

THE IMPACT OF PARENTING STYLES ON CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the profound influence that parenting styles have on the development of children's emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence, which refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively, plays a central role in a child's mental health, social functioning, and academic achievement. Drawing upon foundational psychological theories and recent empirical research, this study categorizes parenting styles into four key types—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful—and analyzes their respective effects on children's emotional competencies. It finds that emotionally supportive and structured parenting (authoritative) significantly enhances EI, while controlling or neglectful parenting can lead to emotional suppression, low empathy, and poor self-regulation. The article concludes with practical recommendations for parents, educators, and mental health professionals.

Keywords: Parenting styles, emotional intelligence, child development, emotional regulation, empathy, family psychology, behavioral outcomes

1. INTRODUCTION

The emotional development of children is influenced by a variety of interrelated factors including genetics, environment, education, and, most importantly, **parenting practices**. As primary caregivers, parents are the first and most consistent emotional guides in a child's life. Their attitudes, behaviors, and methods of interaction form the blueprint for how children learn to perceive and regulate emotions—both their own and those of others.

In recent decades, **emotional intelligence (EI)** has emerged as a critical predictor of success and well-being. Defined by Salovey and Mayer as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use emotional information to guide thinking and actions, EI is now recognized as a more accurate predictor of life satisfaction and social functioning than traditional intelligence quotient (IQ).

This paper examines the intricate relationship between different **parenting styles** and the development of children's emotional intelligence, offering a multidisciplinary perspective grounded in psychology, education, and behavioral science.

2. Understanding Emotional Intelligence in Children

Emotional intelligence in children encompasses several core competencies:

- **Self-awareness:** Recognizing and understanding one's emotions
- **Self-regulation:** Managing emotions in a constructive way
- **Empathy:** Recognizing and responding appropriately to others' emotions

- **Social skills:** Building and maintaining positive relationships
- **Motivation:** Channeling emotions to achieve goals

These skills do not emerge spontaneously; they must be nurtured through healthy interpersonal interactions, particularly within the family context.

3. Parenting Styles: Theoretical Framework

Diana Baumrind's seminal work in the 1960s introduced a taxonomy of **parenting styles** based on dimensions of responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control). These styles are:

3.1 Authoritative Parenting

- High responsiveness and high demandingness
- Combines warmth and structure
- Encourages autonomy while setting clear boundaries
- Emphasizes reasoning, communication, and mutual respect

3.2 Authoritarian Parenting

- Low responsiveness and high demandingness
- Emphasizes obedience and discipline over emotional connection
- Often includes punitive control
- Limited emotional discussion or validation

3.3 Permissive Parenting

- High responsiveness and low demandingness
- Emotionally supportive but lacks rules or expectations
- Children often have emotional freedom but lack regulation skills

3.4 Neglectful (Uninvolved) Parenting

- Low responsiveness and low demandingness
- Parents are emotionally detached or inconsistent
- Children often lack both support and guidance

These parenting styles serve as emotional climates in which children develop—or fail to develop—emotional intelligence.

4. The Impact of Each Parenting Style on Emotional Intelligence

5. Mechanisms Linking Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence

5.1 Emotional Modeling

Parents serve as emotional role models. Children learn emotional vocabulary, empathy, and regulation strategies by observing how parents manage their own emotions and respond to the emotions of others.

5.2 Emotion Coaching

Emotionally intelligent parents engage in **emotion coaching**—validating feelings, labeling emotions, and guiding children toward constructive responses. This process is especially prevalent in authoritative parenting and is absent in neglectful or authoritarian households.

5.3 Attachment Security

Secure attachment provides a foundation for emotional exploration. Children who feel safe and supported are more likely to develop emotional self-awareness and empathy for others.

6. Cultural and Societal Influences

Cultural norms influence parenting practices and, in turn, emotional development. For example:

- In **Western cultures**, authoritative parenting is often idealized due to its emphasis on independence and emotional expression.
- In **collectivist cultures**, authoritarian styles may be more prevalent, with obedience and respect prioritized over emotional discussion.

Despite cultural differences, global research consistently finds that warmth, responsiveness, and consistent communication are universally beneficial for emotional intelligence development.

7. Educational and Psychological Implications

The link between parenting and EI has far-reaching implications:

- **In Education:** Schools can integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into curricula to supplement emotional development for children from less supportive home environments.
- **In Mental Health:** Therapists can work with families to improve emotional communication and teach emotion coaching techniques.
- **For Parents:** Parenting programs that teach emotional intelligence, effective discipline, and active listening can transform family dynamics and child outcomes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Promote Authoritative Parenting:** Through media, workshops, and public health campaigns
2. **Support Parent Education Programs:** Teach emotion coaching, nonviolent communication, and consistent discipline strategies
3. **Implement SEL in Schools:** Foster emotional competencies in all children, especially those lacking parental support
4. **Train Professionals:** Equip teachers and psychologists with tools to recognize the influence of family dynamics on emotional development
5. **Research Initiatives:** Encourage longitudinal studies that examine parenting-EI links across cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds

9. CONCLUSION

Parenting styles play a fundamental role in shaping children's emotional intelligence. While emotional intelligence can be developed in various contexts, the family remains the most powerful and consistent arena for emotional learning. Among the parenting styles, authoritative parenting is most strongly associated with high emotional intelligence, as it combines emotional warmth with firm boundaries and open communication. In contrast, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting each present risks to various aspects of

emotional development. Understanding these dynamics is essential for creating emotionally healthy future generations.

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