Parental Impact: How Parenting Styles Shape a Child's Development

A young girl named Susan failed a test even though she studied all night. She tells her parents about the failed grade. Susan tells her mother, and she responds by listening, assuring her it will be okay, and offering Susan help studying if needed. Susan feels comforted and supported. The opposite effect happens when Susan tells her dad. Her dad's response is dismissive, and he shows little interest in her studies. Susan becomes a people-pleaser and suffers from emotional dysregulation. The scenario highlights parental influence on a child's social skills, self-esteem, and emotional development. Parents' interactions, behaviors, and expectations shapes a child's moral values, social skills, emotional development, and long-term mental well-being

Moral values such as beliefs and behaviors are not genetically inherited in children but shaped by parental influence. Parents foster moral values in their children through various forms of "meta-moral characteristics" which are "necessary for moral functioning but are not themselves intrinsically moral in nature. That is, they potentially serve either morality or immorality"(Berkowitz & Grych, 1998). Parents play a pivotal role in teaching their children moral values in communication, empathy and perspective, expectations and discipline, emotional development, encouragement, and opportunities for moral interaction. Children benefit from communication because it shapes their internalized structure of right and wrong while engaging in conversation with adults on why certain behaviors and actions are right or wrong. Empathy and perspective are essential moral values for children because they can learn to relate to others

and understand the world around them. Next, expectations and discipline are important because they help guide behavior and promote responsibility in a child. Emotional development and encouragement are crucial moral values for children because they lay the foundations for empathy, self-awareness, and social interactions. Lastly, opportunities for moral interaction allow children to have real-world context where they can practice and internalize ethical behavior. Facilitating moral values in children requires effort, patience, and consistency. Parents who model positive behavior create a supportive environment and provide opportunities for their children to make moral decisions.

Moreover, parental influence shapes a child's social cooperation and emotional growth. From a social cooperation perspective, parents must set an example for their children, meaning parents' interactions with others teach children how to communicate, share, resolve conflict, and collaborate. The same aspect is applied to emotional growth. Parents must teach their children how to manage their emotions and navigate emotional challenges with confidence. These aspects should apply to all parenting styles, but every child is different, meaning every parent's style differs based on their child's personality and behavior. Mackenzie Longmire (2024) "identifies several parenting styles, including authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful. These parenting styles differ based on the approach to discipline, communication, and emotional support." Authoritative parenting is a healthy balance of boundaries, discipline, and communication. This type of parenting develops a child's self-esteem, social competence, and emotional regulation. Authoritarian parenting differs because the parents are strict and expect obedience without proper communication. A child may develop anxiety or aggression problems. Permissive parenting is similar to authoritative parenting in that it establishes a healthy balance,

but these parents do not set boundaries or place rules. Permissive parents raise spoiled children who have trouble with self-control and authority figures. Neglectful parents are emotionally and physically detached from their children. The child will struggle socially, emotionally, and academically due to a lack of support. Although these parenting styles reflect a child's social and emotional development, they do not support the underlying cause of a child's psychological and behavioral mechanism, especially regarding a child's age, cultural disparities, and environment. Researchers evaluated different emotion-socialization strategies that parents used based on the developmental trajectory of their children. They concluded that many parents do not advocate emotional coaching for their children. There are different classifications of emotion coaching, which details parents teaching their child about emotions, and emotion-dismissing, where parents dismiss their child's emotions (Zhu et al.,2024). Emotion-socialization strategies are fundamental for a child's emotional-social development because they help children understand how to regulate their emotions, build positive relationships, gain empathy for others, and maintain behavioral problems.

Furthermore, a child's development for long-term mental health is shaped by early emotional support, secured attachment, and healthy coping strategies that are influenced by parental guidance. Parents can guide and influence their children, but studies show that parental guidance and influence are relevant if parents have access to available resources to help nurture and guide a child through different life events. Researchers discovered that parents function in multiproblematic and non-multiproblematic families. Multiproblematic families experience interconnected issues that affect the well-being of the family unit. These issues can include financial problems, substance abuse, mental health issues, and more, and the family often lacks

the resources to help solve the problems. Non-multiproblematic families do not face complex or interconnected issues. These families experience fewer challenges and have abundant resources. To combat multiproblematic issues, a multifaceted problem must be addressed to find immediate and long-term solutions (Campos et al., 2018). Another aspect that needs to be considered is the availability of parents. Most parents work full-time jobs, limiting their emotional availability to their children. Parents may struggle to provide emotional support and attention to their child, which is necessary for their child to sustain long-term mental health. Solutions for parents to be available for their children would be taking mini-vacations with their children, participating in family activities, and communicating with their children about what is going on in their lives (Zahrah et al., 2022). The fundamentals of parenting are a difficult road with different events and circumstances that occur, but it is the emotional support, model behavior, and consistent boundaries that promote long-term mental health in children.

In conclusion, children behave, interact, and understand boundaries based on parental guidance. Parents must enforce consistent guidance, reinforce positive behaviors, and model healthy interactions for their children to understand moral values. Additionally, parents lay the foundation for emotional resilience and allow children to navigate life's challenges. Over time, these experiences will influence children's mental health, emotional stability, and healthy relationships, which will ultimately contribute to a well-adjusted adult life.

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