

Parenting styles

Erin Martin, PhD

Psychology

Parenting style and its influence on child and adolescent achievement and development was what I focused on for my thesis topic. In general, I found within my research that authoritative parenting styles enhance child development and achievement. Authoritative parenting allows more reciprocal respect and understanding between parent and child, developing a healthy relationship.

Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parenting as described in Santrock (2009) as rigid, inflexible rules and directions that is followed by harsh punishment with any infraction. Children are not allowed to express themselves, and required to follow any direction of the parents without question. Authoritarian parents believe it is their responsibility to shape the child by whatever means necessary to fit their inflexible standards (Baumrind, 1996). Santrock suggested that children within authoritarian environments tend to fear the parent; they are anxious about talking with their parent from fear of any backlash. These children are always worried that they will do something wrong and get punished, so they seldom do individual thinking and just do what their parents say. Children within authoritarian homes are taught to do whatever the parent says, no questions asked; as a result, these children lack problem solving skills. Often in response to when a child says why, the parental response is "Because I said so, that's why." Since children are not allowed to have any form of discussion with their parents, they lack well developed communication skills. The relationship between parent and child with authoritarian parenting is one where the parents are highly demanding with little responsiveness toward the child (Baumrind, 1996).

Neglectful Parenting

Neglectful parenting is one in which the parents are uninvolved and uninvested in their children's lives. The children grow up thinking that they are insignificant and things in their lives are insignificant - including school (Santrock, 2009). These children may also lack social skills and maturity to interact with others. In severe cases, the children's physical development and nutrition may be lacking. Neglectful parents are neither responsive nor demanding (Baumrind, 1996). Neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles tend to have few successful attributes and more dysfunctional attributes for school success (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer & Steinberg, 1997). These are the children who have to fend for themselves for food. If they make it to school, it is only because they got themselves up and got there.

Indulgent/permissive parenting

Permissive parents are highly responsive to the child without any demands, while very accepting of the child's impulses (Baumrind, 1996). The parent is seen as a resource for the child to use instead of being responsible for guiding or shaping the child. Permissive parents use reason without power, and do not encourage obeying standards. (Baumrind, 1996) Since there is little limits placed on the child, and the child is allowed to do what they want, the children do not learn how to control their own behavior; they expect to get their way and cause problems when they don't (Santrock, 2009). This kind of behavior is one that makes it difficult for the child to have healthy friendships because they tend to be domineering, egocentric, and show little respect for others (Santrock, 2009). Often these children are the ones that have well developed temper tantrums until they get what they want. Parents usually give in quickly to the tantrums.

Authoritative Parenting

Authoritative parents are both responsive and demanding with their parenting strategies. Authoritative parents encourage individuality within certain limits and guidelines; there is a nurturing relationship of mutual give-and-take (Santrock, 2009). Children are encouraged to utilize and develop their communication, problem solving, self-monitoring, and independence skills. Santrock discussed how students from an authoritative parenting environment tend to have healthy relationships with peers and adults, as well as good stress management skills. Research has shown that democratic and authoritative parenting styles are associated with higher grades and college aspirations; typically half of a letter grade higher for authoritative over non-authoritative parenting (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, & Steinberg, 1997; Steinberg, et al., 1992). Parents often provide guidelines with the reasoning behind them, allowing discussion of why, yet stand firm in their decision. Often children are given choice they can make and the consequences for each of the choices they can choose from.

Culture

In a study of student achievement in Spain, researchers (Casanova, Garcia-Linares, de la Torre, & Carpio, 2005) showed majority (48.9%) of students with normal achievement had democratic parenting styles; while low achievement students had equal percentage of democratic and indifferent parents (30.4%). Santrock (2009) discussed how the research of Steinberg and Silk (2002) found the trend of healthy child development from authoritative parenting holds true for many ethnic, social strata, cultures, and family structures. He also discussed that within certain cultures authoritarian parenting styles have positive outcomes in child-rearing; two of which are Indian and Asian cultures. Other research has found that corporal punishment among African American families can have either beneficial or neutral outcomes (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997 as cited by Santrock).

References

- Baumrind, D. (1996, October). The discipline controversy revisited. *Family Relations*, 45(4), 405-414.
- Casanova, P. F., García-Linares, M. C., de la Torre, M. J., & de la Villa Carpio, D. (2005, August). Influence of family and socio-demographic variables on students with low academic achievement. *Educational Psychology*, 25(4), 423-435. doi:10.1080/01443410500041888
- Glasgow, K. L., Dornbusch, S. M., Troyer, L., & Steinberg, L. P. (1997, June). Parenting styles, adolescents' attributions, and educational outcomes in nine heterogeneous high schools. *Child Development*, 68(3), 507-529. doi:10.2307/1131675
- Hirsch, J. W. (2009). *A topical approach to life-span development* (custom ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Steinberg, L., Lamborn, S. D., Dornbusch, S. M., & Darling, N. (1992, October). Impact of parenting practices on adolescent achievement: Authoritative parenting, school involvement, and encouragement to succeed. *Child Development*, 63(5), 1266-1281. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.ep9301210142