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Two Determinants of Parenting Behavior: Conceptual Understanding of Child Development

Adelaide Molaro
Loyola University Chicago

TWO DETERMINANTS OF PARENTING BEHAVIOR: CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND STRESS

by

Adelaide Molaro

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents

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VITA

The author, Adelaide Molaro, is the daughter of Salvatore J. Molaro and Olga (Cenicola) Molaro. She was born on September 8, 1960, in Weehawken, New Jersey.

Her elementary education was obtained in the Catholic schools of Fairview, New Jersey, and her secondary education was completed at the Cliffside Park Public High School in Cliffside Park, New Jersey, where she graduated, salutatorian, in 1978.

In September, 1978, Ms. Molaro entered Rutgers University, The State University of New Jersey. In 1981, while attending Rutgers University, she was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa. She graduated in May, 1982 with high honors, and received the degree of Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology.

In September, 1983, Ms. Molaro entered the graduate program in clinical psychology at Loyola University of Chicago, and received a fellowship from the National Institute of Mental Health for the 1983-1984 academic year. She completed the clinical training program at the Charles I. Doyle, S.J. Child Guidance Center and Loyola Day School from August, 1984 to August, 1986. She is currently an intern at the Loyola University Counseling Center.

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INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Child development is a complex process whereby a child grows physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally. While current views of development have increasingly come to recognize that the child is an active agent in his/her own maturation, such developmental progression is not solely an innate process, but is inextricably bound to the child's interactions with his/her immediate environment. In one theory of child development, Vygotsky (1978) proposes that it is social interactions with caregivers in particular which influence the course of an individual's future development. According to Vygotsky, the development of cognitive and affective processes begins first on a social level through early adult-child interactions, and later becomes internalized on an individual level. Of central concern in Vygotsky's theory of development are those social processes used by adult caregivers to control and direct the child in social interactions. In particular this theory is concerned with how these regulative processes are then taken over by the child, allowing him/her to eventually function as an independent agent (Vygotsky, 1981). Clearly, Vygotsky's theory strongly implicates the

important role of caregiving or parenting behavior in shaping and influencing the subsequent development of a child.

In line with the above, much research effort in the area of socialization has been expended investigating the characteristics and consequences of parenting across various developmental stages in a child's life. Dreikurs (1964) has proposed several child rearing strategies and practices for use with children of all ages based on the principles of freedom and responsibility. In particular, he advocates the use of warm encouragement and rational guidance as opposed to authoritarian control in the care and discipline of children, emphasizing the need to be firm and consistent without being critical or domineering. Dreikurs (1964) further stresses the importance of taking time out to train children for the many functions of living, talking "with" them instead of "to" them, and stimulating children's independence so that they will be able to meet and cope with life's many demands.

Many of Dreikurs' (1964) propositions for child rearing have been found to be related to positive developmental outcomes for children. For example, Baumrind (1967) systematically studied child rearing practices associated with competence in young children.

The child rearing practices of parents of a group of preschool children identified as being self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative, and content were contrasted with those of parents whose children were identified as being discontent, withdrawn, distrustful, had little self-control or self-reliance, and who tended to retreat from novel experiences. It was found that high levels of parental nurturance, independence training, encouragement of expression, and use of a consistent and rational approach to discipline were positively related to social affiliativeness, self-reliance, self-control, exploration, and emotional contentment in these preschool children.

Certain child rearing practices have also been found to be related to the intellectual achievement of children. In a longitudinal study McCall, Applebaum, and Hogarty (1973) found that parents of school-aged children who showed the greatest gains in IQ provided their children with warm encouragement and acceleration for intellectual tasks, and took a moderate, "rationally structured" orientation to discipline. Furthermore, Baldwin, Cole, and Baldwin (1982) found that active and warm parent-child interactions, especially when such interactions were evenly balanced between the parent and child, are related to children's school adjustment,

particularly ratings of cognitive functioning and motivation.

The characteristics of parenting behavior have been investigated in terms of their influence on children's self-esteem and moral development as well. Coopersmith (1967) found acceptance of children by their parents, recognition of their opinions, clearly-defined and enforced limits, and latitude for individual action within such limits to be positively related to the child's sense of self-esteem. With regard to the moral development of children, Hoffman (1970) found that while frequent use of power assertion techniques as a means of discipline is consistently associated with weak moral development, induction discipline and affection are associated with advanced moral development across various age levels.

In reviews of the literature on child rearing practices and developmental outcome, Belsky (1981; 1984) concludes that attentive, warm, stimulating, responsive, and nonrestrictive parenting has been found consistently to be associated with healthy intellectual, social, and emotional development. Belsky (1984) also states that across childhood, it is parenting which is "sensitively" attuned to children's levels of ability and to the developmental tasks they face which promotes a variety

of highly valued outcomes including the manifestation of emotional security, behavioral independence, social competence, and intellectual achievement by the growing child. In particular, the parental behaviors which have been found in the research literature to be related to these outcomes include high levels of parental nurturance and positive affect, use of rational, non-punitive disciplinary techniques, stimulation and training, and the encouragement of both independence and openness of verbal expression.

While much attention has been focused on understanding how certain child rearing practices affect children's development, little attention has been devoted specifically to studying the determinants of such parenting behavior, i.e. what influences the ways in which people parent? Stolz (1957) first explored the potential influences on child rearing behavior. Based on a series of interviews with mothers and fathers who differed widely in demographic characteristics, a variety of influences were revealed which included the parents' experiences during childhood, parental values and beliefs, the personal needs of parents, spouse interaction, the characteristics and behavior of the child, and the behavior setting in which parent-child interactions take place. Stolz (1957) concluded that

parenting is clearly a result of the interplay of numerous forces.

Unfortunately, since Stolz (1957) little else has been done to study the determinants of parenting behavior more precisely. However, based on available empirical findings which stem largely from the child abuse and neglect literature, Belsky (1984) recently proposed a conceptual model of parenting which focuses on three general sources of influence on parental functioning: 1) the parent's personal psychological resources; 2) the contextual sources of stress and support; and 3) the child's individual characteristics. Belsky's model presumes that parenting is multiply determined by forces emanating from within the individual parent, within the individual child, and from the broader social context in which the parent-child relationship is embedded. The model further assumes that the above influences on parental functioning are not equally influential in supporting or undermining growth-promoting parenting, but rather that the personal psychological resources of the parent are the most important and influential, followed by the amount of stress and support experienced by the family, and with the child's contributions being the least influential in determining parental behavior. However, to date no data

exist testing the hypothesis of the primacy of the parent's contributions over the other influences on parental functioning.

The present study will seek to test the primacy of parental characteristics in predicting child rearing practices. However, before one can test this issue, one must define the numerous aspects which comprise the parent's contributions. Individual parents bring a host of their own enduring characteristics to the parenting process, characteristics which are in part a product of their own developmental histories. One such set of characteristics which has been considered to play an important role in determining parental behavior includes the attitudes and beliefs that parents have concerning child rearing and child development in general. MacPhee (1983) discusses the assumption that knowledge of development affects child rearing practices and how it is documented in various bodies of literature. For example, in the child abuse literature, parents who maltreat their children have been commonly described as having unrealistic expectations for child behavior, often expecting "too much, too soon" as far as physical, social, and cognitive development are concerned. In contrast to abusive parents who may have unrealistically high expectations, teenage mothers are often thought to

expect "too little, too late" from their children, which may contribute to non-stimulating child rearing practices found to be a problem with this population of parents. While few would deny that what a parent knows about children influences the way they are reared, MacPhee (1983) points out that very little empirical work has actually been conducted on this particular topic.

Sameroff and Feil (1983) propose that parental beliefs regarding particular child rearing practices, and attitudes regarding ideal developmental outcome, emanate from a conception of the developmental process itself. Therefore, what is suggested in looking at the influence that such variables have on parenting behavior, is an assessment of the underlying theories parents hold concerning development. According to Sameroff and Feil (1983), theories of development are frequently based on what is seen as the determinants of a child's outcome. Parents can differ in the importance they give to influences arising from the child's nature, a constitutional approach, the child's upbringing, an environmental approach, or some combination of the two which Sameroff and Chandler (1975) would call an interactive or "transactional" approach. It has been further proposed that based on their conceptual

understanding of the developmental process, parents' expectations for the development of physical, intellectual, social, and emotional competencies in their children should be commensurate with the child rearing practices they adopt (Lawton & Coleman, 1983; Sameroff & Feil, 1983). Thus, a question which remains to be answered empirically is whether differences in parental thinking about development will translate into differences in parental behavior that will produce differences in the way children develop.

As part of the Rochester Longitudinal Study (Sameroff, Seifer, & Barocas, 1982) investigating the role of parental mental illness, social status, and other family cognitive and social variables that might be risk factors in the early development of children from birth to 4 years of age, Sameroff and Seifer (1983) provide some empirical evidence which can begin to answer the above questions regarding the effects of parental thinking about development. These investigators compared the contributions of social status, parent mental health, and parent concepts of development to intellectual ability and social competence of 4-year old children. Significant correlations were found between parental level of thinking about development and both cognitive and social

competence. In comparing the relative importance of the independent variables, parent mental health was found to make an independent contribution to social competence but not to child intelligence scores, while parental concepts of development made an independent contribution to intelligence scores but not to social competence scores. These findings demonstrate a relationship between parental concepts of development and different aspects of child functioning. What remains to be determined however, is the influence that parental concepts of development may have on different aspects of parenting behavior itself. Consequently, in testing the primacy of parental contributions in predicting parental functioning, the specific characteristics to be addressed in the present study will be parents' conceptual level of thinking about and understanding of child development.

A second hypothesized determinant of parenting behavior is the amount of stress and support experienced by the family system (Belsky, 1984). The underlying assumption in studying the influence of stress on parental functioning is that every parent experiences stress which, depending on the amount, intensity, and resources available with which to cope, will determine whether dysfunctional parenting occurs (Abidin, 1983).

Recent research studies have begun to delineate the effects of stress on parenting behavior. In investigating the relationship between maternal stress and maternal discipline attitudes and practices, Jordan (1982) found that high levels of chronic stress were associated with increased use of "power oriented" techniques, i.e., those which assert power over the child such as physical punishment. Furthermore, in examining the effects of stressful life events and social support on mother-infant interactions, Crnic, Greenberg, Ragozin, Robinson, and Bosham (1983) found that life stress had a negative impact on maternal attitudes toward parenting as well as on mothers' ability to recognize and respond to their infant's subtle behavior cues. It was also found that infants whose mothers were under greater stress were less responsive and less clear in the cues they provided, suggesting that a circular feedback loop may have existed in such relationships. The authors propose that such mother-child relational difficulties may add to the degree of stress experienced by the mother, further perpetrating the stress loop and perhaps generating greater relationship difficulties given the cumulative effects of stress over time. Based on such empirical findings to date, it appears that amount of stress is an

important variable to be considered in influencing parental functioning.

The present study will seek to test Belsky's (1984) model in terms of the primacy of parental characteristics, in particular parent concepts of development, over stress factors in predicting child rearing practices. In order to gain a better understanding of the determinants of parental behavior and the extent of their influence, differences in parents' level of thinking about development and differences in the amount of stress experienced by parents will be compared in terms of their ability to predict reported differences in child rearing practices. It is hypothesized that both parental concepts of development and parental stress will influence parenting behavior to some degree, but that the personal beliefs regarding the process of development which parents maintain, as an intrinsic component of their personal psychological resources, will be a better predictor of their child rearing strategies than will the contextual sources of stress that parents frequently experience.

METHOD

Subject

A sample of 54 English-speaking parents was recruited from several community schools and services in the Rogers Park area of Chicago, Illinois which included the Rogers Park Family Network, Mundelein Lab School, St. Jerome's School, and St. Ignasius School. Only parents of children between the ages of 3-10 years old were asked to participate voluntarily in the present study.

Subject characteristics are presented in Table 1. The subjects who participated in this study were primarily white females (i.e. mothers) who had at least some college or a vocational school education, with 55% of the sample being college or professional school graduates. Their spouses also tended to have at least some college or vocational school training, with almost 75% being college or professional school graduates. The ages of parents ranged from 24-47 years old, with a mean age of 35.3 years and a median and modal age of 35. The majority of parents (71%) reported having no formal parent training or education within the last two years.

TABLE 1

Subject Characteristics

Subject Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
SEX		
Male	6	11.8
Female	45	88.2
RACE		
Caucasian	43	84.3
Black	3	5.9
Hispanic	3	5.9
Oriental	1	2.0
Asian	1	2.0
EDUCATION (mother)		
9-12th grade	3	5.9
Vocational or some college	20	39.2
College graduate	13	25.5
Graduate/Professional school	15	29.4
EDUCATION (father)		
9-12th grade	1	2.0
Vocational or some college	12	23.5
College graduate	12	23.5
Graduate/Professional school	26	51.0
FORMAL PARENT TRAINING		
Yes	15	29.4
No	36	70.6

The size of subjects' families ranged from having 1-6 children, with a mean number of 2.2 children and a median and mode of 2 children per family. In answering the study's questionnaires, parents were asked to focus upon only one of their children who was between the ages of 3-10 years old. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the children focused upon by their parents in answering the questionnaires were male and 39% were female. The mean age of the child focused upon in the present study was 5.7 years old, with a median age of 6 and a modal age of 4. Sixty-one percent (61%) were first-born children, 12% were middle children, and 27% were the youngest children in the family.

Materials

In addition to filling out a brief demographic statement, parents were asked to complete the following three standardized questionnaires:

(1) Concepts of Development Questionnaire (CODQ): The CODQ (Sameroff & Feil, 1983) assesses the levels of parental thinking and understanding of child development on a dichotomous scale ranging from "categorical" to "perspectivistic." At the "categorical" end, child behavior and development are viewed as being determined by single causes, such as constitution or environment.

At the "perspectivistic" end, child behavior is seen as the outcome of complex transactional processes between the individual child and the context in which his/her behavior occurs (Sameroff, 1982). The CODQ consists of 20 items, 10 items tapping the "categorical" level of thinking about development and 10 items tapping the "perspectivistic" level. Respondents are required to rate statements regarding child development on a 4-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The measure yields a "perspectivistic" score and a "categorical" score found by summing the weights assigned to scale points and dividing by 10. In the case of unanswered items (0.9%), weights were summed and divided by the total number of answered items per category. The measure also yields a total score found by subtracting the categorical score from the perspectivistic score, adding three (3.0), and dividing by two (2.0). All scores on the CODQ were transposed in a direction consistent with scores from the other test measures. Since the CODQ is a relatively new measure, no definitive information regarding its validity and reliability is as yet available. However it does appear to have face validity, and good internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .71).

(2) Parental Stress Index (PSI): The PSI (Abidin, 1983) is a screening and diagnostic assessment instrument designed to yield a measure of the relative magnitude of stress present in the parent-child system. It consists of 101 items which respondents must rate on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Nineteen additional items require respondents to check off specific stressful events which have been present in their lives within the past year. The measure takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

The PSI provides separate domain scores related to stressors associated with child characteristics, parent characteristics, and general life stress events. The Child Characteristics Domain includes measures of child adaptability/plasticity, acceptability of child to parent, child demandingness/degree of bother, mood, distractibility/activity, and child as a source of reinforcement to the parent. A raw score greater than or equal to 122 on this scale is indicative of a high amount of potentially dysfunctional stress due to certain characteristics of the child. According to Abidin (1983), high scores on this scale are associated with children who possess and exhibit qualities which make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting roles.

Parent characteristics assessed by the PSI include depression/guilt/unhappiness, attachment to the child, perceived restrictions imposed by the parental role, sense of competence as a parent, social isolation, relationship with spouse, and health. A raw score greater than or equal to 153 is considered to be high, and suggests that the sources of stress and potential dysfunction in the parent-child system may be related to dimensions of the parent's functioning (Abidin, 1983).

The PSI also yields a total stress score found by summing the scores from the Child Characteristics Domain and the Parent Characteristics Domain. The normal range for the PSI Total Stress Score lies between a raw score of 180-245, with a score greater than or equal to 250 ($\geq$ 260 involving a child age 3 or older) identifying parent-child systems which are under a high amount of stress and which may be at risk for the development of dysfunctional parenting behaviors and/or behavior problems in the child involved.

The Life Stress Scale is an optional scale which provides some index of the amount of stress outside of the parent-child relationship which the parent may also be experiencing currently. This scale includes events which can be perceived in both negative and positive ways, but which are potentially stressful events

nonetheless including death of a family member or friend, divorce, drug problem, marriage, pregnancy, new job, etc. A raw score of 17 or above is considered to be high. It should be noted that the Life Stress Scale Score is not included in the PSI Total Stress Score, but when high should be considered in conjunction with the PSI Total Stress Score, as such stress may tend to intensify the total stress which the parent is experiencing.

Subjects were required to complete all three subscales of the PSI. In cases of unanswered items (0.4%), the mean score for that subscale of child or parent characteristic was assigned and computed into the overall score for that category.

Evidence for concurrent, construct, discriminant, and factorial validity of the PSI has been demonstrated by numerous studies and is presented in Abidin (1983). The reliability coefficient for the Total Stress Score on the PSI is .95, and the stability of the PSI scales is supported by test-retest reliabilities obtained from several different research studies also discussed in Abidin (1983).

(3) Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR): The CRPR (Block, 1965) consists of 91 socialization relevant statements tapping various child rearing practices

employed by parents. The items are phrased, wherever possible, in the active voice to emphasize a behavioral orientation with respect to parenting. Reliability of the CRPR has been assessed in two test-retest studies, and construct validity of the CRPR has been assessed by comparing self-reported responses with actual maternal behavior towards the child as observed in three structured situations designed to tap achievement emphasis, modes and degree of control, and independence training (Block, 1965). The CRPR is commonly administered in a Q-sort format with a forced-choice, 7-step distribution ranging from ratings of "most descriptive" to "most undescriptive." However, in order to make administration and analysis of the CRPR more manageable and consistent with the formats of the other test measures, this measure was converted into questionnaire format in the present study. Furthermore, only a subset of the original items which comprise the CRPR served as the criterion of parenting behavior. This subset consisted of those child rearing practices found in the research literature to be most salient in terms of promoting ideal developmental outcome, and included items designed to tap (1) parental nurturance and positive affect, (2) discipline orientation, (3) independence training, (4) achievement stimulation, and

(5) encouragement of expression (Dreikurs, 1964; Baumrind, 1967; Coopersmith, 1967; Hoffman, 1970; McCall, Applebaum, & Hogarty, 1973; Baldwin, Cole, & Baldwin, 1982; Belsky, 1981, 1984). The final version of the modified CRPR Questionnaire consisted of a total of 40 items, eight items for each of the above five a priori factors identified. Thirty-four of the 40 items were taken directly from the original CRPR, and in order to counterbalance the number of items across factors, six new items were constructed by this investigator. The exact wording of some of the items was changed from the original CRPR version in order to have an equal number of positively and negatively phrased statements. In the questionnaire format, respondents were required to rate items on a 5-point scale ranging from "very descriptive" to "very undescriptive," based on how characteristic the items were of their actual parenting behavior. Weights were assigned to scale points and a mean score for each of the five a priori factors was computed. In cases of unanswered items (0.3%), the mean score for that factor was assigned and computed into the overall factor mean score.

Procedure

Permission was obtained from local community schools and services in the Rogers Park area of Chicago,

Illinois to allow this investigator to recruit volunteer subjects from their premises. Potential subjects from the Rogers Park Family Network were approached directly on the premises and in person by the investigator. Parents were informed verbally of the general nature of the present study, the procedures to be followed, and the time commitment involved. Confidentiality of the data provided was assured and inquiries regarding the research proceedings were addressed directly. Upon receiving verbal consent from the parents who voluntarily wished to participate, packets containing the research materials were then distributed in person to the subjects.

Subjects recruited through the school system (i.e., Mundelein Lab School, St. Jerome's School, St. Ignasius School) were contacted by the investigator via a letter explaining the details of the present study. This letter was distributed by school personnel to all children in preschool, kindergarten, and first through fifth grades. Attached to the letter was a consent form to be signed by those parents interested in participating in the study. Signed consent forms were returned to the school and were collected by the investigator. Packets containing research materials were then prepared for those parents who had volunteered

to participate in the study and were sent home with their child from the school premises.

The packets given or sent home to parents who had volunteered to be subjects consisted of the following materials: a cover letter introducing parents to the study and enumerating the details, a demographic information sheet, the Concepts of Development Questionnaire, the Parenting Stress Index, and the Child Rearing Practices Report complete with instructions, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of the data to the investigator's attention. All packet materials were number-coded to guarantee anonymity of the data provided by subjects. Furthermore, all questionnaires required the subjects to mark their answers directly on the test booklets so that separate answer sheets were not needed. All together, the questionnaires were estimated to take no more than one hour to complete by parents.

Upon return of the data, all measures were scored by this investigator. A total of 79 packets were distributed to parents, 54 (68%) of which were returned. Two returned packets had large amounts of missing data and were not included in the data analyses. Also one other subject was excluded due to an abnormally high score on the Parental Stress Index. Thus the final

sample included in the data analyses consisted of a total of 51 subjects.

RESULTS

Two preliminary analyses were conducted before the specific hypotheses of the study were tested. First, in order to determine the internal consistency of the dependent measure of parenting behavior, a Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the five a priori factor scales of the Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR). An alpha of .55 was obtained on Scale 1: Positive Affect, which assessed the degree of parental nurturance and general positive affect expressed towards the child. An alpha of .20 was obtained on Scale 2: Discipline, which tapped the discipline orientation of the parent. On Scale 3: Independence, which assessed the degree of independence training of the child engaged in by the parent, an alpha of .45 was obtained. An alpha of .56 was obtained on Scale 4: Achievement, which measured the extent to which parents stimulated a positive attitude towards achievement in their child. Finally, an alpha of .66 was obtained on Scale 5: Open Expression, which evaluated the degree to which parents encouraged their child to express their feelings and thoughts openly. Based on these findings, Scale 1: Positive Affect, Scale 3: Independence, Scale 4: Achievement, and Scale 5: Open Expression appear to

have adequate consistency. However, Scale 2: Discipline showed considerable inconsistency.

Next, the potential influence of demographic characteristics on parenting behavior was investigated. First, Pearson correlation coefficients between each of the demographic variables assessed in the present study and the mean scores on each of the five scales of the CRPR were examined for potential relationships. Parent characteristics such as sex, age, mother's education level, and experience with formal parenting skills training within the last two years were not correlated significantly with any of the five CRPR mean scale scores. Furthermore, no significant relationships were found between child characteristics such as sex or age and child rearing practices. However, the education level of fathers correlated significantly with CRPR Scale 1: Positive Affect (r = -.30, p = .05); the number of children within the family correlated significantly with Scale 4: Achievement (r = .30, p = .04); and both race of the parent (r = .43, p = .002) and birth order of the child (r = .33, p = .02) correlated significantly with Scale 5: Open Expression.

In order to determine whether differences in the above demographic variables are significantly associated with differences in parenting behavior, further analyses

were performed on those demographic variables found to be correlated significantly with the CRPR scales. To investigate group differences in the expression of positive affect towards the child (CRPR Scale 1) as a function of the education level of the father, an analysis of variance was performed. The variable Education-Father was recoded into the following three groups: 1) those with a high school education and/or some college or vocational training, 2) college graduates, and 3) graduate/professional school graduates, since a small amount of subjects in the groups with less than a college education prevented a finer breakdown. This ANOVA (Scale 1 x Education-Father) yielded a significant main effect for education ($F(2,48) = 3.76$, $p = .03$). Families in which the father had less than a complete college education scored higher (i.e., more negatively) on the scale assessing the expression of positive affect towards the child than did fathers with a college or professional school degree.

To investigate group differences in the emphasis placed on achievement (CRPR Scale 4) as a function of a number of children in the family, an ANOVA was performed. The variable Number of Children was recoded into three groups: 1) one child, 2) two children, and 3) three or more children in the family, since there

were not enough subjects in the groups with greater than three children to test them separately. This ANOVA (Scale 4 x Number of Children) was not significant ($F(2,48) = .65$, $p = .52$). No group differences in parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 4: Achievement were found as a result of the number of children in the family.

The variable Race, which correlated significantly with CRPR Scale 5: Open Expression, was recoded into two groups: 1) Caucasian and 2) Non-Caucasian, since there were not enough subjects in the separate Non-Caucasian groups to test them independently. A t-test between Race and Scale 5 was significant ($t(49) = -2.25$, $p = .03$). Caucasian parents had lower (i.e., more positive) mean scores on the scale assessing encouragement of open expression than did Non-Caucasian subjects. No further analyses were possible due to the small amount of subjects in the Non-Caucasian group.

Finally, an ANOVA was performed to determine whether group differences existed in the encouragement of open expression (CRPR Scale 5) as a function of the child's birth order (i.e., first-born, middle child, or youngest). This ANOVA (Scale 5 x Rank) was not significant. No group differences in parenting behavior

on CRPR Scale 5: Open Expression were found as a result of this demographic variable.

In order to test the hypothesis that both parental stress and conceptual understanding of child development are significant predictors of parenting behavior, multiple regression analyses were employed. First a Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted for each CRPR scale using the total scores from the two independent measures, i.e., the Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score (PSITSS) and the Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score (CODQTS). Then a Forced-Entry method was used which entered the variables into the regression equation in the opposite direction from that which resulted from the Stepwise method. This procedure was employed in order to determine whether or not the predictor variable entering first in the Stepwise method was masking a significant influence of the other predictor variable. In cases where both independent variables were found to be significant predictors of parenting behavior, their respective beta weights were compared and tested for significant differences in order to determine which of the two was weighted more heavily in predicting parenting behavior. A similar set of analyses was then conducted for each CRPR scale using the subscale scores from the

independent measures as predictor variables, i.e. PSI Child Domain Score (PSICDS), PSI Parent Domain Score (PSIPDS), PSI Life Stress Score (PSILSS), CODQ Perspectivistic Score (CODQPS) and CODQ Categorical Score (CODQCS).

The results from Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using the PSITSS and CODQTS as predictor variables of mean scores on CRPR Scale 1: Positive Affect are presented in Table 2. In the Stepwise selection method, the PSITSS was entered first and significantly accounted for approximately 12% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 6.71$, $p = .01$). Entered second, the CODQTS significantly accounted for appxoimately 27% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 8.73$, $p = .0006$). Using the Forced-Entry selection method, when entered first the CODQTS significantly accounted for approximately 10% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 5.48$, $p = .02$), while the PSITSS significantly accounted for 27% of the remaining variance ($F(2,48) = 8.73$, $p = .0006$). The difference between the standardized regression weights of the CODQTS and the PSITSS was not significant ($F(2,48) = .003$). Both the Parental Stress Index Total Score and the Concepts of Development Total Score were significant predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR

TABLE 2

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Predictors of Parenting Behavior: Positive Affect

Predicting Variables	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Stepwise	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Forced Entry
Total Scores:	1. PSITSS:	1. CODQTS:
PSITSS *	r^2 = .12	r^2 = .10
CODQTS **	F(1,49) = 6.71	F(1,49) = 5.48
	p = .01	p = .02
	2. CODQTS:	2. PSITSS:
	r^2 = .27	r^2 = .27
	F(2,48) = 8.73	F(2,48) = 8.73
	p = .0006	p = .0006
Subscale Scores:	1. PSIPDS:	1. CODQPS:
PSIPDS *	r^2 = .13	r^2 = .08
PSICDS *	F(1,49) = 7.58	F(1,49) = 4.45
PSILSS *	p = .008	p = .04
CODQPS **	2. CODQPS:	2. PSIPDS:
CODQCS **	r^2 = .25	r^2 = .25
	F(2,48) = 7.85	F(2,48) = 7.85
	p = .001	p = .001

*PSITSS: Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score
PSIPDS: Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score
PSICDS: Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score
PSILSS: Parental Stress Index Life Stress Score

**CODQTS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score
CODQPS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Perspectivistic Score
CODQCS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Categorical Score

Scale 1: Positive Affect, with neither of these variables being a significantly better predictor than the other.

Table 2 also presents the results of Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using the subscale scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 1. In the Stepwise selection method, the PSIPDS was entered first, significantly accounting for approximately 13% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 7.58$, $p = .008$). Entered second, the CODQPS significantly accounted for approximately 25% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 7.85$, $p = .001$). No other variables were eligible for entry into the regression equation. When using a Forced-Entry method of selection, the CODQPS significantly accounted for approximately 8% of the variance when entered first ($F(1,49) = 4.45$, $p = .04$), while the PSIPDS significantly accounted for approximately 25% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 7.85$, $P = .001$). The difference between the standardized beta weights of the CODQPS and the PSIPDS was not significant ($F(2,48) = .01$). The Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score and the Concepts of Development Perspectivistic Score were equally significant subscale predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 1: Positive Affect.

The results of Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using the total scores of the PSI and CODQ as predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 2: Discipline are presented in Table 3. In the Stepwise analysis, only the PSITSS was eligible for entry into the regression equation, significantly accounting for approximately 15% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 8.33$, $p = .006$). When the CODQTS was entered first in the Forced-Entry analysis, it accounted for only 3% of the variance, which was not significant ($F(1,49) = 1.40$, $p = .24$), while the PSITSS significantly accounted for appxoimately 20% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 6.04$, $p = .005$). Only the Parental Stress Index Total Score was found to be a significant predictor of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 2: Discipline.

Using the subscale scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 2 (see Table 3), it was found that only the PSIPDS was eligible for entry into the regression equation by the Stepwise selection method. This variable significantly accounted for 15% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 8.30$, $p = .006$. Since in previous analyses using the total scores, the CODQ Total Score was not found to be a significant predictor of parenting behavior on CRPR

TABLE 3

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Predictors of Parenting Behavior: Discipline

Predicting Variables	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Stepwise	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Forced Entry
Total Scores: PSITSS * CODQTS **	1. PSITSS: r^2= .15 F(1,49) = 8.33 p = .006 CODQTS: ns ***	1. CODQTS: r^2= .03 F(1,49) = 1.40 p = .24 2. PSITSS: r^2= .20 F(2,48) = 6.04 p = .005
Subscale Scores: PSIPDS * PSICDS * PSILSS * CODQPS ** CODQCS **	1. PSIPDS: r^2= .15 F(1,49) = 8.30 p = .006 PSICDS: ns PSILSS: ns CODQPS: ns CODQCS: ns	1. PSICDS: r^2= .10 F(1,49) = 5.46 p = .02 2. PSIPDS: r^2= .15 F(2,48) = 4.19 p = .02 1. PSILSS: r^2= .005 F(1,49) = .24 p = .63 2. PSIPDS: r^2= .15 F(2,48) = 4.08 p = .02

(continued)

TABLE 3 (continued)

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*PSITSS: Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score
PSIPDS: Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score
PSICDS: Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score
PSILSS: Parental Stress Index Life Stress Score

**CODQTS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score
CODQPS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Perspectivistic Score
CODQCS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Categorical Score

***ns: Not significant

Scale 2, CODQ subscales were not force-entered into the regression equation. However, in order to determine whether the PSIPDS was masking the effects of the other PSI subscale scores, the PSICDS and PSILSS were force-entered respectively into the equation. When force-entered first, the PSILSS did not significantly account for any variance (r^2 = .005; $F(1,49)$ = .24, p = 63). However, the PSICDS did significantly account for 10% of the variance when force-entered first ($F(1,49)$ = 5.46, p = .02). Due to the multicolinearity of the PSIPDS and PSICDS (Pearson r = .72, p = .000), the shared variance between parent characteristics (PSIPDS) and child characteristics (PSICDS) was given to the PSI Parent Domain Score in the Stepwise regression analysis, thereby masking the explanatory power of the PSI Child Domain Score. The Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score and the Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score were both significant subscale predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 2: Discipline.

The results of Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using the total scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 3: Independence are presented in Table 4. In the Stepwise analysis, only the PSITSS was eligible for entry into the regression equation, significantly accounting for

TABLE 4

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Predictors of Parenting Behavior: Independence

Predicting Variables	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Stepwise	Forced Entry
Total Scores:	1. PSITSS:	1. CODQTS:
PSITSS *	r^2 = .09	r^2 = .001
CODQTS **	F(1,49) = 5.03	F(1,49) = .05
	p = .03	p = .82
		2. PSITSS:
	CODQTS: ns ***	r^2 = .09
		F(2,48) = 2.48
		p = .09
Subscale Scores:	1. PSIPDS:	1. PSICDS:
PSIPDS *	r^2 = .10	r^2 = .06
PSICDS *	F(1,49) = 5.35	F(1,49) = 3.12
PSILSS *	p = .03	p = .08
CODQPS **		2. PSIPDS:
CODQCS **	PSICDS: ns	r^2 = .10
	PSILSS: ns	F(2,48) = 2.64
	CODQPS: ns	p = .08
	CODQCS: ns	
		1. PSILSS:
		r^2 = .0003
		F(1,49) = .02
		p = .90
		2. PSIPDS:
		r^2 = .10
		F(2,48) = 2.63
		p = .08

*PSITSS: Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score
PSIPDS: Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score
PSICDS: Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score
PSILSS: Parental Stress Index Life Stress Score

(continued)

TABLE 4 (continued)

**CODQTS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score
CODQPS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Perspectivistic Score
CODQCS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Categorical Score

***ns: Not significant

approximately 9% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 5.03$, $p = .03$). Using a Forced-Entry method of selection, the CODQTS did not significanty account for any variance ($r^2 = .001$; $F(1,49) = .05$, $p = .82$) when entered first. Forced-entered second, the PSITSS did not significantly account for the residual variance ($r^2 = .09$; $F(2,48) = 2.48$, $p = .09$). Based on these findings it appears that stress (PSITSS) is a significantly better predictor of parenting behavior in terms of independence training (CRPR Scale 3) than is parental understanding of development (CODQTS).

Using the subscale scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 3 (see Table 4), it was found that only the PSIPDS was eligible for entry into the regression equation by the Stepwise method. This variable significantly accounted for approximately 10% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 5.35$, $p = .03$). Since in previous analyses using the total scores of the independent measures, the CODQ was not found to be a significant predictor of parenting on CRPR Scale 3, no Forced-Entry analyses were performed using the CODQ subscales. However, in order to determine whether the PSIPDS was masking significant effects of the other two PSI subscales, the PSICDS and PSILSS were forced-entered respectively into the regression equation. In doing so,

neither the PSICDS (r^2 = .06; $F(1,49)$ = 3.12, p = .08) nor the PSILSS (r^2 = .0003; $F(1,49)$ = .02, p = .90) accounted significantly for the variance in the dependent variable. In speaking of independence training (CRPR Scale 3), stress (PSITSS) appears to be a better predictor of this parenting behavior than a parent's conceptual understanding of child development (CODQTS). And in particular, it is stress which emanates from characteristics of the parent (PSIPDS) which is a predictor of parenting behavior in terms of independence training.

The results from Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using total scores of the PSI and CODQ as predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 4: Achievement are presented in Table 5. In the Stepwise analysis, the PSITSS was entered first and significantly accounted for approximately 12% of the variance ($F(1,49)$ = 6.89, p = .01). Entered second, the CODQTS significantly accounted for approximately 24% of the remaining variance ($F(2,48)$ = 7.68, p .001). Using a Forced-Entry selection method to enter the CODQTS into the regression equation first, it was found that by itself the CODQTS significantly accounted for approximately 8% of the variance ($F(1,49)$ = 4.16, p = .05), while the PSITSS signifcantly accounted for

TABLE 5

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Predictors of Parenting Behavior: Achievement

	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis	
Predicting Variables	Stepwise	Forced Entry
Total Scores:	1. PSITSS:	1. CODQTS:
PSITSS *	r^2 = .12	r^2 = .08
CODQTS **	F(1,49) = 6.89	F(1,49) = 4.16
	p = .01	p = .05
	2. CODQTS:	2. PSITSS:
	r^2 = .24	r^2 = .24
	F(2,48) = 7.68	F(2,48) = 7.68
	p = .001	p = .001
Subscale Scores:	1. PSIPDS:	1. CODQPS:
PSIPDS *	r^2 = .13	r^2 = .12
PSICDS *	F(1,49) = 7.51	F(1,49) = 6.84
PSILSS *	p = .009	p = .01
CODQPS **	2. CODQPS:	2. PSIPDS:
CODQCS **	r^2 = .29	r^2 = .29
	F(2,48) = 9.84	F(2,48) = 9.84
	p = .0003	p = .0003

*PSITSS: Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score
PSIPDS: Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score
PSICDS: Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score
PSILSS: Parental Stress Index Life Stress Score

**CODQTS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score
CODQPS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Perspectivistic Score
CODQCS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Categorical Score

approximately 24% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 7.68$, $p = .001$). The difference between the standardized beta weights of the PSITSS and CODQTS was not significant ($F(2,48) = .02$). Based on these findings, both parental stress (PSITSS) and conceptual understanding of child development (CODQTS) are equally significant predictors of parenting behavior in terms of stimulating achievement (CRPR Scale 4).

Using the subscale scores of the PSI and CODQ as predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 4 (see Table 5), it was found that the PSIPDS entered first into the Stepwise multiple regression equation, accounting significantly for 13% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 7.51$, $p = .009$). Entered second, the CODQPS significantly accounted for approximately 29% of the remaining variance ($F(2,48) = 9.84$, $p = .0003$). No other subscale variables were eligible for entry into the equation. When using a Forced-Entry method of selection to enter the CODQPS into the equation first, this variable significantly accounted for approximately 12% of the variance by itself ($F(1,49) = 6.84$, $p = .01$), while the PSIPDS significantly accounted for 29% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 9.84$, $p = .0003$). The difference between the standardized regression weights of the PSIPDS and CODQPS was not significant ($F(2,48) =$

.0007). Both stress which emanates from parent characteristics in particular (PSIPDS) and a perspectivistic level of conceptualizing development (CODQPS) are equally significant predictors of parenting behavior in terms of encouraging achievement (CRPR Scale 4).

The results of Stepwise and Forced-Entry multiple regression analyses using the total scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 5: Open Expression are presented in Table 6. In the Stepwise analysis, only the CODQTS was eligible for entry into the regression equation, significantly accounting for approximately 16% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 9.30$, $p = .004$). Using a Forced-Entry method of selection, the PSITSS did not significantly account for any variance ($r^2 = .004$; $F(1,49) = .20$, $p = .66$) when entered first, while the CODQTS did significantly account for approximately 16% of the residual variance when entered second ($F(2,48) = 4.56$, $p = .02$). Based on these findings, it appears that a parent's conceptual understanding of child development (CODQTS) is a better predictor of parenting behavior in terms of encouraging open expression (CRPR Scale 5) than is parental stress (PSITSS).

TABLE 6

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Predictors of Parenting Behavior: Open Expression

Predicting Variables	Type of Multiple Regression Analysis: Stepwise	Forced Entry
Total Scores:	1. CODQTS:	1. PSITSS:
PSITSS *	r^2 = .16	r^2 = .004
CODQTS **	F(1,49) = 9.30	F(1,49) = .20
	p = .004	p = .66
		2. CODQTS:
	PSITSS: ns***	r^2 = .16
		F(2,48) = 4.56
		p = .02
Subscale Scores	1. CODQPS:	1. CODQCS:
PSIPDS *	r^2 = .14	r^2 = .10
PSICDS *	F(1,49) = 8.22	F(1,49) = 5.46
PSILSS *	p = .006	p = .02
CODQPS **		2. CODQPS:
CODQCS **	CODQCS: ns	r^2 = .17
	PSIPDS: ns	F(2,48) = 4.86
	PSICDS: ns	p = .01
	PSILSS: ns	

*PSITSS: Parental Stress Index Total Stress Score
PSIPDS: Parental Stress Index Parent Domain Score
PSICDS: Parental Stress Index Child Domain Score
PSILSS: Parental Stress Index Life Stress Score

**CODQTS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Total Score
CODQPS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Perspectivistic Score
CODQCS: Concepts of Development Questionnaire Categorical Score

***ns: Not significant

Using the subscale scores of the PSI and CODQ to predict parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 5 (see Table 6), it was found that only the CODQPS was eligible to be entered into the Stepwise method. This varaible accounted for approximately 14% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 8.22$, $p = .006$). Since in previous multiple regression analyses using the total scores of the independent measures, the PSI was not found to be a significant predictor of parent behavior on CRPR Scale 5, no Forced-Entry analyses were performed using the PSI subscales. However, in order to determine whether the CODQPS was masking a significant effect of the CODQCS in the Stepwise analysis, the latter variable was force-entered into the regression equation first. In doing so, by itself the CODQCS significantly accounted for 10% of the variance ($F(1,49) = 5.46$, $p = .02$), while the CODQPS significantly accounted for approximately 17% of the residual variance ($F(2,48) = 4.86$, $p = .01$). Due to the multicolinearity of the CODQPS and CODQCS (Pearson $r = -.47$, $p = .001$), the shared variance between perspectivistic scores and categorical scores was given to the CODQ Perspectivistic Score in the Stepwise regression analysis, thereby masking the explanatory power of the CODQ Categorical Score. The Concepts of Development Perspectivistic Score and the Concepts of

Development Categorical Score were both significant subscale predictors of parenting behavior on CRPR Scale 5: Open Expression.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the roles of parents' conceptual understanding of child development and amount of stress in influencing child rearing practices. Parenting behavior was analyzed in terms of the degree to which parents expressed positive affect to their child, adopted a rational and authoritative approach to discipline, fostered independence, stimulated achievement, and encouraged their child to express openly their feelings and thoughts. Both conceptual thinking and stress were hypothesized to be able to significantly predict these parenting behaviors. Moreover, it was further hypothesized that parents' conceptual level of viewing development, as an intrinsic component of the parent's personal resources, would be a better predictor of parenting behaviors than would stress factors. Conceptual thinking about development and stress, as measured in this study, were found to be equally important determinants of the expression of positive affect and achievement stimulation. Stress was found to be a better predictor of discipline practices and independence training, whereas conceptual thinking was found to be a better predictor of encouraging open expression.

With respect to the expression of positive affect towards children, as hypothesized it was found that both stress factors and conceptual understanding of development were significant predictors of this parenting behavior. In particular, it was found that stress which emanated from parental characteristics, and a perspectivistic level of conceptualizing development were the specific components of these independent variables which contributed most to the prediction of expression of positive affect. However, neither independent variable predicted parental expression of positive affect significantly better than the other. Thus, it appears that both parental stress and conceptual level of viewing development are equally important variables which play an influential role in determining the extent to which parents are nurturing, warm, and generally positive in their interactions with their children.

In terms of discipline practices, only stress was found to be a significant predictor of this parenting behavior. In particular, stress emanating from both child and parent characteristics contributed equally to explaining the way in which parents manage their child's behavior. Contrary to expectation, the level of a parent's conceptual understanding of child development

was not found to be a significant determinant of discipline practices. One must be cautious in interpreting these findings and making any definitive statements about the factors which significantly influence discipline practices, since the scale evaluating this parenting behavior (CRPR Scale 2) had poor internal consistency. Certain items on this scale, especially those having to do with consistency in relation to applying discipline techniques, were answered with considerable variation by subjects in the present study. In future research on the factors which influence parents' approach to discipline, it is suggested that actual child-management techniques be separated from consistency in applying them when assessing discipline practices.

On a measure of the extent to which parents train their child to be independent, only parental stress was found to be a significant determinant. Furthermore, it was only stress wich emanated from characteristics of the parent in particular which contributed most to the prediction of this parenting behavior. Contrary to expectation, parental conceptualization of child development did not significantly influence the extent to which parents fostered a sense of independence and personal responsibility in their child. Once again,

these findings may be questionable given the somewhat depressed level of internal consistency of CRPR Scale 3. One factor which may have tempered the internal consistency of this scale has to do with the fact that a majority of the children focused on in answering the questionnaire were below six years of age. Parents may have had difficulty in answering general questions about independence training for children of such a young age.

In terms of parents stimulating achievement, both conceptual understanding of child development and stress were significant determining factors. In particular, it was a perspectivistic level of understanding development, and stress as a function of parent characteristics which were found to be the specific components of the independent variables which best predicted parenting behavior with respect to achievement emphasis. However, neither stress nor conceptual understanding of development predicted this parenting behavior significantly better than the other. It appears that parental conceptualization of development and stress experiences are equally important determinants of how parents stimulate and emphasize the achievement and accomplishments of their children.

Finally, with respect to encouraging a child to openly express his/her feelings and ideas, only parental

level of conceptualizing child development was found to be a significant determining factor, with both perspectivistic and categorical scores being equally able to predict this parenting behavior, although in opposite directions. Stress was not found to be a significant determining factor of whether or not parents encourage their child to speak openly about their feelings and thoughts. It is interesting to note that this was the only dimension of parenting behavior that was best predicted by a parent's level of thinking about development. It may be that parental value of and work on encouraging open expression from their child entails the ability to think about and view development in a more conceptually abstract and integrative fashion than is true for other parenting behaviors. Extending this line of reasoning to the role of conceptual level of thinking in determining other child rearing practices, some measure of flexible and abstract thinking about development may be required for parents to work on being positive in their interactions with their child and in encouraging achievement in a positive fashion. In contrast, since conceptual thinking about development did not significantly predict parenting behavior with respect to discipline and independence training, perhaps these behaviors are more automatic and not as dependent

on one's capacity and tendency to reflect about development in an abstract and integrative manner.

It is also interesting to note the significant influence of stress factors across almost all dimensions of parenting behavior examined in the present study with the exception of one (i.e., open expression). Although stress was hypothesized to significantly influence parenting behaviors to some extent, it was not expected to be equally as good or a better predictor of child rearing practices than parental conceptualization of development. However, in the present study stress was found to be an equally important determinant of parenting behavior in terms of expressing positive affect and achievement emphasis, and was found to be a better predictor of parenting behavior in terms of discipline and independence training than was parents' level of conceptual thinking about development. One possible explanation of the significant and almost widespread influence of stress factors demonstrated in the present study might have to do with how acute versus chronic the reported stress experiences were. While situational and temporary stressors that are frequently experienced by all parents might potentially have some impact on parenting behavior, one might reasonably expect chronic stressors to have a more taxing impact on

parental functioning. Since no measure of chronicity of stress factors was included in the present study, there is no way of telling whether the kinds of stressors which significantly influenced parenting behavior to the degree demonstrated were of a situational and temporary or more ongoing and chronic nature. Future research investigating the role of stress in influencing child rearing practices should attempt to better differentiate between these two kinds of stress and their effects on behavior.

In addition to considering the duration of stress factors, the specific source of stress might have a differential impact on parental functioning. In every case where overall stress factors were found to have a significant impact on parenting behavior, it was the stress which emanated from parental characteristics in particular which contributed most to the determination of child rearing practices. Stress as a function of child characteristics was found to have an equally significant influence only in predicting discipline practices. Furthermore, general life stressors did not significantly contribute to the prediction of any measure of parenting behavior. Given the particular dimensions of parental stress characteristics that were assessed in the present study (i.e., depression,

attachment, role restriction, sense of competence, marital satisfaction, social isolation, and health), coupled with the likelihood that some of these stressors may have been of a more longstanding duration than originally expected, raises the possibility that something more inherent and intrinsic to the individual is accounting for the equally significant influence of parental stress factors across almost all categories of parental behavior. The amount or intensity of stressful life events may not be as important a variable in determining child rearing behavior as the parent's emotional response to such circumstances. This latter variable is more representative of a component of one's personal psychological resources. This might best explain why both parental stress factors and conceptual understanding of child development were often found to have an equally significant effect on parenting behavior, since both measure some aspect of the parent's personal psychological contributions which Belsky (1984) hypothesizes as being primary over contextual sources of stress and child characteristics in determining parental functioning. Clearly the issue of personal parental characteristics is an important variable which influences child rearing behavior. However, these characteristics are multi-dimensional, consisting of

both cognitive and emotional features, which need to be further delineated. The present study revealed the influential importance of only two such characteristics: one's cognitive perspective regarding child development and one's emotional reaction to stress. Future work in this area must address the issue of parent's psychological contributions to the parenting role in a larger perspective which encompasses the multiple components of one's personality functioning.

However, despite the limited scope of the present investigation, the findings have important clinical implications for the enhancement of parenting skills and/or the treatment of dysfunctional parenting. Since both conceptual understanding of child development and stress, or more clearly, response to stress, were found to be significant predictors of several dimensions of parenting behavior, interventions which provide some specific attention to these areas might be more effective in improving or rectifying parental functioning than those which focus solely upon child-management skills training. It would seem that parents might have difficulty applying new child-management techniques if they are derived from theories of child development which conflict with the parent's own conceptualization of development. Thus, some attention

might also be given profitably to having parents adjust their ideas about development to be more compatible with the specific child-management techniques being taught, as well as to helping parents conceptualize development in a more comprehensive and integrative fashion in general. Furthermore, in addition to teaching better parenting skills, some parents may also benefit from stress-management and/or coping skills training. This may be particularly ideal for parents who are experiencing multiple stress factors, since research has demonstrated that preoccupation with other problems such as marital dissatisfaction, illness, depression, financial problems, etc. interferes with the ability of parents to use the material presented in parent training classes (Swetnam, Peterson, & Clark, 1983). Finally, the potential that group training approaches have for providing parents with social support should not be overlooked, since such support may serve to buffer the deleterious effects of stress on parental functioning.

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APPENDIX A

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

Are you Male _____ or Female _____?

In what year were you born? _____

Are you: Caucasian _____ Hispanic _____

Black _____ Oriental _____

Other (specify) _____

How many children do you have? _____

How old is your oldest child? _____

How old is your youngest child? _____

Have you participated in any formal parenting education programs within the last two years? yes _____ no _____

If yes, please identify the type of program _____

_____

What was the experience like for you? _____

_____

_____

CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire asks for your opinions about different aspects of child-rearing. Please give your own opinions and do not worry about what others may think. You will probably agree with some statements and disagree with others. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions since they are all matters of opinion. In addition, your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality.

Read each item carefully and, when you are sure you understand it, place an X in the space which best expresses your feelings about the statement. Do not spend much time on any item. Try to answer every question.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Children have to be treated differently as they grow older.	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. Parents must keep to their standards and rules no matter what their child is like.	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. It is not easy to define a good home because it is made up of many different things.	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. Fathers cannot raise their children as well as mothers.	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. The mischief that 2-year-olds get into is part of a passing stage they'll grow out of.	( )	( )	( )	( )

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. A child who isn't toilet-trained by 3 years of age must have something wrong with him.	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. Parents need to be sensitive to the needs of their children.	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. Girls tend to be easier babies to take care of than are boys.	( )	( )	( )	( )
9. Difficult babies will grow out of it.	( )	( )	( )	( )
10. There's not much anyone can do to help emotionally disturbed children.	( )	( )	( )	( )
11. Children's problems seldom have a single cause.	( )	( )	( )	( )
12. The father's role is to provide the discipline in the family and the mother's role is to give love and attention to the children.	( )	( )	( )	( )

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Parents can be turned off by a fussy child so that they are unable to be as nice as they would like.	( )	( )	( )	( )
14. A child's success at school depends on how much his mother taught him at home.	( )	( )	( )	( )
15. There is no one right way to raise children.	( )	( )	( )	( )
16. Boy babies are less affectionate than girl babies.	( )	( )	( )	( )
17. First-born children are usually treated differently than are later-born children.	( )	( )	( )	( )
18. An easy baby will grow up to be a good child.	( )	( )	( )	( )
19. Parents change in response to their children.	( )	( )	( )	( )
20. Babies have to be taught to behave themselves or they will be bad later.	( )	( )	( )	( )

CHILD REARING PRACTICES REPORT

Directions:

In trying to gain more understanding of parenting, it would be useful to know what is important to you as a parent and what kinds of methods you use in raising your child. This questionnaire asks you to rate statements on the degree to which they are indicative of your child-rearing practices. Please try to answer all of the items by circling the number which corresponds best to how descriptive or undescriptive the statement is of your actual behavior or feelings in relation to parenting your child.

1 - Very Descriptive (VD)

2 - Descriptive (D)

3 - Neither Descriptive nor Undescriptive (N)

4 - Undescriptive (UD)

5 - Very Undescriptive (VU)

Jean H. Block
Institute of Human Development
University of California, Berkeley

		(VD)	(D)	(N)	(UD)	(VU)
1.	I make sure my child knows that I appreciate what he tries or accomplishes.....	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I usually listen to and take into account my child's preference and suggestions in making plans for the family.....	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I respect my child's opinions and encourage him to express them.....	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I punish my child by taking away a priviledge he otherwise would have had.....	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I let my child make many decisions for himself.....	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I believe spanking my child to be the best way of disciplining.....	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I talk it over and reason with my child when he misbehaves.....	1	2	3	4	5
8.	If my child gets into trouble, I expect him to handle the problem mostly by himself.....	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I believe in praising a child when he is good and think it gets better results than punishing him when he is bad.....	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I continually push my child to do better, rather than paying too much attention to his actual accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5

	(VD)	(D)	(N)	(U)	(VU)
11. I am not usually easy-going and relaxed with my child.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. I encourage my child to always do his best.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. I believe a child should be seen and not heard.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. I encourage my child to be curious, and explore, and question things.....	1	2	3	4	5
15. I believe that scolding and criticism make my child improve.....	1	2	3	4	5
16. I encourage my child to be independent of me.....	1	2	3	4	5
17. I threaten punishment more often than I actually give it.....	1	2	3	4	5
18. I often do things for my child that he is capable of doing himself.....	1	2	3	4	5
19. I make every effort to do things which my child thinks are important.....	1	2	3	4	5
20. I help my child when he is being teased by his friends.....	1	2	3	4	5
21. I joke and play with my child.....	1	2	3	4	5
22. I try to stop my child from playing rough games or doing things where he might get hurt.....	1	2	3	4	5

	(VD)	(D)	(N)	(U)	(VU)
23. I prefer that my child not try things if there is a chance he will fail.....	1	2	3	4	5
24. I teach my child he is responsible for what happens to him.....	1	2	3	4	5
25. I sometimes tease and make fun of my child.....	1	2	3	4	5
26. I punish my child by putting him off somewhere by himself for awhile....	1	2	3	4	5
27. I spend a lot of time teaching my child new things.....	1	2	3	4	5
28. I often compare my child's performance to one of his more competent siblings or peers.....	1	2	3	4	5
29. I believe that too much affection and tenderness can harm or weaken a child.....	1	2	3	4	5
30. I often push my child to do things that he does not like and is not good at..	1	2	3	4	5
31. I do not allow my child to say bad things about others.....	1	2	3	4	5
32. I do not allow my child to question my decisions....	1	2	3	4	5
33. I let my child know how ashamed and disappointed I am when he does not do as well as I expect...	1	2	3	4	5

	(VD)	(D)	(N)	(U)	(VU)
34. I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my child often...	1	2	3	4	5
35. I encourage my child to talk about his troubles..	1	2	3	4	5
36. I have strict, well-established rules for my child.....	1	2	3	4	5
37. I do not feel a child should always be given comfort and understanding when he is scared or upset.....	1	2	3	4	5
38. I allow my child to get angry with me.....	1	2	3	4	5
39. I teach my child to keep control of his feelings at all times.....	1	2	3	4	5
40. My child and I have warm, intimate times together..	1	2	3	4	5

PARENTING STRESS INDEX

Directions:

In answering the following questions, please focus on only one of your children if you have more than one child.

How old is the child that you will focus on in answering these questions _____?

Is this child a male _____ or a female _____?

The questions on the following pages ask you to mark an answer which best describes your feelings. While you may not find an answer which exactly states your feelings, please mark the answer which comes closest to describing how you feel. Your first reaction to each question should be your answer. Please mark the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number which best matches how you feel. If you are not sure, please circle #3.

(continued)

1 - Strongly Agree

2 - Agree

3 - Not Sure

4 - Disagree

5 - Strongly Disagree

Richard R. Abidin
Institute of Clinical Psychology
University of Virginia

1. When my child wants something, my child usually keeps trying to get it.
2. My child is so active that it exhausts me.
3. My child appears disorganized and is easily distracted.
4. Compared to most, my child has more difficulty concentrating and paying attention.
5. My child will often stay occupied with a toy for more than 10 minutes.
6. My child wanders away much more than I expected.
7. My child is much more active than I expected.
8. My child squirms and kicks a great deal when being dressed or bathed.
9. My child can be easily distracted from wanting something.
10. My child rarely does things for me that make me feel good.
11. Most times I feel that my child likes me and wants to be close to me.
12. Sometimes I feel my child doesn't like me and doesn't want to be close to me.
13. My child smiles at me much less than I expected.
14. When I do things for my child I get the feeling that my efforts are not appreciated very much.
15. Which statement best describes your child?
    1. almost always likes to play with me,
    2. sometimes likes to play with me,
    4. usually doesn't like to play with me,
    5. almost never likes to play with me.
16. My child cries and fusses:
    1. much less than I had expected,
    2. less than I expected,
    3. about as much as I expected,
    4. much more than I expected,
    5. it seems almost constant.
17. My child seems to cry or fuss more often than most children.
18. When playing, my child doesn't often giggle or laugh.
19. My child generally wakes up in a bad mood.
20. I feel that my child is very moody and easily upset.
21. My child looks a little different than I expected and it bothers me at times.
22. In some areas my child seems to have forgotten past learnings and has gone back to doing things characteristic of younger children.

23. My child doesn't seem to learn as quickly as most children.

24. My child doesn't seem to smile as much as most children.

25. My child does a few things which bother me a great deal.

26. My child is not able to do as much as I expected.

27. My child does not like to be cuddled or touched very much.

28. When my child came home from the hospital, I had doubtful feelings about my ability to handle being a parent.

29. Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be.

30. I feel capable and on top of things when I am caring for my child.

31. Compared to the average child, my child has a great deal of difficulty in getting used to changes in schedules or changes around the house.

32. My child reacts very strongly when something happens that my child doesn't like.

33. Leaving my child with a babysitter is usually a problem.

34. My child gets upset easily over the smallest thing.

35. My child easily notices and overreacts to loud sounds and bright lights.

36. My child's sleeping or eating schedule was much harder to establish than I expected.

37. My child usually avoids a new toy for a while before beginning to play with it.

38. It takes a long time and it is very hard for my child to get used to new things.

39. My child doesn't seem comfortable when meeting strangers.

40. When upset, my child is:
    1. easy to calm down,
    2. harder to calm down than I expected,
    4. very difficult to calm down,
    5. nothing I do helps to calm my child.

41. I have found that getting my child to do something or stop doing something is:
    1. much harder than I expected,
    2. somewhat harder than I expected,
    3. about as hard as I expected,
    4. somewhat easier than I expected,
    5. much easier than I expected.

42. Think carefully and count the number of things which your child does that bothers you. For example: dawdles, refuses to listen, overactive, cries, interrupts, fights, whines, etc. Please fill in the number which includes the number of things you counted.
    1. 1-3
    2. 4-5
    3. 6-7
    4. 8-9
    5. 10+

43. When my child cries it usually lasts:
    1. less than 2 minutes,
    2. 2-5 minutes,
    3. 5-10 minutes,
    4. 10-15 minutes,
    5. more than 15 minutes.

44. There are some things my child does that really bother me a lot.

45. My child has had more health problems than I expected.

46. As my child has grown older and become more independent, I find myself more worried that my child will get hurt or into trouble.

47. My child turned out to be more of a problem than I had expected.

48. My child seems to be much harder to care for than most.

49. My child is always hanging on me.

50. My child makes more demands on me than most children.

51. I can't make decisions without help.

52. I have had many more problems raising children than I expected.

53. I enjoy being a parent.

54. I feel that I am successful most of the time when I try to get my child to do or not do something.

55. Since I brought my last child home from the hospital, I find that I am not able to take care of this child as well as I thought I could. I need help.

56. I often have the feeling that I cannot handle things very well.

57. When I think about myself as a parent I believe:
    1. I can handle anything that happens,
    2. I can handle most things pretty well,
    3. sometimes I have doubts, but find that I handle most things without any problems,
    4. I have some doubts about being able to handle things,
    5. I don't think I handle things very well at all.

58. I feel that I am:

1. a very good parent.
2. a better than average parent.
3. an average parent.
4. a person who has some trouble being a parent.
5. not very good at being a parent.

59. What were the highest levels in school or college you and the child's father/mother have completed?
Mother:

1. 1-8th grade
2. 9-12th grade
3. Vocational or some college
4. College graduate
5. Graduate or professional school

60. Father:

1. 1-8th grade
2. 9-12th grade
3. Vocational or some college
4. College graduate
5. Graduate or professional school

61. How easy is it for you to understand what your child wants or needs?

1. very easy,
2. easy,
3. somewhat difficult,
4. it is very hard,
5. I usually can't figure out what the problem is.

62. It takes a long time for parents to develop close, warm feelings for their children.

63. I expected to have closer and warmer feelings for my child than I do and this bothers me.

64. Sometimes my child does things that bother me just to be mean.

65. When I was young, I never felt comfortable holding or taking care of children.

66. My child knows I am his or her parent and wants me more than other people.

67. The number of children that I have now is too many.

68. Most of my life is spent doing things for my child.

69. I find myself giving up more of my life to meet my children's needs than I ever expected.

70. I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a parent.

71. I often feel that my child's needs control my life.

72. Since having this child I have been unable to do new and different things.

73. Since having a child I feel that I am almost never able to do things that I like to do.

74. It is hard to find a place in our home where I can go to be by myself.

75. When I think about the kind of parent I am, I often feel guilty or bad about myself.

76. I am unhappy with the last purchase of clothing I made for myself.

77. When my child misbehaves or fusses too much I feel responsible, as if I didn't do something right.

78. I feel everytime my child does something wrong it is really my fault.

79. I often feel guilty about the way I feel towards my child.

80. There are quite a few things that bother me about my life.

81. I felt sadder and more depressed than I expected after leaving the hospital with my baby.

82. I wind up feeling guilty when I get angry at my child and this bothers me.

83. After my child had been home from the hospital for about a month, I noticed that I was feeling more sad and depressed than I had expected.

84. Since having my child, my spouse (male/female friend) has not given me as much help and support as I expected.

85. Having a child has caused more problems than I expected in my relationship with my spouse (male/female friend).

86. Since having a child my spouse (or male/female friend) and I don't do as many things together.

87. Since having my child, my spouse (or male/female friend) and I don't spend as much time together as a family as I had expected.

88. Since having my last child, I have had less interest in sex.

89. Having a child seems to have increased the number of problems we have with in-laws and relatives.

90. Having children has been much more expensive than I had expected.

91. I feel alone and without friends.

92. When I go to a party I usually expect not to enjoy myself.

93. I am not as interested in people as I used to be.

94. I often have the feeling that other people my own age don't particularly like my company.

95. When I run into a problem taking care of my children I have a lot of people to whom I can talk to get help or advice.

96. Since having children I have a lot fewer chances to see my friends and to make new friends.

97. During the past six months I have been sicker than usual or have had more aches and pains than I normally do.

98. Physically, I feel good most of the time.

99. Having a child has caused changes in the way I sleep.

100. I don't enjoy things as I used to.

101. Since I've had my child:
    1. I have been sick a great deal,
    2. I haven't felt as good,
    4. I haven't noticed any change in my health,
    5. I have been healthier.

STOP HERE — unless asked to do items below

During the last 12 months, have any of the following events occurred in your immediate family? Please check on the answer sheet any that have happened.

102. Divorce

103. Marital reconciliation

104. Marriage

105. Separation

106. Pregnancy

107. Other relative moved into household

108. Income increased substantially (20% or more)

109. Went deeply into debt

110. Moved to new location

111. Promotion at work

112. Income decreased substantially

113. Alcohol or drug problem

114. Death of close family friend

115. Began new job

116. Entered new school

117. Trouble with superiors at work

118. Trouble with teachers at school

119. Legal problems

120. Death of immediate family member

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Adelaide Molaro has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Jill Nagy-Reich, Director
Associate Professor, Psychology, Loyola

Dr. John M. Paolella
Clinical Associate Professor, Psychology, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

11-25-86
Date

Jill M. Reich
Director's Signature