are not loved at home

(Woolfolk, 2016)
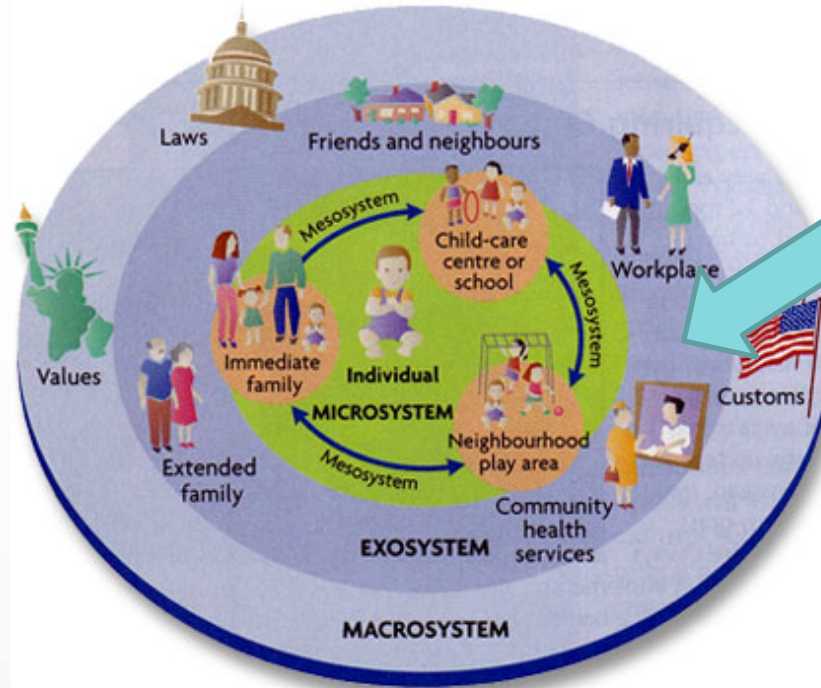
Exosystem

- Child is influenced by actions or people that do not have an active role in his/her life

(Woolfolk, 2016)

Macrosystem
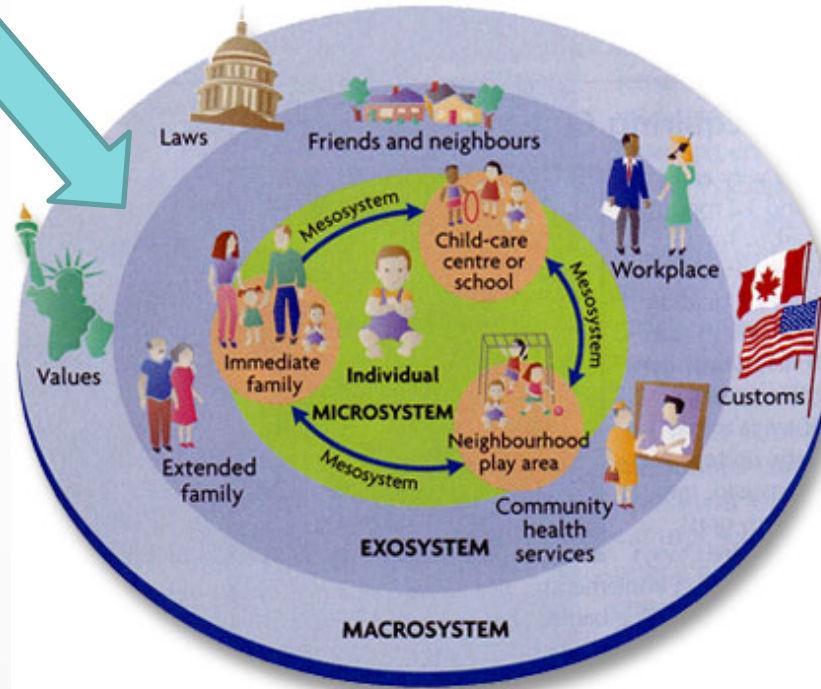
- Child is influenced by his/her own cultural values and traditions, socioeconomic status and the laws.

(Woolfolk, 2016)

Chronosystem
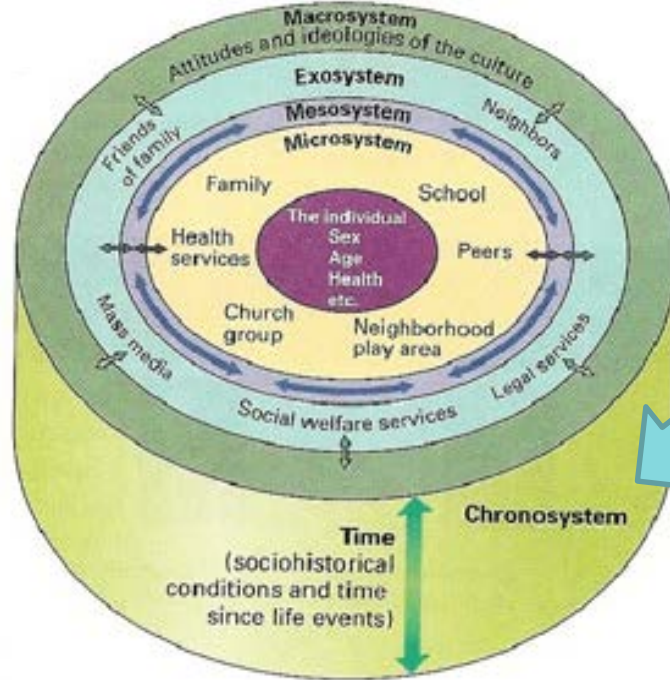
- Child is influenced by growing older or shifts in one's lifespan like divorce of parents or death of a close family member

(Woolfolk, 2016)

Family and Development

Structured Leisure Time: Extracurricular Activities

- Participation in extracurricular activities is influenced by a number of factors, one of the most important of which is social class

- In general, participation is somewhat more prevalent among adolescents:
    - From more affluent families
    - Who earn better grades
    - From smaller schools
    - From schools in smaller, more rural communities

Changes in Family Processes: Effects of Parenting Style

- Two critical aspects (dimensions) of parenting:
  - Parental responsiveness
    - degree to which parent responds to child's needs in an accepting, supportive manner
  - Parental demandingness
    - degree to which parent expects/demands mature, responsible behavior from the child

Changes in Family Processes: Effects of Parenting Style

- Authoritative
  - warm but firm and fair
- Authoritarian
  - place a high value on obedience and conformity
- Permissive
  - behave in an accepting, benign, and somewhat more passive way
- Neglectful (Uninvolved)
  - minimize the time and energy they devote to interacting with their child

Changes in Family Processes: Effects of Parenting Style

- Adolescents who are permitted to assert their own opinions within a family context that is secure and loving develop:
  - higher self-esteem
  - more mature coping abilities
- Adolescents whose autonomy is suppressed
  - at risk for developing feelings of depression and low self-esteem
- Adolescents who do not feel connected
  - more likely than their peers to develop behavior problems

Changes in Family Processes: Sibling Relationship

- If all siblings are treated well, research shows that differential treatment can actually be a good thing
  - leads to siblings getting along better
  - less sibling rivalry
- Sibling deidentification
  - trying to distinguish self from sibling can also diminish feelings of competition

Peers and Development

Adolescent Peer Group Formation

- Two major groups
  - Cliques
    - Small groups of between 2 and 12 individuals
    - Generally same-sex and same age
    - Intimate knowledge and appreciation
  - Crowds
    - Large, loosely organized groups
      - 15 to 30 members
    - Composed of a collection of cliques

Cliques: General Characteristics

- Provide main social context in which interaction takes place
- Tendency to join cliques is relatively stable
- Functions of cliques
    - Activities
        - Talking about and planning activities
        - Dissemination of crowd activities
        - Evaluation of past activities
    - Psychosocial development
        - Trying out new roles
            - Identity, autonomy, intimacy and sexuality

Cliques: Composition

- Age

- Gender

  – Why?

    - Formation based on shared activities and interests

    - Sensitivity to sex-roles and sex-appropriate behaviour

Cliques: Composition

- Influenced by:
  - Social class
  - Ethnicity
    - Powerful determinant of friendship patterns
    - Why?
      - Influence of
        » Feelings of discrimination and attitudes
        » Parents' cultural orientation
        » Neighbourhoods
        » Academic achievement

Adolescent Group Formation: Transformation from Clique to Crowd

- Same-sex cliques come together
  - Ex. Mixed-sex parties

- Some same-sex clique members begin to form mixed-sex cliques
  - Led by upper status members
  - Lower status members follow along

- By middle adolescence peer group is composed of mixed-sex cliques forming crowds

Crowds

- Based on the identification of adolescents who share a similar image or reputation among peers or a common feature such as ethnicity or neighbourhood *even if* they do not consider each other friends or spend much time interacting with each other

Crowds

- Not the main setting for intimate interactions or friendships
- Main functions
  - To locate adolescents (to themselves and others) within the social structure
  - To channel adolescents into associations with some peers and away from others
  - To provide contexts that reward certain lifestyles and disparage others

Crowds: Influence

- Crowds serve as *reference groups*
  - Contribute to the definition of norms and standards for such things as clothing, leisure, and tastes in music
  - Provide their members with an identity in the eyes of other adolescents
    - Adolescents judge one another on the basis of the company they keep and they become branded on the basis of whom they hang out with
    - Affects self-concept, identity, and self-esteem
    - Different short-term and long-term consequences

Spectrum of Popularity Individuals

- Two forms of popularity
  - Sociometric popularity refers to how well-liked someone is
    - Determinants:
      - Social skills, possessing traits that are valued, physical attractiveness
  - Perceived popularity refers to how much status, or prestige, someone has
    - Determinants:
      - More variable
      - Money

Spectrum of Popularity Individuals

- Benefits of popularity far out-weigh the costs
  - Costs
    - Increased possibility of being object of others' meanness
  - Benefits
    - More likely to
      - Have close, intimate friendships
      - Participate in social activities with peers and extracurricular activities
      - Receive more social recognition
      - have non-school peers

Spectrum of Popularity Individuals

- Types of unpopular adolescents
  - Aggressive (or rejected adolescents)
    - Disliked by peers
    - Fight with other students, bully others
  - Withdrawn (or neglected adolescents)
    - Often unnoticed by peers
    - Exceedingly shy, anxious, and inhibited
    - Difficulty making friends
    - Victims of bullying

Spectrum of Popularity Individuals

- Types of unpopular adolescents
  - Aggressive and withdrawn
    - hostile, but nervous about initiating friendships
  - Controversial adolescents
    - Strongly liked and disliked by different peers or by the same peers in different situations
    - Aggressive but also have good social skills

Rejection

- Consequences of rejection
  - Being unpopular has negative consequences for adolescents' mental health and psychological development
    - depression
    - behavior problems
    - academic difficulties
- Consequences might differ for rejected youth who are aggressive versus those who are withdrawn
  - Underlying causes

Popularity and Rejection

- Unpopular youths may lack the social skills and social understanding necessary to be popular with peers

  - easy targets for bullying

  - creates a cycle of teasing, feeling less socially adept, leading to more bullying

  - blame themselves for their victimization

Victimization

Victimization can lead to lower earnings as an adult because of the cyclical nature of bullying

| Victimization in school | → | Lower academic competence and performance | → | Depressed educational attainment | → | Lowered earnings in adulthood |

Peer and Development

- Peer pressure
  - Increases across adolescence
  - Conformity to peer pressure peaks in middle adolescence
    - Peer pressure & autonomy
  - Effects of peer group are weak

Peer and Development

– Friend influence

- Is mostly positive
  - Informational support
  - Instrumental support
  - Companionship support
  - Esteem support
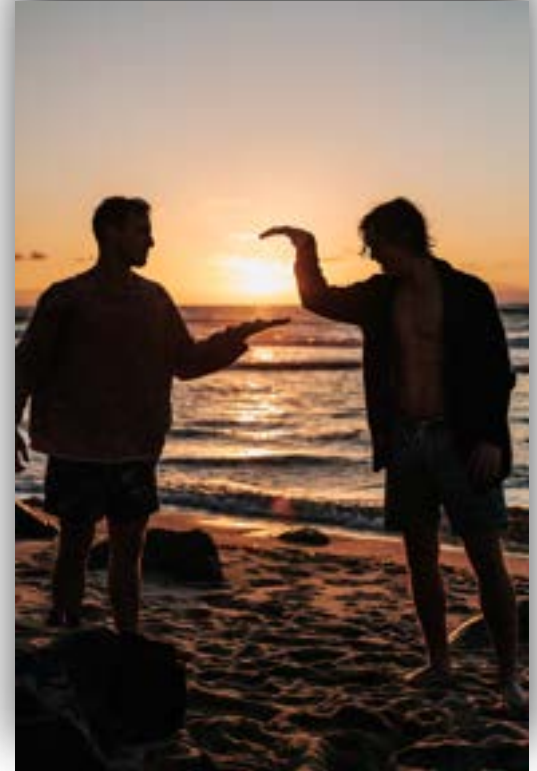
Peers and Development

- In promoting normal development, peers …
    - provide models and feedback in regard to identity
    - influence self-image
    - assist the development of autonomy
    - provide a context for decision-making skills
    - interact in intimate and sexual relationships
    - influence one another regarding achievement

Leisure and Development

Structured Leisure Time: Extracurricular Activities

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Structured Leisure Time: Extracurricular Activities

- Longitudinal studies indicate that participation in an extracurricular activity actually
  - Improves students' performance in school
  - Reduces the likelihood of dropping out
  - Deters delinquency, drug use, and other types of risk-taking
  - Enhances students' psychological well-being and social status

Structured Leisure Time: Extracurricular Activities

- Activities may increase students' contact with teachers and other school personnel who may reinforce the value of school

- Activities may bring adolescents into contact with peers who influence them in beneficial ways

- Increases attachment to their school
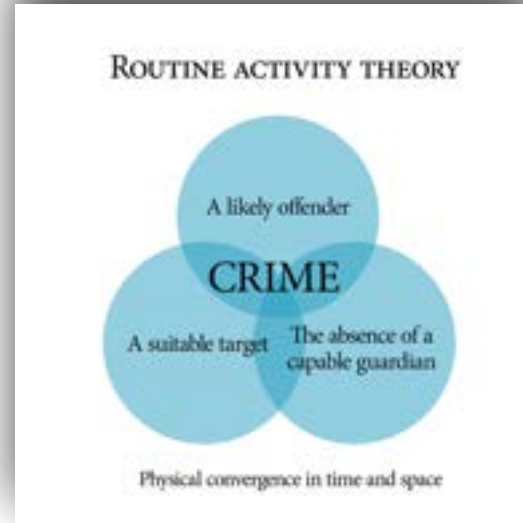
Unstructured Leisure Time

- Combination of lack of structure, socializing with peers, and the absence of adult supervision

    - Leads to delinquency and problem behaviors

    - Recall "latchkey" teens and the importance of monitoring

        - Setting plays an important role

Unstructured Leisure Time

- Routine Activity Theory
  - One of the main theories of "environmental criminology"
  - Crime occurs when the following three elements come together in any given space and time:

ROUTINE ACTIVITY THEORY

A likely offender

CRIME

A suitable target   The absence of a capable guardian

Physical convergence in time and space

Technology and Development

Media Use & Adolescence

- Should we be concerned?
  - Carson et al. (2011)
    - Positive correlation between screen time and more risk-taking behaviours over time
  - Link between media use and poor-quality sleep

Theories of the Impact of Media on Adolescent Development

- Cultivation theory
  - Media shapes adolescents' views, interests, motives and beliefs
    - Media constantly retell a selective and biased set of myths and ideologies that help define social thinking in a particular society

Theories of the Impact of Media on Adolescent Development

- Social Cognitive theory
    - People learn from what they see others do
        - Depends on whether the model is rewarded or punished, how attractive or similar the model appears to be and the relevance of the situation to the viewer's needs

Theories of the Impact of Media on Adolescent Development

- Uses and gratification approach
  - Adolescents choose the media to which they are exposed
    - Different uses
      - Diversion/entertainment
      - Cognition
      - Social utility/youth culture
      - Withdrawal
      - Personal identity

Theories of the Impact of Media on Adolescent Development

- Media practice model
  - Reciprocal relation between media exposure and adolescent preferences

  - Adolescents' interpretations of media shapes their impact

Impact of Media on Adolescent Development

- Research shows that:
  - Exposure to violent television does lead to more aggressive behavior
  - Exposure to images of sex does in fact affect adolescents' attitudes, beliefs and intentions about sex
  - Exposure to images of drug and alcohol use does affect adolescents' beliefs about these matters

The Internet and Adolescent Development

- Replacement of face-to-face interactions
  - Communication with friends
    - Increases intimacy, socially anxious teens
- Allow for identity exploration and formation
  - "identity play"
  - Social media, blogging
- Increased interaction with strangers
  - May lower quality of relationships with friends
- Increased amount of time spent online
  - Replaces physical activity

Thank you!
See you next time !