



The Role of Parenting Styles in Children's Problem Behavior

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Civilian-
Focused
Article



196 Finnish children and their parents were assessed six times during their kindergarten and first two years of primary school in order to determine whether parenting styles predicted children's problem behaviors during the transition from kindergarten to primary school. A high level of maternal psychological control with high affection predicted increases in the level of both internal and external problem behaviors among children.

Key Findings:

- High levels of maternal psychological control combined with high affection predicted increases in the children's internal and external problem behaviors when transitioning from kindergarten to primary school.
- High levels of maternal behavioral control combined with low levels of psychological control predicted decreases in the level of children's external problem behavior.
- Among children whose mothers reported low affection, higher maternal psychological control predicted a decrease in children's external problem behavior.
- Fathers' parenting style had only a marginal impact on children's behavior.
- Parenting style contributed to children's problem behaviors; however, children's problem behaviors did not influence parenting style.

Implications for Programs:

- Programs could offer supportive classes for military parents about how to foster children's self-regulation.
- Programs could offer courses for military families on how to support children in school transitions.

Implications for Policies:

- Policies could continue to allocate funding for parenting classes for military parents.
- Policies could recommend professional development for military family program workers about parenting styles and related child outcomes.

Avenues for Future Research:

- Additional research could use non-self-report measures of children's problem behaviors, such as teacher observation.
- Additional studies could expand the domains of internalizing and externalizing behaviors assessed.



Background Information

Methodology:

- Parents were recruited at their children's schools. Measurements were taken six times (twice during kindergarten and the first two primary school years).
- At each time point, children self-reported on their problem behavior, and parents reported on parenting style.
- Latent growth curve modeling was used to determine whether mothers' and fathers' parenting styles predict children's problem behaviors during the transition from kindergarten to primary school.

Participants:

- 196 Finnish children who were 5-6 years old in 1983 participated.
- 83% of families had two parents
- The average number of children in the family =2.80 (SD=1.50).
- 18% of mothers and 14% of fathers had a university degree.
- Racial/ethnic background: 100% Caucasian and Finnish.

Limitations:

- All data was self-report which may not be accurate, especially in the case of child reports.
- The instrument used to measure psychological control focused on guilt induction rather than other forms of control.
- Internal consistencies for the parent reported parenting style were low.
- There was little data completed by fathers. Further, the fathers that did respond differed from those who did not. Therefore, the father related data may be inaccurate.

Assessing Research that Works

Research Design and Sample				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★)	Questionable (★)	
The design of the study (e.g., research plan, sample, recruitment) used to address the research question was....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Research Methods				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★)	Questionable (★)	
The research methods (e.g., measurement, analysis) used to answer the research question were...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Limitations				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent Minor Limitations (★★★★)	Appropriate Few Limitations (★★★)	Limited Several Limitations (★★)	Questionable Many/Severe Limitations (★)	
The limitations of this study are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implications				Quality Rating:	
	Excellent (★★★★)	Appropriate (★★★)	Limited (★★)	Questionable (★)	
The implications of this research to programs, policies and the field, stated by the authors, are...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable because authors do not discuss implications	
Overall Quality Rating					