

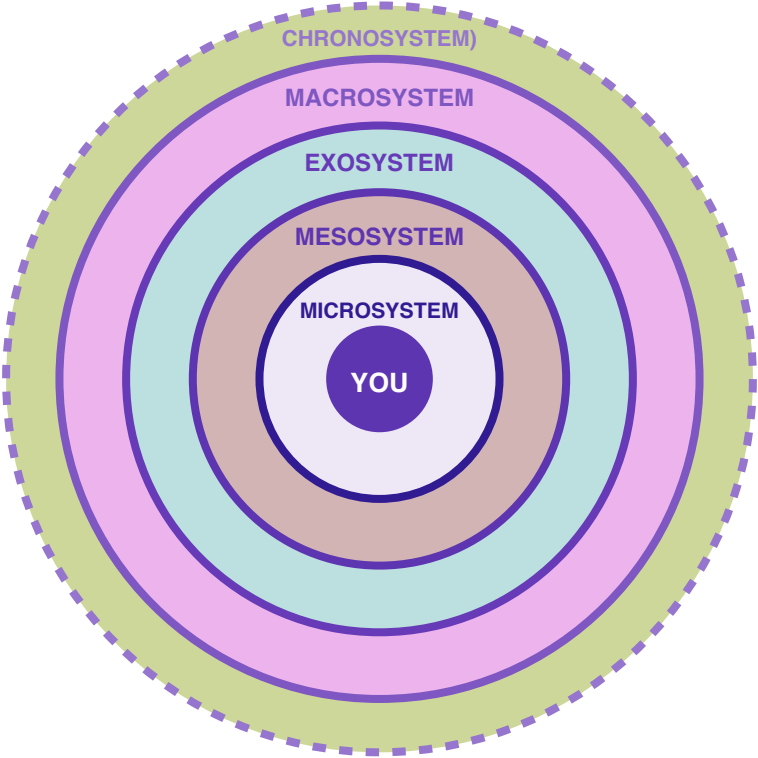
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Understanding Development Through 5 Nested Environmental Systems

CORE PRINCIPLE

Human development occurs through complex, bidirectional interactions between individuals and multiple nested environmental systems. Context matters—the same person develops differently in different environments.

The 5 Nested Systems (Like Russian Dolls)



↕ Bidirectional Influence: You shape your environment AND your environment shapes you

The 5 Systems Explained

MICROSYSTEM

Your immediate environment

Direct interactions & relationships you personally experience

Examples:

- Family • School • Friends
- Neighborhood • Workplace

MESOSYSTEM

Connections between microsystems

How your immediate environments interact with each other

Examples:

- Parent-teacher communication
- Home-school connection

EXOSYSTEM

Indirect environments

Settings you don't directly participate in but still affect you

Examples:

- Parent's workplace
- School board • Community services

MACROSYSTEM

Cultural context & societal patterns

Overarching cultural beliefs, values, laws, and customs that shape all other systems

Examples:

- Cultural values (individualism vs. collectivism) • Laws & policies
- Economic systems • Political ideology • Religious traditions

CHRONOSYSTEM

Time & life transitions

Changes over time—both personal transitions and historical events

Examples:

- Starting school • Parents' divorce • Moving
- Historical events (pandemic, recession, war)

KEY PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Systems are NESTED (like Russian dolls) • ✓ Influences are BIDIRECTIONAL (you ↔ environment)
- ✓ PROXIMAL PROCESSES matter (regular, ongoing interactions) • ✓ Individual characteristics influence responses
- ✓ Context is DYNAMIC (constantly changing) • ✓ Development = Person × Process × Context × Time

Quick Example: How all 5 systems affect a student's academic performance

Micro: Family support, teacher quality • Meso: Parent-teacher communication • Exo: Parent's job stress • Macro: Cultural value on education • Chrono: COVID-19 pandemic
All systems interact to create the complete developmental context!