



What seems to influence children's development



These scripts look at different areas that influence children's development – immediate family, extended family, the community and other children and young people.

Family influences – influences from parents' own childhoods



Many people find that the way that family members get on with each other can have quite an influence on how a particular child develops, for example the youngest child when there are a number of brothers and sisters will either be babied and will grow up very slowly, or will want to grow up super-fast and to be a teenager long before they should be.

Influence of the extended family



Sometimes the way that parents have grown up themselves, whether they had to grow up very fast and take a lot of responsibility to take parental roles long before they were ready and the way that they were looked after can have an influence on the way parents feel about their own children. They may feel they would not want their children to be that grown up and so perhaps have few expectations, or they may expect them to be grown up, look after their younger brothers or sisters in the way they had to themselves.

Influences from the community



The way in which the extended family acts is important. Sometimes the first child can be a tremendous focus for all the grandparents, and sometimes when there are a number of children they do not evoke much interest. Sometimes children can bring the family together and there will be a lot of support and advice and help, sometimes much less so.

Schools, religious groups, community organisations can be very important as influences in children's development. Children can get a tremendous amount of support from school, teachers, or sometimes they seem to go backwards and really not thrive.