

Parental Influence on Adolescent Development

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Abstract—A parent can do anything in the eyes of a 6-year-old, but becomes an embarrassment to that same child at age 13. An adolescent's more critical view of his parents is part of growing up, preparing him to separate from his family when he becomes an adult. Parents might turn that critical eye inward, to reassess their parenting and lifestyles. The choices parents make can have long-lasting positive and negative influences on children. The relationships adolescents have with their peers, family, and members of their social sphere play a vital role in their development. Adolescence is a crucial period in social development, as adolescents can be easily swayed by their close relationships. There are four main types of relationships that influence an adolescent: parents, peers, community, and society.

High quality friendships may enhance a child's development regardless of the characteristics of those friends. As children begin to gain bonds with various people, they start to form friendships, which can be beneficial to development. Peer groups offer members the opportunity to develop social skills such as empathy, sharing, and leadership. They can also have negative influences via peer pressure, such as encouraging drug use, drinking, stealing, or other risky behavior. There are certain characteristics of adolescent development that are more rooted in culture than in human biology or cognitive structures. Culture is learned and socially shared, and it affects all aspects of an individual's life. Social responsibilities, belief system development, for instance, are all likely to vary based on culture. This Paper entitled Parental Influence on Adolescent Development emphasizes how parenting can influence the development of adolescents in terms of their behavior, interactions and relationships

Index Terms — Adolescence, authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, uninvolved.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition that involves biological, cognitive, psychological, social, and physical changes. Children observe their parents more closely, appraise their parents more carefully, and know their parents better than parents do the child. Parents play a vital role in their child's development. What parents do and how they respond to their child can affect the way the child thinks, acts and learns.

The child (up to ages 8 - 9) admires and even worships parents for the capability of what they can do and the power of approval that they possess. The child wants to relate on parental terms, enjoy parental companionship, and imitates the parents wherever possible. A child identifies with parents because they provide the primary models to follow after and to live up to. So childhood evaluation of parents begins with

idealization. At the outset, parents are usually too good to be true, at least for long.

During adolescence (around ages 9 - 13), the change gradually sets in for the child. To begin the separation from childhood (and from parents and family) that starts adolescence, the young person has to reject some of the old lifestyle that branded him or her as 'child', thus providing room for the journey to independence ahead. The adolescent no longer wants to be defined and treated as a child. This transition from childhood to adolescence comes with the adolescent becoming more critical, dissatisfied, argumentative, demanding, moody, distant and less cooperative to live with. Psychosocial development occurs, involving changes in identity, autonomy, intimacy, sexuality, and achievement. Major tasks of adolescence are developing a positive self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem. Through active resistance, such as arguing and disobedience, and passive resistance, such as ignoring and delay, the young individual asserts more independence. In the process, parental influence is contested and they lose some traditional power. In addition, adolescence can make parental influence confusing because of the developmental transformation that often occurs. For example, parents who encouraged athletics and academics in a physically active and high achieving child may find themselves confronted by an adolescent who asserts independence of their old influence by rebelling against it.

When children go through puberty, there is often a significant increase in parent-child conflict and a less cohesive familial bond. Arguments often concern new issues of control, such as curfew, acceptable clothing, and right to privacy. Parent-adolescent disagreement also increases as friends demonstrate a greater impact on the child. Although conflicts between children and parents increase during adolescence, they are often related to relatively minor issues. Regarding more important life issues, many adolescents will still share the same attitudes and values as their parents. Adolescents who have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to engage in various risk behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, fighting, and/or unprotected sex

II. PARENTING STYLES

Parenting styles are of four types: - Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive and Uninvolved.

- **Authoritarian Parenting:** - Authoritarian parents are very strict and controlling. They have a strong sense of justice and of the need for obedience. They are strong believers in clearly stated rules. If their children don't behave as ordered, then they

will be punished. Thus, authoritative parents are highly demanding but not very responsive.

- **Authoritative Parenting:** While retaining authority and control, these parents are warmer and more communicative than authoritarian parents. Authoritative parents seek a balance between the teens' desire for independence and the parents' desire to be listened to. These parents are demanding and responsive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self-regulated as well as cooperative. They encourage more freedom of expression.
- **Permissive Parenting:** Permissive parents, while often warm and accepting, make few demands on their children. They are lenient, avoid confrontation and avoid considerable self-regulation. They are much more responsive than they are demanding. They are nurturing and accepting and are responsive to the child's wishes and needs. Permissive parents try to be "friends" with their child, and do not play a parental role. The expectations of the child are very low and there is very little discipline.
- **Uninvolved Parenting:** The uninvolved parent demands almost nothing and gives almost nothing in return, except near-absolute freedom. This style is neither demanding nor responsive. Parents are emotionally unsupportive of their children, but will still provide their basic needs.

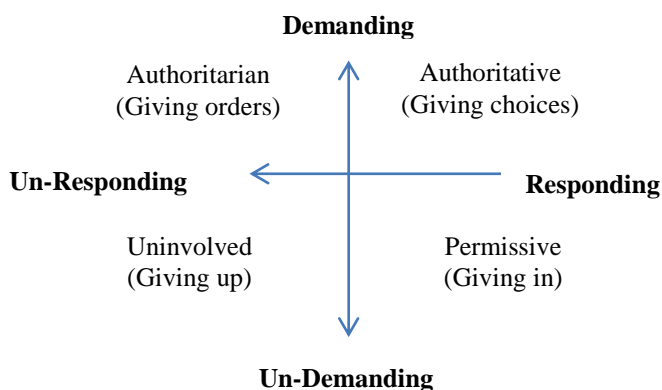


Fig. 1: Parenting styles

III. PARENTING DURING TEEN YEARS

Just because parents have less influence with the adolescent than with the child doesn't mean they have none. In fact, even though they don't directly control them, parents have many ways to affect choices the adolescent makes. Consider just a few.

- **Parents lead by example:** By the beliefs they follow and behaviors they model, they encourage imitation.
- **Parents teach by instruction:** By knowledge and skills they impart, they instill learning.
- **Parents inform by self-disclosure:** By personal history they share, they give lessons from their own life experience.
- **Parents convince by persuasion:** By explanations they offer, they give reasons that can convince.
- **Parents inspire by motivation:** By giving encouragement, they coach effort that is made.
- **Parents connect with empathy:** By expressing concern for feelings, they demonstrate how they care.
- **Parents insist with supervision:** By repeatedly keeping after what they want done, they wear stubborn resistance down.
- **Parents provide discipline:** By applying positive and negative consequences, they influence choices that are made.
- **Parents convince with commitment:** By unconditionally affirming unwavering faith and love, they gain credibility.

IV. TIPS FOR PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Parenting teens well requires that we understand that our job is not about controlling them. It's about providing them with "training wheels" for life — guidelines that give them protection and experience so that they can develop self-control.

- **Establish the "Three W" rule:** Teens need to tell you *where* they are going, *who* they will be with, and *when* they will be back. This is not an invasion of privacy; it's common courtesy.

- **Respect privacy, but refuse to accept secretive behavior:** It's important to your teen's developing sense of independence to have some privacy, but he or she must learn the difference between privacy and secrecy. Your children do have a right to talk with friends privately, to keep a diary, and to have uninterrupted time alone. But if your teen starts being evasive, parental interference becomes a necessity.
- **Talk regularly with your adolescent children about their choice of friends:** Children often don't realize that they've fallen in with bad company. They like to think that they see something positive in a friend that everyone knows is bad news. They may be drawn to the exotic, the different, and the risky. Keep lines of communication with your child open so that you can talk about their relationships.
- **Act swiftly and certainly when something unacceptable happens:** Be consistently clear, kind, and definite in response to unacceptable behavior and kids will see that you really won't tolerate it.
- **Model adult behavior when you are in conflict with your teen:** If your child is behaving inappropriately, don't yell at them. Your child will take you far more seriously if you insist that the two of you focus on managing the problem instead of yelling at each other.
- **Get to know the parents of your children's friends:** This is absolutely the most important thing you can do if you want to have access to your children's world. Try to get in touch with them in order to exchange information about rules, supervision and acceptable behavior.
- **Help your child get a job:** Keep your teenager occupied with a productive activity.

V. NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE PARENTAL CONTROL

Parental guidance is an essential part of grooming children. Rules are integral to make parental skills more effective and functional. However, too many rules can be bad in parenting. Too much parental influence can hinder a child's developmental process. Children seem to take this as interference and loss of control over their own lives. This is particularly significant when children are entering adolescence and want more freedom from parental control.

VI. CONCLUSION

Parental influence, particularly during adolescence, is not always as simple and straightforward as one would like. The lesson when it comes to parental influence is sometimes this: to change your adolescent's behavior, first consider different ways you that you could change your own. Strong bonds with teachers and peers at school can be a positive influence, but many characteristics of middle and high school are not conducive to the development of such bonds. Communities also may have structural characteristics that are supportive of positive adolescent development

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