Growing Into Behavior

How experiences before and after birth can shape behavior

P.3.1 "Explain the roles, effects, and outcomes of prenatal and postnatal development on human behavior."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one prenatal condition and circle two postnatal experiences in the passage. Number the behaviors they might help explain, using the same number for an influence and its possible outcome.

Nia's Changing World

1. Before birth, a developing brain depends on nutrients supplied through the pregnant person's body. When Nia's mother was pregnant, her health clinic checked her iron level. Iron helps carry oxygen in the blood and supports the growth of the fetal brain. A serious iron shortage during pregnancy can raise a child's risk of later difficulties with attention and learning. The clinic helped Nia's mother treat the shortage with food choices and an iron supplement. This care lowered a risk, but no prenatal condition could predict exactly how Nia would behave at school years later.

2. After Nia was born, her father talked with her during meals and answered her sounds as if they were part of a conversation. As she grew, he named objects she pointed to and listened when she tried new words. These back-and-forth exchanges gave Nia repeated chances to connect words with people and things. Later, at preschool, she used words to ask for help instead of always grabbing a toy. Her language skills reflected postnatal experiences as well as her growing brain. Talking with a child supports language development, but one family habit does not determine every child's speech.

3. At age ten, Nia found it hard to focus during noisy group work, yet she explained ideas clearly when a partner asked her questions. Her early iron shortage might be one influence on attention, but the classroom setting, sleep, and other experiences also matter. Her early conversations offered practice with language, while later interactions gave her more practice. The two developmental periods are not competing explanations. Prenatal conditions can affect the starting conditions for development; postnatal experiences can strengthen skills or add challenges over time. A single behavior cannot prove which influence caused it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How might the iron shortage before Nia's birth relate to her attention at age ten? Why is this connection uncertain?

2. How could Nia's father's conversations help explain what she did when she needed help at preschool?

3. Compare the possible effects of Nia's prenatal care and her father's postnatal conversations. What different behaviors might each help explain?

4. Nia focuses less easily in noisy group work than when speaking with a partner. What does this difference suggest about blaming her focus difficulty only on a prenatal condition?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a child with one prenatal condition and one postnatal experience not described in the passage. In four sentences, explain how each could influence a behavior you choose and why neither guarantees that outcome.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one prenatal condition and circle two postnatal experiences in the passage. Number the behaviors they might help explain, using the same number for an influence and its possible outcome. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How might the iron shortage before Nia's birth relate to her attention at age ten? Why is this connection uncertain?	**A serious prenatal iron shortage can raise the risk of attention difficulties. Nia's focus could also be affected by the noisy classroom, sleep, or other experiences.**
2	How could Nia's father's conversations help explain what she did when she needed help at preschool?	**Their back-and-forth conversations gave Nia practice connecting words with people and things. At preschool, she used words to ask for help.**
3	Compare the possible effects of Nia's prenatal care and her father's postnatal conversations. What different behaviors might each help explain?	**Treating the iron shortage lowered a prenatal risk related to attention and learning. Her father's conversations supported language skills, which might help explain why she asked for help and later explained ideas clearly.**
4	Nia focuses less easily in noisy group work than when speaking with a partner. What does this difference suggest about blaming her focus difficulty only on a prenatal condition?	**The setting may affect Nia's focus. The difference does not show that her prenatal iron shortage caused the difficulty.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before birth, Leila was exposed to alcohol, which can disrupt brain development and raise the risk of attention difficulties. After birth, a teacher showed Leila how to break big assignments into small steps, giving her a way to manage her attention. Leila might finish a class project by working through its steps. Neither influence guarantees this behavior, because her development and circumstances include many other factors.

Accept explanations that distinguish a possible influence from a certain cause. For Part 3, look for a plausible prenatal condition, a distinct postnatal experience, a related behavior, and a clear statement that the outcome is not guaranteed.