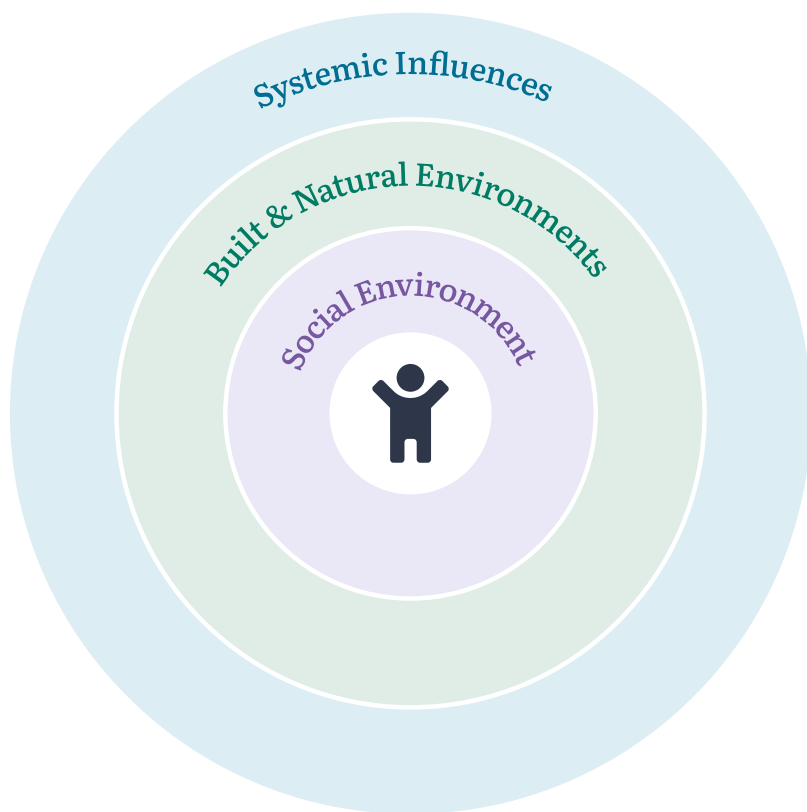


Place Matters: What Surrounds Us Shapes Us

How the environment we create shapes the foundations of early childhood development

A wide range of conditions in the places where children live, grow, play, and learn can get “under the skin” and affect their developing brains and other biological systems. Beginning before birth, these environmental conditions shape how children develop, which shapes their lifelong physical and mental health.



The built and natural environments, and the systemic factors that shape those environments—such as the policies that influence where people are able to live and how resources are distributed—interact with each other and with a child’s social environment in deeply interconnected ways. Every environment is infused with a combination of influences, which can have positive and negative impacts on health and development. Knowing this, it’s important to recognize that levels of exposure to risk and access to opportunity are not distributed equally. **In short, place matters.**

