

Research Observations about Parenting Styles

Paternal

More often holds baby at arms length, makes eye contact, tosses in air, turns her back against his chest or props her shoulder, underscoring a sense of freedom and exploration

Spend more time with infant in play

Pick up their infant 50% of time just to "make something happen"

Less predictable and more activating in physical style and interactions

Will stress physical risk-taking

Will play to push the child to higher level, to challenge the child to take risks

More likely to promote young child's intellectual and social development through physical play

Play is less predictable, following activation-exploration themes

Offers less immediate support in face of child's frustration, thus promoting adaptive problem-solving competencies

Disciplines with an interest in the societal bottom-line outcome

Teaches through example, emphasizing lessons learned from experience

Maternal

More often picks up her infant, wraps baby close to breasts, limits movements, underscoring a sense of comfort, calm, warmth, and security

Spend more time with infant in physical care

Most times pick up their infant to tend to their care.

Follow personal established patterns of physical style and interactions

Will stress emotional security and personal safety

Inclined to play at the child's level. Will let child direct the play, to be in charge, to proceed at child's own pace

More likely to promote intellectual and social development through talking and teaching while care giving

Play is more conventional, employing traditional games, songs and themes.

Likely to intervene more quickly in face of child's frustration

Disciplines with focus upon impact of behavior on emotional relationships

Teaches with focus on the process of learning

Promote exploratory freedom

Promote emotional awareness

Promote independence outside the home

Promote independence inside the home

Tend to focus on child's instrumental behaviors-doing

Tend to focus on child's expressive behaviors-feeling

Emphasize autonomy and independence even in early years

More ambivalent about autonomy and independence until elementary years

1) Describe three observations about variations in parenting styles that you learned today.

2) What workplace practices or policies would you like to see adopted to recognize and respect differences in maternal and paternal parenting styles?

1. What do mothers contribute toward the development of their daughters?

2. What do mothers contribute toward the development of their sons?

3. What do fathers contribute toward the development of their daughters?

4. What do fathers contribute toward the development of their sons?

Discussion Points

Some researchers observe that mother behavior has clear initiating stages. They say for many mothers it begins with the delivery of the placenta

Father behavior varies much more, since fatherhood is more a social construct than it is a biological construct. They report that is a unique moment for each father-child pair.

At six weeks, infants can distinguish their fathers' voice from their mothers' voice. While a quiet and alert infant will attend more quickly to a mother's voice, an upset or fretting infant will calm more readily to a fathers voice.

In a split screen study of 8 week-old infants seated comfortably, researchers noted significant differences in the infant's response to an approaching parent.

When infant sees her mom approaching, her eyes narrow, her shoulders relax, and her heartbeat and respiration decrease. The infant becomes calm in the presence of her mother.

When infant sees her dad approaching, her eyes widen, her shoulders rise, and heartbeat and respiration increase. The infant becomes stimulated in the presence of her father.

By one month of age, a mother has a distinctive way of holding her baby, and she holds him that way 9 times out of 10.

A father on the other hand will pick up his infant 9 different ways out of 10.

A mother will typically use objects from her environment to interact with her infant- a toy, game, book, doll, puzzle, etc.

A father will typically make use of his body when interacting with his infant- he becomes the jungle gym, monkey bars, rocking horse, piggy back, roughhousing, tickling, wrestling, etc.

Mothers tend to simplify and slow their speech to get and hold their toddler's attention.

Fathers use bigger words and longer sentences spoken in less rhythmic sequences, perhaps showing a reluctance to baby his child.

When the child confronts a novel situation, a dog, a stranger, a new toy, moms instinctively move closer, offering the reassurance of her familiar presence.

In the same situation, fathers tend to stay back and allow the child to explore it for herself. He typically stands three times the distance that mom will.

One researcher reported that parents' response to a question regarding the nicest thing about having children.

Mothers allude to the love and warmth aspects of the affiliative pleasure that accompanies raising her child.

Fathers focus on the influence of forming the character of his child.

FATHER FACTS

Infants who have time alone with their dad show richer social and exploratory behavior than children not exposed to such experiences.

Fathers help children individuate- he is typically more willing to let a child out of his sight than the mom will. A father will let the child crawl twice as far as mom will before retrieving the infant.

One of the most critical roles that a dad plays in the life of his child in the toddler years (1 & ½ to 3 & ½) is helping the child safely and securely separate from the intense maternal dependency of infancy.

Fathers have a slight proclivity to encourage their pre-schoolers of both genders to play with sex-types toys.