

**The Relationship of Parental Emotional Maltreatment to
Children's Developmental Outcomes**

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PREVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that seriously rejected and verbally abused children can have intense and long lasting problems, such as insecure attachment styles, behavior problems and high rates of depression and anxiety. Furthermore, based on the idea of intergenerational transmission of parenting, abusive parents are more likely to have been abused as children themselves than non-abusive parents. The present research integrates these theories by examining the possible long-term negative effects of the perceived emotional abuse of young adults. The study investigated whether the level of the perceived emotional maltreatment influences one's self-esteem, level of depression, and perceptions of parenting and the parent role.

The sample for this study consisted of 198 undergraduate freshmen and sophomore students recruited from a private urban university. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. The participants completed self-report measures during a pre-arranged class time. The results reveal that higher levels of perceived verbal abuse in childhood are related to higher levels of depressive symptoms and lower levels of self-esteem, as reported by the participants. In addition, perceived parental verbal aggression is found to be a significant negative predictor for participants' perceptions of the six parenting characteristics associated with the Parent Developmental Theory, in terms of both importance and frequency. Results also indicate that participants' level of depression is found to be a significant negative predictor for their ratings of nearly all parenting characteristics in terms of both importance and frequency. In contrast, participants' level of self-esteem is not a significant predictor for ratings of the six parenting characteristics.

Until recently, the long-term effects of emotional abuse have not been the focus of research due, in part, to the difficulties in defining, assessing and studying this type of maltreatment. Therefore, one of the major implications of this study is demonstrating possible long-term negative effects of emotional abuse, thus raising awareness that psychological maltreatment of children may create a cycle of emotional abuse that could be transmitted from one generation to the next.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Child maltreatment exercises a profound influence on the course of development, with ramifications that may continue throughout the lifetime (National Research Council, 1993). Although physical and sexual abuse are well recognized in the medical and legal systems, there have been difficulties in addressing the issue of emotional abuse of children. Regardless of the difficulties, emotional abuse is so pervasive that Briggs and Hawkins (1996) note by “the very nature of adult-child relationships and cultural influences, most adults will have inflicted emotional abuse on children probably without realizing it” (p. 21). Thus, behavior that may be emotionally damaging to a child, may not necessarily be considered emotionally abusive by parents or even by child welfare staff. In addition, emotional abuse often goes unnoticed because the abuse does not leave any physically visible marks. The damage is done on the inside, but that damage is detrimental to individual recipients and may continue to affect them for the rest of their lives (Ney, 1987).

Research on the psychological impact of emotional abuse on children reveals that this type of maltreatment may be associated with a wide variety of negative effects, including low self-esteem (Ney, 1987; Solomon & Serres, 1999), and/or depression (Briere & Runtz, 1988), scholastic underachievement (Solomon & Serres, 1999), behavioral problems such as delinquency (Gracia, 1995; McGee, Wolf & Wilson, 1997) and aggression towards others (Cicchetti & Carlson, 1989; Garbarino, Guttman & Seeley, 1986). Claussen and Crittenden (1991) propose that psychological maltreatment is even more detrimental to children than physical aggression, as this form of abuse reflects recurrent interactions among family members. Furthermore, previous research has suggested some unique negative consequences of emotional abuse. For example, Gross and

Keller (1992) show that psychological abuse in childhood is a more powerful predictor of depression and low self-esteem than physical abuse. This is probably due to the child's internalization of parental statements as a basis for self-perception (Briere & Runtz, 1990).

Like other types of maltreatment, emotional abuse occurs in different forms and at different rates in different cultures. In a study focusing on the cross-cultural perspective of emotional abuse, Korbin (1991) notes that every culture defines some form of behavior as abusive, and each culture has an awareness of abuse when people deviate from accepted behavioral standards. For example, in some Asian countries, as well as in the industrial north of England, traditional views emphasize the value of modesty and sincerity. Conceit and dishonesty are believed to be the worst traits a child could develop. General disciplining methods include a regional tendency of "putting down" children, behavior which would not be acceptable in many other countries (Briggs & Hawkins, 1996). Thus, when studying the emotional abuse of children, an important consideration is to view the maltreatment as "reliant upon context, where each incident a child is subject to is seen to be a part of an established pattern" (Woodham & Lapsley, 1996, p. 276) and dependent on the context of the child's living environment.

The discussion of child emotional abuse is closely related to the larger topic of parenting and different parenting practices. The parent role is important to examine because a person's understanding of this role ultimately influences the way individuals will parent their children. The Parent Development Theory (PDT), developed by Mowder (2005), examines how individuals construct and modify their parenting cognitions over time. Although ideas of parenting develop early in life (Namer, 1997), research associated with PDT reveals that parenting perceptions are influenced by life experiences, the characteristics of the individual child, the parent-child dyad, family dynamics, and the social-cultural context (Mowder, Harvey, Moy & Pedro, 1995). Furthermore, the theory of the intergenerational transition of parenting posits that specific parenting practices are

transmitted from one generation to the next (Steinmetz, 1987). More specifically, research demonstrates that emotionally abusive parents are more likely to have been abused as children than non-abusive parents (Barber, 2000; Belsky, 1984). By integrating these ideas, the present study aims at examining the possible negative effects of the perceived emotional abuse of young adults. In addition, this study investigates whether the level of perceived emotional maltreatment influences individuals' perceptions of parenting and the parent role.

Statement of Problem and Purpose of Study

Considering the negative impact that parental emotional abuse can have on children, psychological maltreatment also may influence one's perceptions of parenting and the parent role. Therefore, the present study aims to build upon previous research on the effects of psychological maltreatment of children (e.g., Belsky, 1984; Briere & Runtz, 1988; Iwancic, 2003; Ney, 1987) by examining young adults' perception of parenting and the parent role. Participants' perceptions of the level of verbal abuse experienced as children are considered along with measures assessing their perceptions of the parent role. In addition, the current study examines the potential negative outcomes for those who perceive they experienced verbal abuse in childhood. Thus, the participants' perceptions of the degree of verbal abuse experienced as children are correlated with measures of self-esteem and depression.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

This study investigates the following research questions/hypotheses:

1. Will participants who perceive they experienced a high degree of parental verbal aggression (VA) in childhood, score significantly higher on depression and lower on self-esteem measures compared with participants who perceive they experienced a low degree of parental VA in childhood?

- Based on previous research (Garcia, 1995; Solomon & Serres, 1999), it is hypothesized that an association exists between verbal aggression and negative outcomes, such that the

greater parental VA experienced in childhood, the more undesirable emotional outcomes are expected in adulthood. Therefore, participants who perceive they experienced more VA in childhood likely will score higher on a measure of depression and lower on self-esteem compared with participants who perceive they experienced less VA in childhood.

2. Do participants who perceive they experienced higher VA in childhood differ from those who perceive they experienced lower VA in terms of characteristics of parenting importance and frequency?

- Based on the concept of intergenerational transmission of parenting (Simons et al., 1991) and Bandura's (1973) social learning theory, the perceived amount of VA experienced in childhood is hypothesized to be related to individuals' perceptions of parenting and the parent role, such that perceived higher VA will lead to decreased expectations of parental bonding, sensitivity and responsivity and increased expectations of discipline and education in terms of importance and frequency.

3. Are there gender related differences in rating of the frequency and importance of the six characteristics? And if there are, are these differences influenced by the level of VA?

- Based on research related to the gender differences in parenting practices (Clifford, 2004; Gerstel, 2001; Turiano, 2001), women are hypothesized to rate bonding, sensitivity and responsivity as more important parenting characteristic than males. The effects of VA on gender differences also will be explored.

Exploratory Question: Will the participants' level of depression and self-esteem influence their ratings of the importance and frequency of the parenting characteristics?

- The participants' reported levels of depression and self-esteem will be explored as predictors of the parenting behaviors.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of the research literature examining the problem of emotional abuse in children and the psychological impact of this form of abuse. Different parenting styles, possible consequences of these styles, and the development of parenting cognitions is also presented. The literature review begins with an overview of the difficulties related to defining and assessing emotional abuse, as well as the prevalence and the causes of this type of maltreatment. This is followed by an examination of the psychological impact of emotional aggression on children, a comparison of parenting practices, and possible parenting consequences in terms of child outcomes. Research on intergenerational transmission of specific parenting practices along with Mowder's (2005) Parent Development Theory (PDT) is discussed. The concluding section discusses one of the major goals of the present study, the investigation of verbally aggressive (VA) parenting practices and their influence on individuals' own parenting cognitions.

Defining Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse began to be recognized and investigated more widely as a separate form of child maltreatment in the 1980s. However, the problem of defining, assessing and dealing with emotional abuse has proved to be complex and currently there is no overarching definition to guide in the identification of emotionally abused children (Hamarman & Ludwig, 2000). Part of the problem in studying this form of maltreatment lies in the uncertainty of whether the emphasis should be on abusive parental behavior or on the effects of such behavior on children's development and well-being (Iwaneic, 2003). Some researchers argue that damaging parental behavior should be considered as a main indicator for emotional abuse (McGee & Wolfe, 1991). However, other studies propose that parental behavior alone is an inadequate predictor of emotional damage. These researchers

focus on child outcomes arising as consequences of emotional abuse (Aber & Zigler, 1981; Kavanagh, 1982). For instance, Kavanagh (1982) argued that emotional abuse should be considered as damaging only when it causes obvious physical symptoms, such as failure-to-thrive.

Furthermore, some researchers focus on delineating emotional from psychological abuse. According to O'Hagan (1995), emotional abuse is the appropriate term when the focus is on the impairment of the child's emotional functioning, and psychological abuse refers to the subsequent impairment in cognitive and emotional development. However, it is clear from the literature that many researchers use the terms interchangeably, with American reports typically using psychological abuse more often and the British using emotional abuse (Edmundson & Collier, 1993).

The work of Garbarino and associates (Garbarino 1978; Garbarino, Guttman & Seeley, 1986) is widely regarded as seminal work in the field of emotional abuse. The researchers define "psychological maltreatment" as a "concerted attack by an adult on a child's development of self and social competence" (Garbarino et al., 1986, p. 8). Based on this definition, the researchers classify emotional maltreatment into five behavioral forms: *Rejecting*, including behaviors which communicate or constitute abandonment of the child, such as refusal to show love and affection; *Isolating*, including preventing the child from participating in normal social interactions; *Terrorizing*, meaning deliberately creating a climate of fear by threatening the child with severe punishment; *Ignoring*, including failure to respond to the child's behavior or being psychologically unavailable to the child; and *Corrupting*, encouraging the child to develop false social values, such as aggression, criminal acts or substance abuse. Later, Garbarino and Vondra (1987) included four additional behaviors to the original typology of psychological maltreatment: stimulus deprivation, influence by negative or inhibiting role models, forcing children to live in dangerous and unstable environments (e.g., exposure to war, domestic violence or parental

conflict), and the exploitation of children by adults who provide inadequate care while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The conceptualization of emotional abuse has continued to expand through both research and clinical observations, as the need for clarity and definition is essential for child protection policy and legislation. The National Center of Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) defines emotional abuse as: “acts of omission by parents or other caregivers that have caused serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders” (National Child Abuse and Neglect Information, 1994, p. 84). The New York State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (2003) has compiled a list of warning signs that can guide the identification of emotional abuse. A caregiver may be emotionally abusing a child if they routinely: *ridicule* the child’s appearance, ideas, abilities, fears or accomplishments; *criticize* the child and undermine his/her confidence; *terrorize* the child by yelling at the child repeatedly; *reject* the child by constantly denying the child affection; *humiliate* the child in front of others as a form of discipline; and/or *blame* the child without any specific cause. After reviewing numerous models and definitions of emotional abuse, Iwaneic (2003) concludes that “emotional damage to the child can be caused by verbal hostility, denigration, unrealistic expectations, induced fear and anxiety by threats of abandonment, rejection, and all-around deprivation of attention, stimulation and by having excessive power over the child” (p. 17).

Although the concept of emotional abuse is elusive due to the lack of clear consensus regarding an operational definition (Black, Smith & Haymen, 2001), one form of emotional maltreatment is clearly identified by most researchers in this area – verbal aggression (VA). Schaefer (1997) focused his research on investigating which specific parental verbal utterances were generally perceived as psychologically harmful. A sample of 151 mental health professionals (i.e., 120 women, 31 men), who were parents as well, completed a questionnaire describing 18 categories of parental verbalizations that are

commonly associated with psychological maltreatment in the professional literature. Results indicate that 80% of the respondents rated 10 out of the 18 categories as being “never acceptable” parenting practices. These included rejection or withdrawal of love, verbal putdowns (e.g., “you are so clumsy,” “you are really stupid”), negative predictions (e.g., “you will never amount to anything”), negative comparisons (e.g., “Why can’t you be more like your sister?”), scapegoating, perfectionism, shaming, cursing or swearing, treats, and guilt trips (e.g., “How could you do that after all I’ve done for you?”).

In the present study, the labels “emotional maltreatment” and “psychological maltreatment” are not distinguished from one another as the research focuses on the relationship between perceived VA experienced in childhood and individuals’ cognitions regarding parenting. More specifically, the perceived frequency of the following parental behaviors: yelling, insulting, criticizing, inducing guilt, ridiculing, humiliating or embarrassing in front of others, and causing the child to feel like a bad person, are correlated to individuals’ self-esteem, level of depression and cognitions of parenting.

Prevalence

Due to the mostly intangible wounds, emotional abuse is probably the most hidden and underestimated form of child maltreatment. Oates (1996) believes that the ongoing nature of emotional abuse and the absence of a clear crisis precipitating identification by health, welfare or criminal justice systems, make the extent of emotional abuse unknown. The NCCAN Data System is a national data collection and analysis program on child abuse and neglect established by the U.S. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). State participation is voluntary; however, compliance with reporting of abuse is a prerequisite for receiving funds from the Child Abuse and Neglect State Grants Program (Kot, Bruner & Scott, 1998). A 2002 study examining the state laws governing the prosecution of emotional abuse cases, revealed that only 42 states have civil and criminal laws regarding child emotional abuse (Hamarman, Pope & Czaja, 2002). According to a

recent report of the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, emotional abuse accounts for approximately 11 % of all reported cases of child maltreatment across the United States (Dowd, 2004). The lack of a clear definition and guidelines for determining emotional abuse may lead to inaccurate reporting of child emotional abuse and hinder Child Protective Services from intervening.

Causes of Emotional Abuse

There is a paucity of knowledge surrounding the causes of emotional abuse. Much of the literature devoted to the investigation of different aspects of emotional abuse discusses the etiology in terms of child maltreatment in general (e.g., Wolfe, 1991). That is, emotional abuse is a function of the effect of the caregiver's and the child's characteristics within the socio-cultural context. There has been little effort to determine what causes parents to become verbally abusive. Emotional maltreatment does not seem to stem from parents being isolated by the community, but more likely these parents isolate themselves (Wolfe, 1991).

Pillari (1991) argued that emotional abuse is intergenerational, highlighting deeply rooted patterns of scape-goating in families. In these families, children typically become the source of blame for the inability of the caregivers to resolve the detrimental consequences of their own experiences of rejection and family trauma. Moreover, Pillari notes that some professional systems continue to blame children for parental disturbances, thus further compounding the effects on children and minimizing the potential for caregivers to change behaviors and attitudes towards their children.

In addition, research has demonstrated that caregivers who emotionally abuse, frequently have poor self-esteem, engage in irrational thinking (Shorkey & Armendaris, 1985), and generally are poorly equipped with the knowledge to cope effectively with children's normal demands at different developmental stages (Oates, 1996). A day nursery study comparing parents with reported incidents of emotional maltreatment to parents with

no reported emotional maltreatment behavior, indicated that emotionally abusive parents show poorer coping skills, poorer child management strategies, and more difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships than those who do not engage in emotional maltreatment. These parents also report more deviant behaviors in their children than the control group parents (Oates, 1996).

Other studies have described a number of parental and child characteristics that may enhance the potential for emotional abuse. For example, two of the most prevalent mental disorders identified as affecting caregivers who emotionally maltreat their children are depression and substance abuse (Chaffin, Kelleher & Hollenberg, 1996). In addition, the caregiver's neuropsychological problems or intellectual deficits may increase the likelihood for inappropriate parenting and emotional abuse as a function of the added stress associated with these conditions (Tomison, 1996).

A recent study (Gagne & Bouchard, 2004) exploring the family dynamics associated with parental psychological violence, suggests that there are four types of families in which psychological abuse is likely to occur. The families are characterized respectively by a scapegoat child, a domineering and intolerant father, a rigid and manipulative mother, and/or a chaotic and incompetent parent. The researchers identified that in families where one of the children is looked upon as a scapegoat, that child is the victim of denigration, embarrassment or humiliation and rejection. Most often, such a child is distinguished from other family members by undesirable characteristics (e.g., physical unattractiveness, a handicap, a disease). In all studied cases, the researchers concluded that the child victim was excluded from moments of family intimacy and understanding.

In families where the environment is structured around a domineering and intolerant father, the children are mainly subjected to intimidation, threats and denigration. These children are also more likely to be exposed to domestic violence than the children in the other three family types. The father is likely to lose patience rapidly and readily

expresses his anger and frustration. The family environment is characterized by a sense of fear and tension among the family members (Gagne & Bouchard, 2004).

On the other hand, when family dynamics are structured around a rigid and authoritarian mother, the children are chiefly victims of excessive control, harshness and manipulation. The mother is likely to assume all the power in the family management and does not tolerate any interference. When she feels that she is losing control of the situation and in order to maintain power, she typically uses manipulation, lies, blackmailing or strategies that make family members feel guilty. She can also invest all her energy in her children to the point of smothering or hampering their autonomy (Gagne & Bouchard, 2004).

Finally, Gagne and Bouchard (2004) found that children raised by incompetent parents were subjected to a chaotic and unhealthy regime. More specifically, neglect of basic psychological needs, rejection, role reversal, alienation and/or corruption can occur in this situation. The incompetent parent may bear the scars of a troubled past or suffer from some psychological problems. Most often, such parents lack the ability to respond consistently and appropriately to the needs of their children. For example, they may be capable of paying attention to their children and/or taking care of their children, but as soon as these parents are challenged by a difficult situation, they fail to utilize their positive coping and parenting skills (Gagne & Bouchard, 2004).

Finally, Gagne and Bouchard (2004) attempted to explore their participants' explanations regarding their parental behaviors. The results demonstrate that the caregivers' reasons for the occurrence of emotional abuse in a given family support the proposed typology (i.e., scapegoat child, domineering father, manipulative mother, incompetent parent) and a different explanatory profile is associated with each type of psychologically violent family. The most frequent categories of explanations given by the respondents include: family heritage and passing on of violence (e.g., scapegoat child, domineering

father), the present day stress combined with isolation and the absence of support (e.g., incompetent parent, domineering father), fear that harm may come to the child, and a desire to protect one's child and to preserve the parent/child relationship (e.g., manipulative mother). Thus, the researchers conclude that parents who are likely to emotionally abuse their children attribute the blame to their own life story typically marked by violence, various deficiencies, or numerous stressors in their present day life. Even when parental behavior is deemed deliberate, rarely is the behavior considered to have malicious intent (Gagne & Bouchard, 2004).

Psychological Impact of Emotional Aggression

Regardless of the exact causes, emotional abuse can have devastating effects on children. Some studies have shown that emotional abuse may create more intense and longer lasting problems in children than other types of abuse (Clausen & Crittenden, 1991; Gularnik, Simeon, Sirof & Knetelska, 2001). When comparing the effects of different types of abuse (i.e., physical, sexual, emotional abuse), Ney (1987) found that emotional maltreatment is more likely to change children's view of the world and themselves than physical or sexual abuse. Criticized children frequently criticize themselves. Unable to deal with the attacker in their parents, these children tend to either denigrate themselves or project their problems onto the world which they expect will treat them in a negative way (Ney, 1987). These findings are supported by Solomon and Serres' (1999) research, which concluded that emotional abuse, more than physical abuse, is associated with subsequent poor self-evaluation due to the belittling nature and direct targeting of children's worth.

Furthermore, Iwancic's (1995, 2003) research demonstrates that constantly criticized and ridiculed children, who attempt to please the caregivers but are met with dismissal and disapproval, tend to retaliate at those who inflict pain in their everyday life. In such cases, children commonly do not speak to their mothers or respond to their questions; on the whole, they dismiss maternal attempts at contact. Iwancic (2003) argues that

seriously rejected and VA children have not learned how to give love because they have never known a loving parent or experienced a model for appropriate parenting practices. Such children typically crave affection, but have difficulty accepting affection when offered. These children's attachment tends to be troubled by emotional constriction or defensiveness. To protect from more emotional hurt, children tend to isolate their emotions and can ultimately stop trying to get affection from other people. Thus, emotionally abused children usually have difficulty forming long-lasting and intimate relationships with others (Iwancic, 2003).

Additionally, consequences consistently have been identified by studies investigating the impact of VA on children and adolescents. These problems include insecure attachment styles (Erickson & Egeland, 1987; Farber & Egland, 1987), behavior problems such as delinquency, oppositional behaviors and temper tantrums (Cicchetti & Carlson, 1989; Gracia, 1995; McGee, Wolfe & Wilson, 1997), and poor academic achievement (Solomon & Serres, 1999). In addition, individuals who were emotionally abused as children show high rates of anxiety, depression, interpersonal sensitivity and dissociation (Briere & Runtz, 1988). The researchers estimate that having above average levels of psychological maltreatment increases the likelihood of above average interpersonal sensitivity, dissociation, and/or depression by 45-50%.

Previous research mostly focused on short-term effects of verbal abuse. However, given that the experience of VA in childhood appears to be an important factor in adult functioning, this abuse seems to have an enduring impact on the victim. For example, Pitzner and Drummond (1997) conducted a study with the Symptom Checklist 90-Revised (SCL-90-R) that measured the psychological adjustment of college students. The results indicate that childhood psychological abuse represents a powerful predictor of adult functioning. Elevated levels in depression, paranoid ideation and psychosomatic complaints were positively related to a history of childhood emotional abuse in the participants. Also, a

study by Rich, Gingerich and Rossen (1997) revealed that college students with a history of childhood emotional abuse were more likely to experience psychological disturbance and clinical distress in adulthood compared to those who were not psychologically abused. The three clinical indicators, as measured by the SCL-90-R, found to be significantly higher in the students reporting emotional abuse were obsessive-compulsiveness, depression, and anxiety.

Parenting Styles

Research has captured many of the negative consequences of childhood emotional abuse. This section takes the discussion a step further by reviewing specific parenting styles and the possible consequences of the different styles for children. Parenting may be the conduit for positive as well as negative parent-child interactions. The positive interactions (e.g., play, talk, laugh together) are usually associated with feelings of safety, comfort and pleasure for both parent and child. On the other hand, negative interactions (e.g., verbal aggression, denigration, rejection, deprivation of attention) may trigger various emotional and behavioral problems in children (Iwancic, 2003).

Parenting is a very complex activity that includes numerous interconnected behaviors which influence child outcomes. Taken in isolation, specific parenting behaviors (e.g., yelling at a child, playing with a child) may not be very useful in exploring child outcomes. Rather, many researchers have focused their studies on a broader spectrum of parenting behaviors known as parenting styles. Diana Baumrind's research is particularly noteworthy. Her research focused on the relationship between parental child rearing styles and social competence in children. Baumrind (1991) defines parenting style as normal variations in parents' attempts to control and socialize their children. Her research emphasizes the issue of control, as Baumrind assumes that the primary role of all parents is to influence, teach, and control their children. Furthermore, parenting styles include two important characteristics: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness (Baumrind,

1991). Parental responsiveness refers to "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). On the other hand, parental demandingness refers to "the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" (Baumrind, 1991, pp. 61- 62).

Based on whether parents are relatively high or low on parental responsiveness and parental demandingness, Baumrind (1991) categorized parenting behaviors into four parenting styles. *Authoritarian parents* can be described as being high on parental control and demandingness and low on responsivity and nurturance. Such parents set absolute standards of behavior, strict rules and regulations and are less likely than others to use gentle persuasion, praise and rewards with their children. Children of authoritarian parents tend to do well academically and have relatively fewer behavioral problems; however, these children also may have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression than their peers.

Indulgent parents are high on responsiveness and low on demandingness. These caregivers are significantly lenient in order to avoid confrontation. Baumrind's research (1991) demonstrated that children of indulgent parents are more likely to perform poorly at school and have behavioral problems; however, such children also tend to have higher self-esteem and better social skills.

Uninvolved parents are usually low in both demandingness and responsiveness. Such parents place few demands on their children and tend to be inconsistent disciplinarians. According to Baumrind (1991), children of uninvolved parents tend to perform most poorly in both the academic and social arenas as compared to children raised with other parenting styles.