THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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Educators must concern themselves not only with the psychology of children but also with the sociology of human behavior. The effect of the family, neighborhood, and community upon young people is demanding increasingly more attention. No individual develops apart from the culture in which he lives. Every man is the product of his time and place. Teachers must recognize the social forces that form the life of the community in order to understand children, to organize everyday activities intelligently, and to work effectively with parents. Values, standards, of behavior, patterns of child training, and approval or rejection of certain groups are all affected by the culture, the particular stage of social advancement of the community of the state. Some of the effects of the culture upon the individual or group are discussed below:

1. Values are established by culture.

Each group develops values or ideals that are guidelines that show themselves in political thought and action as well as in all social relations. Fascism, communism, or democracy ate indications of the values of a people. Children assimilate the values of the society in which they are reared as they grow older.

2. Standards of behavior are established by the culture.

People may vary in their ideals of what is right or proper behaviors. Standards of appropriate dress, language, business methods, and morality evolve from the culture. Such standards differ from one community to another. Behavior that is considered usual in a small rural town might be considered outrageous in the more sophisticated social setting of a large city or vice versa. A weekly bath may be considered adequate by a
certain child and by another an indication of personal carelessness. Short pants may make a young boy feel that he belongs in one community and prove to be the basis for his social rejection if he moves to a new community. The teacher who is not conversant with the mores of the community in which she is employed is often baffled by children’s adherence to behavior that is contrary to her standards.

3. Patterns the child training are influenced by the culture.

Each culture gives sanction to certain methods of child training. An Ifugao mother carries her infant on her back so that it looks over her shoulder. She speaks to her baby frequently and directs her attention to things in the environment that interest her. Corporal punishment is standard practice in one culture and abhorred by another. Cleanliness, obedience, and courtesy are taught by a different method according to the cultural group to which a child belongs.

References:
