

Inadequate schooling

Children benefit from having both engaged families and effective schools, but when one is not available, the other can sometimes compensate. From the research in developed countries we know that children, who begin their formal schooling at a substantial cognitive disadvantage, are systematically mapped into nation's worst schools. Schools serving high concentrations of poor children may themselves be handicapped by a mismatch between needs and resources, just as poor families are. As a result, they are unable to fulfill the social mandate to provide a level playing field in which all children—irrespective of their family circumstances—are given a fair chance to succeed.

Dr. Deborah Stipek has argued that palpable differences in school and classroom resources contribute to and exacerbate the income achievement gap. In this way, schools augment rather than mitigate the adverse effects of family economic disadvantage for poor children.

Differences in the school experiences of poor children do not arise entirely from inequitable facilities, teaching materials, and books. They also result from the quality of instructional interactions, curricula, and teaching practices.

Better academic outcomes, particularly literacy and language skills, occur in classrooms that are not only rich in learning materials but also have teachers with high expectations of students and adequate preparation to teach and possibilities to in-service training or professional development. Experiences in these classrooms are filled with opportunities for active engagement with materials, particularly opportunities for practicing reading and writing. Many of

these things are possible to put in practice despite of limited resources of school.

Barbarin, O.A., & Aikens, N. (2015). Overcoming the educational disadvantages of poor children: How much do teacher preparation, workload, and expectations matter.

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(Link to Marja-Kristiina text)