

TOOL 4: IDENTIFYING HOW RACE WORKS IN OUR EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEMS

Examine the five levels of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecosystems Theory in the table that follows and think about how racial beliefs and ideologies influence patterns of social interaction in each example. What other examples of interaction come to mind for you? In the last column, identify how racial beliefs and ideologies impact these interactions.

SYSTEM LEVEL	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	THE INFLUENCE OF RACIAL BELIEFS AND IDEOLOGIES
Microsystem	A <i>microsystem</i> comprises activities and relationships experienced in a face-to-face setting. They also contain other people and often imply systems of belief.	A child’s family, nursery or playgroup, neighbors, and their community. The relationship between a child and a principal, teacher, or school counselor.	Assumptions are made about who a child plays with, what they do outside of school, or what their homelife is like.
Mesosystem	The <i>mesosystem</i> is all about the links and processes that occur between multiple settings. It is a collection (or system) of microsystems.	Teacher conference with a parent or guardian at the school. A school provides before and after care to accommodate parents’ work schedules.	
Exosystem	The <i>exosystem</i> includes the links and processes between two or more settings. Sometimes the setting does not include the developing person but still has an influence on that person and their immediate setting.	A parent deployed by the military. The relationship between the home and the guardian’s workplace. The relationship between the school and the neighborhood group.	
Macrosystem	The <i>macrosystem</i> is the social context in which a child lives and grows up and may be thought of as a societal blueprint that includes the beliefs, systems, laws, social structures, and narratives that organize a society.	The impact of Covid-19 on the child’s housing arrangements. School closures due to budget cuts or reform strategies.	Policies are developed that target behaviors and not conditions.
Chronosystem	The <i>chronosystem</i> consists of all of the changes that occur over the lifetime of a person that influences their development, including major life transitions and historical events.	A child’s parents getting divorced. A child being retained in the ninth grade.	