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# The Influence Of Parents On Child Behavior

## FAMILY INFLUENCES

The family is the first form of socialization a child receives. A child learns from the family's relationships and uses that information to form their own relationships. According to Kwalombota Mahalihali (2016), "the kind of care and attention children receive during their early years of life affect their handling of important issues, such as trust versus distrust and autonomy versus disunity". Not only do the adults in the family influence child behaviors, but siblings do as well. With siblings, the child learns how to share and resolve conflicts with the sibling. When the child begins to go to school, learning those learned behaviors will be beneficial when interacting with the other children.

Children form values, learn to cope, and adjust to life problems based from their family experiences (Mahalihali, 2016). If a child has an inability to cope and adjust, there may be a problem with a family member and could affect the child negatively in the future. For example, if a parent is an alcoholic, which is abusive to themselves, or abuse others, such as physical abuse, the child may grow up to be a victim or abuser themselves. Also, children that went through a parental divorce are at greater risk for marital instability based on Mahalihali's (2016) research.

Mahalihali conducted a study to find out if previous research on if children are influenced by their family structure still had the same results. Mahalihali surveyed thirty-six subjects and found that the results concurred with previous research stating that children are better off in a two-parent household, and those who grew up in households that deprived them from happy situations often grow up to become aggressive adults.

## Parenting Styles

There is a wide variety of parent behaviors which can result in an equally wide variety of behavioral outcomes of the child according to Jordan Mullins (2018). In Mullins's research, there are four parenting styles based on parental warmth, such as affection shown toward the child, and parental control meaning creating rules for the child to follow. The four parenting styles, according to Mullins, are authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved, and authoritative or democratic.

Authoritarian parents tend to have a higher amount of control and a low amount of warmth. These parents are very strict and are not clear in their explanations to the child. The child behavior outcomes from an authoritarian parent are associated with hostility, delinquency, rebelliousness, antisocial aggression, and anxiety (Mullins, 2018).

Permissive parents are almost the exact opposite of authoritarian parents. They focus more on warmth than control. These are the parents that are more of a friend to their child. They enforce very few rules which results in very little guidance for the child. Mullins, using information from Baumrind (1991), states, "permissive parenting has been linked to bossy, dependent, impulsive behavior in children, with low levels of self-control and achievement and a failure to learn

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persistence and emotional control”.

Authoritative or democratic parents have high amounts of warmth and control. Mullins, through Baumrind (1991), found that these parents are “reasonable and nurturing, set high expectations, explain disciplinary rules clearly, and engage in frequent communication with their children”. The children tend to show “high levels of moral reasoning” (Mullins, 2018) and this style of parenting is shown to be the most effective parenting style, but the most difficult to pursue as a parent. It requires more energy and time from the parent than any other style.

Uninvolved parents are the opposite of authoritative parents. They have low amounts of warmth and control. They have no structure for rules or discipline for their children. The child is almost entirely free to do whatever they want whenever they want to do it. Mullins, using the research from Ruchkin et al. (1998), Meesters et al. (1995), and Barnow et al. (2002), said, “adolescents who are exposed to uninvolved parenting practices often perceive high levels of rejection and tend to exhibit more externalizing behaviors, aggressive behaviors, delinquent behaviors, hostility, and attention problems”.

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