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Pathways from risk to maladaptation in elementary school: Do peers and teachers matter?

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Summary

Overall, across five studies, our findings suggest that an early child risk-factor can be an important predictor for later maladjustment, partly because it becomes entangled within children's social development during elementary school. Furthermore, children's early cognitive abilities and their social relations are intertwined in complex ways. Overall, our findings show that regardless of whether we focus on children's neuro-cognitive ability, such as working memory, or children's risk status, we cannot disregard that children's development occurs within a social context, not in a vacuum. It therefore remains important to always include the social context when trying to understand children's development. Our findings furthermore indicate that, during the elementary school period, intervening at the social level is a key factor in disentangling developmental cascades and deterring sub-optimal child development.