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THE EFFECTS OF HEALTH ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

by

Dr L. S. Levin

Professor of Health Education and Public Health,  
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

USA

*Child Development*

The fact that health has an effect on the education of children and youth is demonstrated by the idea "A child must be healthy to learn." This health, which is a necessary precursor to learning, includes physical, psychological and social health. In this paper I shall first review various health conditions which can affect the ability of the child to learn. This will be followed by a discussion of the management of these health conditions which is necessary to achieve optimal educational experiences.

1. Health conditions affecting education

1.1 Biological problems

1.1.1 Chronic diseases. "A sick child cannot learn." It is clear that a child who is distracted by pain, weakness or other symptoms of physical illness will be unable to focus on the learning process. Thus it is imperative that children with chronic diseases have the appropriate management, both medically and educationally, so that they may benefit from their education. Since chronic diseases are becoming more important in children and youth in industrialized societies, this is an especially important issue.

1.1.2 Nutritional problems. "A hungry child cannot learn." There are still areas in the European Region where undernutrition is a problem which can definitely affect learning. Furthermore, there can be biological "hunger" resulting from imbalances of nutrition, even in children who are not suffering from insufficient caloric intake. Even overnutrition in the form of obesity can interfere with the educational process, particularly because of the psychological and social consequences.

1.1.3 Slow learning. "A child who cannot think appropriately cannot learn." Most of the "slow-learning" children are suffering either from mild retardation or from minimal brain dysfunction. Either condition will clearly affect their ability to learn. The careful evaluation of such conditions is imperative and will be discussed in more detail.

1.2 Psychological problems

"An upset child cannot learn." There is a wide variety of psychological problems, both acute and chronic, which may develop in children and young people and which will in turn interfere with the educational process. The nature and extent of these problems will be discussed.

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### 1.3 Social problems

"An angry, confused or unhappy child cannot learn." There are a number of social problems which also interfere with the educational process. Children who exhibit social deviance or who are experiencing problems related to their own sexual development are at high risk of performing poorly at school. Also, children who come from disadvantaged socioeconomic settings have been shown by studies to have learning difficulties.

## 2. The management of health problems which is necessary for optimal education

### 2.1 In school

2.1.1 Biological problems. The process of identification, evaluation and management of children in school who are suffering from the above-mentioned biological problems will be reviewed. This review will include, for example, such questions as the proper placement of handicapped children in schools.

2.1.2 Psychological problems. The process of identification, evaluation and management of schoolchildren suffering from psychological problems will be reviewed. This will include, for example, consideration of the proper placement of emotionally disturbed children in schools.

2.1.3 Social problems. The identification, evaluation and management of children with social problems will be reviewed. In addition, there will be a discussion of the important subjects of vocational education and the effects of health conditions on vocational education.

### 2.2 Out of school

#### 2.2.1 Hospitals and other long-term health care facilities for children.

The continuing education of children who must spend significant periods of time in health care facilities will be discussed. The relationship of these educational programmes to health care in these facilities will also be discussed.

2.2.2 Home. The continuing education of children who must remain at home because of health conditions will be discussed.

2.2.3 Collaboration. The absolutely necessary collaboration between education authorities, health authorities, social authorities and the family in order to ensure the best possible education of all children regardless of their health status will be presented.