

The Long-Term Affects of Parenting Styles on Children: A Review of the Research An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction

Since the 1920's, there has been a great deal of interest in parenting styles. Diana Baumrind's landmark research in the 1960's provides the basis for parenting styles used in much of today's research as well as in mainstream parenting literature. She introduced the concept of parenting styles based on two important elements of parenting: parental responsiveness (or warmth/support) and parental demandingness (or behavioral control).

Baumrind's three parenting styles are classified as: Authoritarian Parenting (highly demanding and directive; not responsive), Permissive (highly responsive, not demanding), and Authoritative (both demanding and responsive). In 1983, in a review of Baumrind's work, Maccoby and Martin updated her parenting styles and added a fourth: Uninvolved or Neglectful (not responsive and not demanding).

Much of today's popular parenting literature is based in some form on how to be an authoritative parent. So, what does the research say about the effects of parenting style on a child's long-term outcome and success? Does parenting style affect children differently based upon their age and stage of development? Are there cultural factors that are affected by parenting styles? And what about the effect of parenting styles on a child's physical health especially in the presence of pediatric medical issues?

This annotated bibliography will present sources that provide insight into these compelling questions.

Alegre, A. (2011). Parenting styles and children's emotional intelligence: what do we know? *The Family Journal*, 19(1), 56-62. doi: 10.1177/1066480710387486

Alegre brings an interesting aspect to parenting styles: that of emotional intelligence. Written for academia, he focuses on the questions: "How do parenting styles and practices predict children's emotional intelligence?" And, "Do social-emotional intervention programs succeed in improving children's emotional skills?"

Research indicates the importance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of an array of positive developmental outcomes. The writer quotes several research studies that confirm a positive correlation "between emotional intelligence and positive developmental outcomes such as subjective well-being, adaptive coping skills and mental health, mental ability and positive personality traits, academic achievement, and physical and psychological health." Since

emotional intelligence skills can be learned, it is possible through training for individuals to develop positive behaviors and establish positive social relationships.

Alegre then presents the case that “because parenting styles and practices predict so many developmental outcomes, it makes sense to believe that they may also predict children's emotional intelligence.” Unfortunately there is little research in this area, so much must be inferred. Alegre then goes into a discussion of the three parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative) as they relate to responsiveness and demandingness and ties this into how they affect emotional IQ.

Finally, the author discusses research that indicates that children's emotional abilities can be improved using school-based emotion-related training programs. He mentions three specific school-based programs that have been studied and shown measurable success in teaching children “self-control, emotional awareness and understanding, peer-related social skills, and social problem-solving.” The Fast Track program was found to be effective in “reducing aggressive behavior and increasing pro-social behavior, especially for boys”.

While there is still very little direct research on emotional intelligence and parenting, the research is clear that when children are taught social emotional skills in a school setting, there is a high success rate.

Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development*, 37(4), 887-907. Retrieved from: <http://persweb.wabash.edu/facstaff/hortonr/articles%20for%20class/baumrind.pdf>

Diana Baumrind, Ph.D, had a long and distinguished career as a research psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley and is best known for her seminal research on parenting styles. Written for academia in the social sciences, Baumrind presented three prototypes of parental leadership: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. Each of these prototypes range on a spectrum of freedom and control. Baumrind’s original study was done with a small sample of 32 preschoolers from a middle-class, predominantly caucasian background. A subsequent longitudinal study was conducted by Baumrind in 1971 with 134 middle-class Caucasian preschoolers which supported her initial findings.

Baumrind starts her thesis with the evolving history of parenting attitudes including the religious roots of the authoritarian style which was ultimately directed at teaching children to do the will of God. The “anything goes” permissive parenting style resulted from a backlash against the rigid, punitive authoritarian style. Baumrind’s research shows that neither style is effective in the long run and provides compelling research for what she calls the *Authoritative* parent.

The authoritative parent exerts firm control but is not over-controlling. The authoritative parent is also warm, responsive, and involved. According to Baumrind, “She enforces her perspectives as an adult but recognizes the child's individual interests and special ways; affirming the child's present qualities but also setting standards for future conduct. She uses reason, power, and shaping by regime and reinforcement to achieve her objectives and does not base her decisions on group consensus or the individual child's desires.”

Baumrind's findings give provisional support to the position that "authoritative control can achieve responsible conformity with group standards without loss of individual autonomy or self assertiveness." In other words, authoritative parents can raise children who are able to function well in the real world, with all of its choices and decisions, with competency, resiliency, acceptable social behavior, and a strong sense of self.

Subsequent research has confirmed and refined Dr. Baumrind's findings.

Birgitte. The four basic parenting styles taken a step further: reviewing Diana Baumrind's model with the tool of high awareness [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.positive-parenting-ally.com/four-basic-parenting-styles.html>

The author of this online article is simply known as Birgitte who is a mom and lives in Denmark. She has a master's degree in cultural anthropology so she is very science-oriented and applies this mindset to her parenting articles which are written for mainstream parents. The focus of her article is to provide a "meta perspective on Baumrind's three parenting styles and go into analytical depth." Unlike most of the other articles reviewed, she does not agree with the efficacy of the authoritative parenting style.

Birgitte starts with a reminder that all research is biased culturally as well as personally. She explains that Baumrind was conducting research in the early 1960s and reminds us that society and values were very different back then including the Victorian values of high control, stricter morals, and rigid rules. As our culture has changed into a more individualistic culture, meaning more focused on independence and self-reliance, she counters that Baumrind's ideas may be outdated.

Birgett claims that Baumrind's presumption of the necessity of high control during the 1960's may affect the actual analytical premises of her study. Thus, we have the basis for Birgett's criticism of Baumrind's parenting style framework.

Birgett sites work by psychologists Grolnick and Greenspan as she builds a case that Baumrind's model (in regards to parental control) is "inflexible and lacking situational dexterity." She introduces a fifth parenting style from Stephen Greenspan's work called a *harmonious parenting style*. "The harmonious pattern can, therefore, be defined as characteristic of parents who are warm, who set limits when they feel it is called for, and who overlook some (presumably mild) child behaviors in the interests of facilitating child autonomy and of maintaining family harmony." (Greenspan, 2006)

Birgett ends her paper with a parenting style model of her own which she freely admits is a product of her own biases and opinions. Her model has two different axes: high awareness versus low awareness and social system focus versus individual focus.

She argues that Baumrind and Greenspan's models focus on external behavior rather than actions and she advocates being more focused on meeting the child's needs internally rather than responding to behavior externally. "In my opinion the art of meeting needs as quickly as possible

(short term) in a way that is truly beneficial for both parents and children long term is what really separates high conscious parents from low conscious parents.”

This philosophy is more in line with what is called *attachment parenting* or *positive parenting*. Personally, I think Baumrind addressed this with her definition of a “responsive parent.” Certainly Alegre does in his article on “emotional intelligence.”

Brown, M. (2009). A Comparative Study of Parental Behaviors and Children's Eating Habits. *Infant, Child, & Adolescent Nutrition*, 1(1), 11-14. doi: 10.1177/1941406408328536

Mary Brown, Ed.D. is an assistant professor of early childhood education at South Dakota State University. Her paper is of interest to many academic disciplines including child development and the medical world. Dr. Brown’s research focuses on the impact of parenting style on childhood obesity specifically during the preschool years of 3 to 5 years of age. Her research about children's eating habits and parenting style, which ultimately show a causal relationship between parenting style and BMI, are different from another research paper by Vereecken et.al. on eating habits which showed no causal relationship between parenting styles and food choices.

Dr. Brown focuses on preschoolers because this age has been identified as a critical time in a child's life when eating and physical activity habits are being established. She cites a study which found that fathers who used a permissive or disengaged parenting style with preschool children have greater odds of children with a higher BMI. This study also indicated that as parents increased control during meal times, the children's ability to regulate their energy intake declined. Another study found that “parents using more rigid and controlling approaches with their children during meal times may have impeded the children's development of self-control of food intake by having them focused on queues external to their own hunger and satiety. Overall, the authoritative parenting style was recommended from these studies, showing no increase in children's BMI levels. ” Brown's own research focuses on: “What specific parenting styles and behaviors from Baumrind influence children's eating habits?” And: “What correlation can be found among Baumrind’s parenting styles and behaviors and children's BMI?”

86 surveys were completed and the analysis showed that “Parents who demonstrated an authoritative parenting style were more likely to label their children's eating habits as either very good or good. Parents who demonstrated a permissive parenting style were more likely to label their shared children's eating habits as fair.” One flaw in this research study is that parents themselves completed surveys instead of having objective, third party interviews and observations as part of the research criteria.

Dr. Brown's final conclusion is "As young children mature and take control of their own nutrition and physical activity, the approach that parents use to shape these behaviors become more important. Parents should understand the interplay of genetic, environmental and familial influences on a child, specifically during the early years when children are modeling their parents actions and decisions and are able to communicate and make some independent decisions when eating and playing."

Preventative parenting education and behavioral interventions could be a great way for families of young children to set healthy habits and place that will last a lifetime.

Butler, J.M., Skinner, M., Gelfand D., Berg, C.A., & Wiebe, D.J. (2007).

Maternal parenting style and adjustment in adolescents with type 1 diabetes. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*. 32(10), 1227-37.

This research paper was done by the Department of Psychology at the University of Utah and focuses on how the mother's parenting style affects adolescents with Type I diabetes.

The researchers start out with a discussion on the importance and influence of the family on a child's ability to adjust and manage chronic illness such as diabetes. "Children with chronic illness benefit from a cohesive family environment where parents are responsive and accepting. Such families can be characterized by a parenting style of acceptance in firm control that is flexibly adapted to the needs of the developing child. During adolescence, the challenge for families is to maintain a level of involvement in diabetes management that supports the adolescent's growing independence and autonomy, while making certain that daily diabetes management tasks are completed competently. Parenting style is likely to be an important component of parent adolescent diabetes transactions."

Based on Baumrind's parenting style topographies of permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative, the researchers found that there is a relationship between parenting style and adolescent well-being when a child has diabetes. Psychological control was associated with an increased depressed mood in teenagers. Firm control was also associated with poorer self-efficacy among older youth. It is theorized that firm control with an older teenager who wants independence may be interpreted as unwanted interference. However, younger teens may experience firm control as supportive.

In contrast to controlling styles, a mother's acceptance was generally associated with better well-being particularly with girls and older children. "The present findings point to maternal acceptance as an important protective factor against oppression for at-risk girls."

The researchers noted that surprisingly, the teenager's perceptions of maternal parenting style did not *predict* adherence to the diabetes regimen. Several theories were offered about this.

In conclusion, the researchers suggest that "in the potentially stressful family context of diabetes management, adolescence perceptions of maternal acceptance may provide an important buffer that supports adolescent well-being. Interventions that facilitate close and warm relationships among parents and children, while minimizing instances of psychological control, may prove useful. Interventions such as those based on behavioral family systems theory might be useful for improving family communication and ameliorating difficulties that arise, when parents and families with adolescents with diabetes use psychological control or age inappropriate levels of firm control."

Darling, N. (1999). Parenting style and its correlates. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois*. Retrieved from: <http://library.adoption.com/articles/parenting-style-and-its-correlates.html>

Nancy Darling, Ph.D. is a Professor of Psychology at Oberlin College. In this article, she boils down the large amount of research done on parenting styles since Baumrind's original work in the 60's. Her "easy" writing style makes this information accessible to mainstream parents rather than just researchers.

Over the years, "Parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior." The research shows that children raised by authoritative parents see themselves as "more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are nonauthoritative."

Darling clarifies some important findings regarding parental responsiveness and parental demandingness. In general, "parental responsiveness predicts social competence and psychosocial functioning, while parental demandingness is associated with instrumental competence and behavioral control (i.e., academic performance and deviance)."

Darling echoes what Baumrind originally published. In her review of the literature on parenting style, she is "struck by the consistency with which authoritative upbringing is associated with both instrumental and social competence and lower levels of problem behavior in both boys and girls at all developmental stages. The benefits of authoritative parenting and the detrimental effects of uninvolved parenting are evident as early as the preschool years and continue throughout adolescence and into early adulthood."

Davis, C.L., Delamater, A.M., Shaw, K.H., La Greca, A.M., Eidson, M.S., Perez-Rodriguez, J.E., & Nemery, R. (2001). Parenting styles, regimen adherence, and glycemic control in 4- to 10-year-old children with diabetes. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 26(2)*, 123-129. doi: 10.1093/jpepsy/26.2.123

This well-qualified group of researchers includes PhD's and MDs from the University of Miami and Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. They set out to examine the relationships among parenting styles, medical regimen adherence, and glycemic control for preschool and elementary school children who have type I diabetes. They wanted to see whether parenting style could be a predictor of medical adherence which is critical information for the medical world.

Their study included 55 families who completed parenting style and regimen adherence questionnaires. Glycosylated hemoglobin results were collected by a review of medical records. They used the Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI) which was used in several of the other reports. This self-report questionnaire measures warmth and restrictiveness based on the parenting style typologies discussed previously.

The results showed that "parental warmth was associated with better adherence ratings. Parental restrictiveness was associated with worse glycemic control. However, only black ethnicity, not adherence or parenting variables, *predicted* glycemic control."

The findings are in line with previous research cited although in this paper, parenting style was not a good predictor of problems to come except with black ethnicity. The authors suggest that parent training interventions might have beneficial effects on children's health behaviors and outcomes. Of course, more research is needed.

Dewar, G. (2010, March). The authoritative parenting style: warmth, rationality, and high standards [Web log post]. Retrieved from: <http://www.parentingscience.com/authoritative-parenting-style.html>

Gwen Dewar, PhD, shares her observations about parenting styles on a website called "Parenting Science" (www.parentingscience.com) which is written with the mainstream parent in mind. Like the other articles on this subject, she provides a basic history and definitions of parenting styles, as well as cites research comparing the three. In addition to the typical "argument" in favor of authoritative parenting, she provides good information about the cultural aspect of this style.

Dr. Dewar clarifies that the authoritative parenting style isn't always about democracy. She provides research citations that observe how different cultures, based on their political structure, apply certain elements of authoritative parenting. For example, in western countries like the US and Australia, "Authoritative parenting includes certain democratic practices--like taking children's preferences into account when making family plans, or encouraging kids to express their own, possibly divergent, opinions." But in other places like in China and Russia, these democratic elements may be absent.

Although there are significant cultural differences, one key trait was found in the four countries included in this particular study (Robinson et al 1997). Dewar states, "It seems that explaining the reasons for rules, and talking with kids who misbehave, is a widespread practice. This aspect of the authoritative parenting style has been called 'inductive discipline,' and there is evidence that it helps kids become more empathic, helpful, conscientious, and kind to others (Krevans and Gibbs 1996; Knafo and Plomin 2006)."

Enten, R.S., & Golan, M. (2009). Parenting styles and eating disorder pathology. *Appetite*, 52(3), 784-787.

The researchers of this paper are from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and specialize in providing community services for eating disorders. Their objective was to investigate the association between parenting style and eating disorder symptoms in patients. The study included 53 families and was done with a self report survey. The results showed a "significant, negative correlation between the drive for thinness scores and body dissatisfaction scores and the patient's perception of the father as authoritative."

They began by quoting research that shows "the home environment is a critical socio-cultural component in the development of eating disorders and the parent-child relationship of the utmost importance in the prevention of disordered eating." Using patient self-report surveys as well as surveys by parents and siblings to identify parenting styles as based on Baumrind's typologies, the research concluded that the father's parenting style had a significant impact with the

symptoms of disordered eating. The patient's drive for thinness and body dissatisfaction was shown to be higher when a father's parenting style is other than authoritative. In addition, there was a connection with the authoritarian style and lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression which are two main symptoms of eating disorders. The research in this study holds consistent to the other studies which discuss the correlation between the authoritative parenting and healthier, happier children.

The researchers indicate that further research should be done with a larger sample size. They also recommend that parenting education about parenting styles and their impact on eating disorders should be a part of eating disorder treatment programs.

Fagan, J. (2000). African American and Puerto Rican American parenting styles, paternal involvement, and Head Start children's social competence. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 46(4), 592-612.

Jay Fagan, PhD is a professor of social work at Temple University. Written primarily for academia, he examined parenting styles and the father's involvement in two groups: African-American and Puerto Rican American. He uses Head Start social competence as the "measure" of a child's success.

Fagan states that many of the studies to this point have portrayed minority and poor parents as being deficient in parenting. He points out that it depends who is defining "deficient" and states that there is a growing body of research which suggests the cultural differences in parenting are caused by survival mechanisms for the social and political environments families live in. Dr. Fagan makes the point that "parenting styles that are viewed as less than optimal in one cultural context may be necessary to cope with the realities of another current cultural context." With this in mind, he used a cultural ecology model for this research paper which takes into account the unique cultural differences of individuals and groups. He used Puerto Rican American and African-American families because they are both exposed to high levels of discrimination in America. They often live side-by-side in the same low income urban neighborhoods. However these two races display different parenting styles.

Puerto Rican American parents tend to have high levels of verbal and physical expression of affection and nurturing and the mothers tend to place a high value on responsiveness and closeness to others. They also value structure. African American parents are seen as having a stricter parenting style with an emphasis on respecting authority while also displaying high levels of support and emotional expression.

The results of the research showed that "ethnicity was significantly associated with parenting style: Puerto Rican American parents were found to be more nurturing and responsive/consistent to their children than were African American parents." In addition, "There is a positive relationship between higher levels of responsive/consistent parenting and children's social competence among Puerto Rican American families but not among African-American families."

A surprise finding was that "children with fathers who shared parenting were judged lower in regard to social competence than their counterparts. Moreover, the relationship between shared

childcare involvement and lower levels of social competence was significant for Puerto Rican American families but not for African-American families." He offered various theories for why shared parenting resulted in less competent kids but none of them are definitive.

In conclusion, "there are important differences in parenting styles between the different ethnic groups. The findings contribute to the increasing literature in which doubts are raised about the assumption that mothers differ fundamentally from fathers in their approaches to parenting. The study also provides additional support for the hypothesis that the relationships between specific parenting styles and child behaviors are not uniform for all ethnic groups."

This research paper is consistent with prior findings: that parenting styles do have an impact on children yet reminds us that human beings are not "boxes" and there are cultural and social complexities that affect and impact the development of a child beyond simply parenting style.

Firmin, M. W., & Castle, S. L. (2008). Early childhood discipline: a review of the literature. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 17(1), 107-129. doi: 10.1080/10656210801909715

Firmin and Castle are professors (of psychology and education, respectively) at Cedarville University, a Christian college in Ohio. This paper reviews the existing literature on the subject of early childhood discipline in American children (recognizing that there are cultural differences in discipline).

This well-written paper could appeal to mainstream parents, academia, and educators- especially those in a Christian setting. It starts out with a discussion of the fact that religious perspectives tend to be portrayed in a negative light by researchers in higher education and the media. The topic of child discipline is no different, particularly when discussing corporal punishment. The authors present several areas which are thought to have an impact on modern day parenting philosophies.

The first is the *historical perspective*. Firmin and Castle quote four trends in American discipline practices. The first is a movement from strict, puritanical discipline styles to more lax, permissive parenting which has sent mixed messages to young children. The second involves the transferring of authority for expertise in discipline from religious teachings and teachers to experts in the field of social sciences. The third was legislative efforts focusing on children's rights and a fourth trend was fathers being more involved in child rearing and discipline as women have entered the workplace. All of these trends have affected childhood discipline in modern America.

The second area of influence on American discipline practices is *generational theories* which suggest that parents discipline their children according to how they were discipline themselves. Research concluded that individuals who had experienced harsh discipline as children were less likely to rate the same action as abusive. In other words, parenting responses are passed from one generation to the next and were seen as "okay" even if they were technically "not okay." This may be one of the contributors to the cycle of abuse.

Gender issues are another issue that affects parenting responses. Research shows that boys were swatted more frequently than girls. There were several interesting theories offered for why this might be. And lastly a very detailed treatise on corporal punishment was offered which brings us to parenting styles.

Like the other articles, these authors go into a description of the parenting styles described by Baumrind, supporting the authoritative style. I appreciated their reminder that there are occasions when each of the parenting styles could be the most appropriate to the situation at hand. For example, it is appropriate for parents to respond in an authoritarian style when there is an emergency. Or, when a family is on vacation, a permissive style might be best fit.

They also discussed corporal punishment within the context of each parenting style stating that all three styles may at times choose to spank children. They postulated that when permissive or uninvolved parents spank it may be more likely out of anger or feelings of desperation when children become out of control. The authoritarian parent may spank in ways that could become abusive if unchecked. And authoritative parents may be most prone to using a balanced approach to corporal punishment and meeting the needs of their children.

This excellent article gives a very complete overview of parenting and disciplining young children past and present. The writers conclude that: "How parents apply discipline can be as important as what manner of discipline that utilize with their children." This supports the research shown in the other papers reviewed.

Gold, M.S. (2011, August). Parenting style impacts control of type 1 diabetes in children and adolescents [Web log post]. Retrieved from: <http://www.diabeteshealth.com/read/2011/08/16/7252/parenting-style-impacts-control-of-type-1-diabetes-in-children-and-adolescents/>

Mara Gold posted this review of a research study on the Diabetes Health website (www.diabeteshealth.com) which provides diabetes resources for the general population. She cites a recent study at the Israel Diabetes Center of the Schneider Children's Medical Center, Petach Tikvah, Israel. The study showed that "children of fathers who parent authoritatively show improved glycemic control based on their A1C values."

The study included parents and children aged 11 to 18 years old of different socio-economic backgrounds who had lived with Type 1 diabetes for at least one year. The parenting styles were classified as the typical typologies by Baumrind.

This report showed, "Authoritative dads, but not moms, were associated with children who displayed better adherence to their treatment plans. Boys in the study with mothers who displayed authoritarian traits had poorer treatment adherence. Children of both genders with permissive mothers did not stick to their treatment plans very successfully. When both fathers and mothers displayed a sense of helplessness, children showed both poorer glycemic control and less adherence to treatment overall."

Dr. Anderson, a commentator of the study, concluded that "based on this study and prior

research, clinicians should be trained to help parents achieve an authoritative parenting style. Such a style is not only valuable when dealing with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, but also helps prevent children from becoming overweight.”

This review is very consistent with prior research articles and, being written for the mainstream population rather than academia, is easy to read and understand.

Hoeve, M., Blokland, A., Dubas, J.S., Loeber, R., Gerris, J.R.M., & van der Laan, P.H., (2008). Trajectories of Delinquency and Parenting Styles. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 36, 223-235. doi: DOI 10.1007/s10802-007-9172-x

This group of primarily European researchers takes data from the Pittsburgh youth study, a longitudinal study covering a 14 year period. Their goal is to test whether “distinct developmental trajectories based on delinquency seriousness can be identified and whether parenting styles are differentially linked to membership of these trajectories.” The results of this paper could have important implications for those focused on criminal justice, social sciences, child development, and academia.

The paper discusses several theories in delinquent development and developmental criminological theories. Most are based up until this point on environmental and social factors and other family related issues such as psychosocial problems, parental stress, marital discord, delinquency within the family, and family structure. Family risk factor variables were identified including harsh parental discipline, supervision and control. Taking this information and then applying it to the backdrop of Maccoby and Martin's parenting style topology may “more fully cover the facets of child rearing and may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of patterns of parenting characteristics on the development of delinquency than single parenting characteristics commonly used as risk factors in predicting delinquency.”

The authors conclude that their study shows that “a neglectful parenting pattern consisting of a combination of low levels of warmth and support, inadequate discipline techniques, and harsh punishment predicts several serious delinquency trajectories. These results have implications for family oriented prevention strategies in that they provide information on which combinations of parenting dimensions are particularly relevant. Preventative action should focus on neglectful families in an effort to reduce the risk of youngsters from these families setting off to a future of serious delinquency.”

This research seems to be consistent with the other research papers in this bibliography.

Lamborn S.D., Mants N.S., Steinberg L., & Dornbusch S.M. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62: 1049-1065.

This group of researchers from esteemed universities around the country re-create Maccoby and Martin's revision of Baumrind's conceptual framework of parenting styles. Whereas Baumrind's results were based on a small sample of younger children from predominantly white, middle-class families, this research project examines parenting and adolescent development with a

sample of 4,100 adolescents from varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Will this new study, much larger and broader, with updated research methods and resources, validate the original research findings from over 20 years ago?

According to the authors:

“Results indicate that adolescents who characterize their parents as authoritative score highest on measures of psychosocial competence and lowest on measures of psychological and behavioral dysfunction; the reverse is true for adolescents who describe their parents as neglectful. Adolescents whose parents are characterized as authoritarian score reasonably well on measures indexing obedience and conformity to the standards of adults but have relatively poorer self-conceptions than other youngsters. In contrast, adolescents from indulgent homes evidence a strong sense of self-confidence but report a higher frequency of substance abuse and school misconduct and are less engaged in school. The results provide support for Maccoby and Martin's framework and indicate the need to distinguish between two types of "permissive" families; those that are indulgent and those that are neglectful.”

Some other interesting findings came from the research. First of all, unexpectedly, the analysis indicated that a teenager's family structure did not change the results. Adolescents from intact homes, mother only homes, and mother/ stepfather homes all yielded similar results.

Secondly, as expected, gender, parental education, and ethnicity affected the results. For example, the self-reliance scorers were higher among girls than boys and higher among middle-class youngsters and working-class youngsters but lower among each and youngsters than white or black youngsters. Another interesting and surprising finding was that the method of self reporting used in this study was just as accurate and reliable as the more expensive and time-consuming method of direct observation used in prior studies.

The results in this large-scale, modern day study were very similar to the results with Baumrind's 1991 findings.

Lohaus, A., Vierhaus, M., & Ball, J. (2009). Parenting styles and health-related behavior in childhood and early adolescence. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 29 (4), 449-475.

This study is a longitudinal study done in Germany by researchers at the University of Bielefeld. It examines whether or not an authoritative parenting style has a protective influence on the development of health related behaviors during childhood and adolescence. The sample consisted of nearly 800 children from grades 4 to 7 and took place over three years.

Prior research shows that the early formation of health related behavior patterns pave the way to habits, values and lifestyles that are likely to be followed throughout one's life- for the better or the worse. During late childhood or early adolescence, health risk behavior increases while health protective behavior decreases so the researchers looked at this transition period in an attempt to identify the relationship between parenting styles and health-related behavior.

Prior research shows that parents have a strong influence on their teenagers. In health-related behaviors, the parents' role and influence do not necessarily decrease with adolescence despite the increasing influence of peers. As Reitz et al. (2006) noted, "The parents' role may change to become more managerial, and advising and parental knowledge, discipline, and support may be important factors influencing the adolescents development." These traits are the hallmark of the authoritative parenting style.

Prior research also shows positive protective effects of the authoritative parenting style for reducing *negative* health related behavior such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, dietary behaviors, and interpersonal violence. The authoritative parenting style also encourages health promoting behaviors like physical activity or higher fruit intake. However, "little is known about associations between parenting styles and *positive* health- related behavior, especially concerning the development from child to adolescence."

Based on all of the prior research, it was expected that the authoritative parenting style would be associated with higher levels of positive and lower levels of negative health related behavior. In addition, these researchers wanted to look at the effects of maternal versus paternal parenting behavior.

The research yielded several interesting results. For the younger children in Grades 2 to 5, there was an increase of positive and a decrease of negative health related behavior. But the older kids in Grades 4 to 7, had an expected increase in negative and decrease in positive health related behavior. The study found that high levels of health risk behaviors (negative behaviors) which were formed in the earlier years stayed consistent as children grew older. However, *positive* health related behavior was the opposite; it declined in the teen years. Despite the lack of a definitive explanation for this (and several theories were offered): "It seems to be important to influence early stage of development to avoid negative developments with regard to later health behavior."

The influence of the parenting style on the development of a child's health behavior turned out to be in line with the initial expectations. "The perception and the experience of an authoritative parenting style by children of age 7 to 11 can be seen as a positive resource, which stresses the relevance of this parenting style with respect to the development of health related behavior." Also, "parenting style is an important resource during early adolescence, although peer influences may gain in importance at this age. In general, an authoritative parenting style may not prevent the increase of problematic behavior patterns during adolescence. It also may not foster an increase of the use of healthcare or other kinds of positive health related behavior. However, an authoritative parenting style can be associated with higher levels of positive and lower levels of negative health related behavior during the transition from childhood to adolescence."

Results also indicate that paternal versus maternal parenting styles are meaningful. "If a father is perceived of as authoritative, the combination of high levels of responsiveness and demanding that and the influence of these factors on health related behavior may be even more prominent than in maternal parenting. This result suggests that fostering a more effective prevention should expand the focus on the whole family." The researchers suggest that early interventions should

be on "early health-related behavior patterns (like nutrition, physical activity etc.) as well as on variables related to these behavioral patterns (like parenting styles).

Having important implications for medical professionals, child development experts, and academia, the researchers suggest that "an early focus on health behavior and perceived parenting could lead to a substantially reduced level of problematic health behavior and could be associated with substantial health promotion in later age groups."

Vereecken C., Legiest, E., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., & Maes, L. (2009). Associations between general parenting styles and specific food-related parenting practices and children's food consumption. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 23(4), 233-40.

This was a very interesting study done in Belgium with 100 randomly selected sixth-graders. The researchers appear to be very well-qualified; three with PhD's and one with a Masters from the Departments of Public Health and Movement and Sport Sciences in Belgium.

The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of general parenting styles as well as specific food-related parenting practices on the daily consumption of breakfast, fruit, vegetables, soft drinks, and sweets. The parenting style measure used was, like in our other studies, the four styles based on the two dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness.

After a description of the general parenting styles which resembles the other reports reviewed, there was an interesting discussion about specific food-related parenting practices including the use of pressure, encouragement or material reward, encouragement through negotiation, catering to children's demands, permissiveness, avoiding negative modeling, and verbal praise. This research paper attempts to differentiate the effect of general parenting styles versus specific food-related parenting practices.

One of the categories in the research used was the parent's social status by using occupation as measure of social status. Prior research shows that social status is one of the strongest predictors of health-related behavior.

The results of the research showed several interesting things. Most surprisingly, there was no significant association with general parenting style and the percent of consumption of breakfast, fruit, vegetables, soft drinks, and sweets. In other words, parenting style really did not matter. This is in contrast to pretty much all of the other papers we've reviewed up to this point that show that parenting styles do matter.

However, specific food-related practices *did* matter in this study and those practices can be related to parenting style. "The practices of letting children decide what and when they eat and allowing them to consume sweets and soft drinks whenever they like was significantly detrimental for their eating habits." These specific practices can be related to permissiveness.

Another interesting result showed that pressure and coercion actually *decreases* the daily consumption of fruit and *raises* the odds of daily consumption of sweets. The researchers state "these results are in line with studies showing that strict parental control practices may have

adverse effects such as increasing children's preference for restricted foods and their intake of such foods."

So, while general parenting styles did not predict the child's eating habits, *specific parenting practices*, which are related to the styles did. The researchers state that the "practice of being permissive was a consistent and significant predictor for children's unhealthy dietary habits even though the general parenting style did not contribute independently to the prediction of any of the five indicators of dietary habits."

More research needs to be done. Worth mentioning, is that children of parents with higher occupational i.e. social status reported healthier choices on every indicator of dietary habits. This confirms the importance of social economic status as a predictor of health related behaviors.

Conclusion

Parenting Style is a key predictor of a child's success in life including academic achievement, social skills, self-esteem, long-term mental health, physical well-being and (in the event of pediatric chronic illness), medical adherence. Research shows that an *authoritative parenting style*, generally results in happier, healthier children across all races, cultures and socio-economic classes.

"Improving the family environment has important health implications equivalent to the reduction of risk factors for chronic illness such as promoting exercise or a healthy diet. Offering early family intervention such as psychoeducational workshops is preventative, not just crisis management." Alison M. Heru, MD