

Discuss the effects of parenting style on children's development.

In this essay I will be discussing different types of parenting styles and how they are influenced upon children's development.

Parenting is a complex activity that includes much specific behaviour that work individually and together to influence a Child outcomes. Although specific parenting behaviours, such as smacking or reading aloud, may influence a child's development, looking at any exact behaviour in isolation could be misleading.

(Baumrind 1991) claims that parenting style is meant to describe normal variations in parenting. Baumrind also believes that normal parenting revolves around issues of control. Although parents may differ in how they try to control or socialise their children and to the extent, to which they do so, it is assumed that the primary role of all parents is to influence, teach and control discipline their children. Parenting style captures two important elements of parenting. Maccoby & Martin (1983) explained these as two important elements of parenting. Parental responsiveness and parental demandingness. Parental responsiveness refers to *"the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands"* (Baumrind, 1991, p.62). Parental demandingness refers to *"the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys"* (Baumrind, 1991, p.61-62).

Baumrind has categorized parenting into three styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Each of which has implications for the child's social competence with peers and adults. The three parenting styles differ particularly on two parenting dimensions: the amount of nurturance in child-rearing interactions and the amount of parental control over the child's activities and behaviour.

Demandingness is more than simply requiring certain behaviors from children. Effective demandingness requires three major ingredients. Firstly, parents need to set high but

realistic goals for their children. This entails understanding what the child can and cannot reasonably be expected to do. Children, whose parents have low expectations for them, develop low expectations for themselves. Children whose parents set unreasonable high expectations for them, become frustrated, angry, and develop a sense of self as a failure. Clearly also, parents need to communicate these goals to their children. One of the more common breakdowns in all human relations is the tendency to hold others accountable for failing to meet expectations of which we have never informed them.

Secondly, parents need to provide the support necessary to help children attain these goals. Parental involvement in supporting and monitoring schoolwork is one example. The technique of scaffolding offers a detailed description of how to provide such support in a way that nurtures development rather than becoming a surrogate for it.

Thirdly, parents need to monitor whether or not children meet their expectations. Children will quickly recognize the importance of demands that are not monitored and therefore are unrelated to consequences. Such demands will have little impact on the development of morality in children. If demandingness is appropriately and consistently implemented as part of Authoritative parenting, we have already demonstrated that children will develop greater self-control, altruism, and self-esteem. Maccoby and Martin (1983) make further distinctions, identifying four styles authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and uninvolved parenting.

Parents that practice the authoritative style maintain a good middle ground; they are clearly in control while at the same time encouraging the child to strive for personal autonomy. In certain areas there is an expectation of mature behaviour, and clear standards are set, using non-punitive discipline only when necessary. Children's individuality is accepted and communication between parent and child is encouraged. . (Baumrind, 1991)

Authoritarian parents tend to be low in nurturance and high in parental control compared with other parents. They set absolute standards of behaviour for their children that are not to be questioned or negotiated. They favor forceful discipline and demand prompt obedience. Authoritarian parents also are less likely than others to use more gentle

methods of persuasion, such as affection, praise and rewards, with their children. Consequently, authoritarian parents are prone to model the more aggressive modes of conflict resolution and are lax in modeling affectionate, nurturant behaviors in their interactions with their children. (Baumrind, 1991)

In sharp contrast, Indulgent parents tend to be moderate to high in nurturance, but low in parental control. These parents place relatively few demands on their children and are likely to be inconsistent disciplinarians. They are accepting of the child's impulses, desires, and actions and are less likely than other parents to monitor their children's behavior. Although their children tend to be friendly, sociable youngsters, compared with others their age they lack knowledge of appropriate behaviours for ordinary social situations and take too little responsibility for their own misbehavior. (Baumrind, 1991)

Uninvolved parents on the other hand are low in both responsiveness and demandingness. In extreme cases, this parenting style might encompass both rejecting-neglecting and neglectful parents, although most parents of this type fall within the normal range, because parenting style is a typology, rather than a linear combination of responsiveness and demandingness, each parenting style is more than and different from the sum of its parts. (Baumrind, 1991)

In addition to differing on responsiveness and demandingness, the parenting styles also differ in the extent to which they are characterized by a third dimension, psychological control. According to Steinberg (1992), the child development literature indicates that *"adolescents appear to be adversely affected by psychological control-interference in the youngster's psychological autonomy-and positively influenced by behavioral control or the presence of demandingness."* Inadequate parental control deprives the child of guidance and supervision and therefore places the child at risk for developmental difficulties. Too much psychological control can limit the young person's opportunity for self-discovery, disrupt the establishment of identity, undermine confidence, and result in inadequate understanding and expression of emotions.

Parenting style has been found to predict child well being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behaviour. Research based on parent interviews, child reports, and parent observations have been

consistent in their finding and an example of this is Steinberg et al (1992) a study of adolescents between the ages of 14-18 on parenting styles. Parents on the whole were assessed on their parenting style on the child's school attainment.

That children raised by positive parents tend to do well overall. They have self-esteem and confidence, are respectful and responsible, and show good academic performance. These children are socially competent as defined by having empathy, emotional control, good communication, and ability to manage conflict. Such children have little anxiety or depression and do not have much problem behaviour.

Children raised by indulgent parents tend to have good self-esteem, are socially competent in most areas, and have little depression. However, they scored low on respect and responsibility, underachieve academically, and have a lot of problem behaviour. Children raised by dominating parents are somewhat the opposite. They tend to have low self-esteem and confidence and a lot of anxiety and depression. These children are not very socially competent, rate in the middle on being respectful and responsible, and have an average academic performance. They have very little problem behaviour.

Children of uninvolved parents tend to do the worst in all of the areas studied. They have low self-esteem and confidence, a lot of anxiety and depression, and little social competence. They are not respectful or responsible, have poor academic performance, and show a lot of problem behaviour. As these studies clearly indicate, the balanced approach of nurturing, disciplining and respecting children is where positive parenting begins.

The approach to parenting styles, completed by parents, has been widely used and does predict to aspects of children's development. Examples of these are: Dekovic and Janssens (1992), this study found that authoritative parents tended to have popular pro social children and authoritarian parents tended to have sociometrically rejected children.

There is also considerable research evidence that shows conflict between parents can be distressing for children whether it precedes marital separation or not. This can be demonstrated by a study by Gottman and Katz (1989) in Illinois. The findings of this study found that children whose parents were experiencing marital distress had more

distressed children and showed more negative peer interaction and were susceptible to illness.

There are also studies of parenting styles in different cultures. Belsky's (1984) study was to examine factors related to authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices in Chinese mothers with preschoolers. As well as looking at the global parenting typologies this study also looked into the individual component elements of the two authoritative and authoritarian parenting. As expected, child characteristics, maternal characteristics and contextual factors predicted mothers' parenting practices. The results suggested that maternal depression, child temperament and degree of parenting daily hassles might have cross-culturally influenced on parenting practices. However, the significant influence of culturally specific parenting beliefs on parenting was also found. Chinese parents use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting were both in some degree embedded traditional Chinese parenting beliefs, the concept of training.

In conclusion, parenting is a growing and continuous process. Although not every style will work in every household and every situation, some type of parenting style should be established, hopefully one with much love, warmth, support, and discipline. Adolescence is a time of growth for young people; consequently, adolescents need their parents at this confusing time for direction and guidance in making the right decisions.

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